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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Sixteenth session

Ministerial segment

Libreville, 15 and 16 June 2017

Draft 1: Libreville Declaration on Investing in Innovative Environmental Solutions

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Libreville on 15 and 16 June 2017 at the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the outcomes of the fifteenth session and the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Cairo from 2 to 6 March 2015 and on 18 and 19 April 2016, respectively,

Welcoming the outcomes, including the key messages, of the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 May 2017 in preparation for the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development,

Recognizing that achieving long-term sustainable development in Africa will depend on sustainable and optimal management of our natural capital and requires investment in innovative environmental solutions,

Determined to break the conflict cycle and to increase our resilience by addressing the causes and drivers of environmental insecurity when designing and implementing actions on the governance of our natural resources in Africa,

Aware of the need to raise issues related to ocean, marine and coastal environments, including benefits, threats and opportunities, on Africa's regional agenda,

Acknowledging the efforts made to implement the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as to enhance support from partners,

Welcoming the Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa, adopted in Windhoek on 19 August 2016,

Aware that there can be no sustainable development without commitments and actions to manage pollution and that this requires the sound management of chemicals and waste and other forms of pollution,

Noting that green business development in Africa has led to increased incomes, job and wealth creation, resource efficiency, increased productivity, improved health and improved compliance and competitiveness, while bringing social benefits and addressing environmental concerns,

Aware that youth in Africa are the decision makers and consumers of the environmental goods and services of tomorrow and that their energy, motivation, innovation and creativity are essential assets in achieving sustainable development,

Welcoming the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted in Kigali on 15 October 2016 at the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties, whereby, among others, a commitment was made to reduce the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons by more than 80 per cent over the next 30 years so as to reduce greenhouse gases,

Welcoming also the outcomes of the 2017 conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the theme of which was “A future detoxified: sound management of chemicals and waste”,

Welcoming further the information contained in the *Atlas of Africa Energy Resources* and recognizing its role in stimulating decision makers, planners, investors, energy experts, businesses and the public in taking action to achieve sustainable, modern and affordable energy for all in Africa,

Recognizing the need to develop a gender strategy and policy for the Conference in order to address the particular needs of the most vulnerable, including women and children,

Recalling decision SS.VI/6, on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union’s Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment,

Determined to strengthen our efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and Africa’s Agenda 2063,

Hereby declare our resolve:

1. To take all necessary actions and measures to invest in innovative policy and non-policy interventions in order to optimize the sustainable productivity of our natural capital and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and Africa’s Agenda 2063;
2. To agree to allocate at least two per cent of national or subnational revenue accruing from natural capital assets in reinvesting in innovative environmental solutions;
3. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, other United Nations agencies, development partners and the international community to facilitate the strengthening of international cooperation in undertaking studies and developing policies and measures that contribute towards innovative environmental solutions;
4. To commit to integrating pollution management aspects into our national development agendas and creating awareness at the subnational and local levels among the business and local communities on the negative environmental, health and socioeconomic impacts of pollution;
5. To call upon civil society, business, industry and the private sector in Africa to make commitments individually and collectively to making Africa a pollution-free continent and to play a more proactive role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
6. To request the African Union Commission, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the African Development Bank and other partners to hold a high-level interministerial forum relevant to key ministries, industry, the private sector and civil society in order to raise political awareness and develop common strategies for a future pollution-free Africa;
7. To agree to hold joint meetings of African ministers for the environment and energy with a view to providing policy and strategic guidance on innovative environment and investment solutions to accelerate development of clean energies;
8. To also agree to promote the circular economy, green economy, blue economy and industrial symbiosis strategies in our countries given that such models provide opportunities to enhance economic and social prosperity while reducing waste and pollution;
9. To further agree to prepare a strategic document, with the support of the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners, that supports member States in upscaling and replicating the circular economy and green business development policies and programmes to enable the growth of sustainable entrepreneurship;
10. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, working in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners, to hold in 2018 a high-level interministerial forum on the circular economy to promote green business development as a key driver to Africa’s economic transformation agenda;
11. To urge member States to actively participate in the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held in China in September 2017;

12. To request the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to support the implementation of resolutions 2/13 and 2/24 of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, on the sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication and on combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands, respectively, especially in Africa through the provision of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and networking, development of regional and cross-border programmes, and technology support;
13. To agree to develop a charter on natural resources governance for Africa, with the support of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme, to enable member States to have a common understanding of and shared commitments to better governance and mutual cooperation in matters concerning our natural capital;
14. To request the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to support the implementation of programmes on land degradation neutrality;
15. To support the draft resolution to the United Nations General Assembly on designating 2020 as an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists;
16. To urge member States and regional economic communities, with the support of the relevant partners, to accelerate implementation of the African Union's strategy on combating illegal exploitation and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa;
17. To agree to take action and create enabling conditions including by formulating enabling national policies that will empower the youth in Africa to develop environmental innovations and resilience and create green jobs and wealth;
18. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with other partners, to prepare an environment outlook for the youth in Africa to guide strategic development of youth-responsive actions for sustainable development;
19. To request the United Nations agencies to support the integration of the environmental sustainability aspects of youth in the work of the United Nations at the country and regional levels;
20. To appreciate member States who have ratified the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and urge those that have not yet done so to ratify, approve or accede as soon as possible to enable the Amendment to enter into force on 1 January 2019, taking into account that universal participation is necessary to ensure the protection of both the ozone layer and the climate;
21. To commend those member States that have ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury and urge those that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Convention;
22. To agree to foster the management of persistent organic pollutants in our countries in accordance with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and to request the Global Environment Facility to continue supporting this process;
23. To appreciate the support provided by the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa of the African Development Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme in preparing the *Atlas of Africa Energy Resources*, which will inform strategic decisions in achieving the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets on energy;
24. To adopt the policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming in the environment sector in Africa of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to guide member States in developing subregional and national action plans on gender and the environment;
25. To mandate the President of the Conference to implement decision SS.VI/6, on the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment;
26. To agree to continue supporting the work of member State missions led by the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi and the Permanent Representatives Committee in Addis Ababa in their efforts to coordinate African common understanding and positions during negotiations and effective engagement in the United Nations Environment Assembly, the African Union and other United Nations processes on sustainable development;
27. To urge member States to continue clearing their outstanding mandatory contributions to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

28. To express our profound appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the African Development Bank, the Global Environment Facility and other organizations for their continued support to the work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

29. To mandate the President of the Conference to convey the priorities and position of Africa contained in this declaration and in the decisions, key messages and report of the sixteenth session to all parties, including external partners and organizations, with a view to enlisting their support, and to report to the Conference at its next session;

30. To also mandate the President of the Conference to submit the report of the sixteenth session of the Conference, including the recommendations of the Libreville Declaration and the annexes thereto, to the Commission of the African Union for further action by the African Union policy organs;

31. To pay tribute to the President of Gabon, His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, and the Government and people of Gabon for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to participants, for the excellent facilities made available to them and for their generous support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its sixteenth session, which contributed greatly to its success.
