

STATEMENT AND KEY MESSAGES BY THE AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN)

We, the representatives of the African Civil Society as Major Groups and Stakeholders, having met in Libreville, Gabon on 10-11th June 2017 for the Regional Consultation Meeting to prepare for the 16th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA);

Take note of the resolutions and decisions made in the year 2016 during the 6th Special Session of the AMCEN, UNEA-2, and UNFCCC COP22;

Appreciate continued facilitation for engagement of major groups by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and AMCEN;

Further appreciate the support by Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Konrad Adeneur Stiftung (KAS), the Government of Morocco & our host - the Government of Gabon;

Recognize the role of indigenous knowledge and efforts in conserving the environment and addressing climate change challenges in Africa;

Alarmed by the failure of most member states to make payment of the mandatory annual contribution to the AMCEN trust fund;

Aware that the third session of UN Environment Assembly will take place in December 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme ‘Towards a Pollution-free planet’;

Concerned with the high levels of environmental degradation in Africa as a result of multiple sources including air, soil, marine and fresh water pollution;

Further concerned that weak implementation of decisions adopted at AMCEN by member states has resulted in increased challenges facing the African continent such as food insecurity, illegal wildlife trade and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources;

Applaud the political commitment of the committee of African Heads of States for the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI);

Condemn the decision by United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement;

We therefore call for action from the member states in Africa as follows:

1. On AMCEN:

We call upon member states through the African Heads of State to revisit the proposal to dissolve AMCEN. We also call on AMCEN to improve the provision of policy guidance and heightened responses to regional environmental and sustainable development challenges.

We strongly urge Member States to live up to their obligation and pay the mandatory annual contribution to the Trust Fund. The contributions will ensure sustainable financing for convening AMCEN and implementation of its activities. We commend all member states who have met their obligation and single out Madagascar, Mauritius and South Africa for contributing beyond the mandatory amount. We also call upon AMCEN and African member states to financially support the engagement of the African Civil Society to effectively participate in environmental governance processes in Africa.

2. On implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and Africa Agenda 2063:

We call upon African Governments to accelerate the implementation of SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063, by taking an integrated, inclusive, innovative and gender-responsive approach to ensure collective actions.

We further call on the African Governments to cap foreign debt and domestically mobilize and effectively utilize both financial and natural resources to reflect African priorities.

3. On climate change and acceleration of Implementation of the Paris Agreement:

We call upon African Governments to adopt a declaration to affirm their commitment and strongly condemn the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. African Governments that have not yet ratified the Agreement should do so and prepare comprehensive low-carbon and climate-resilient strategies.

We further call upon the African Governments to support the Africa Group of Negotiators in the development of an “Africa Paris Rulebook” before the 23rd session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP23).

We strongly urge our African leaders to develop, pursue and implement their climate and sustainable development commitments.

4. Renewable Energy:

We call upon the African Governments to develop robust plans and resource mobilization strategies to invest and harness the great renewable energy potential in the continent in order provide access to millions of energy poor populations across the continent.

We further call upon African leaders to safeguard the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) and put in place necessary procedures to ensure this remains Africa-driven and deliver the energy transformation the continent is aspiring for.

5. Pollution:

We strongly urge African Governments to take decisive action to combat all forms of pollution including ban on production, importation and use of plastics. African Governments should adopt best practices from a country like Rwanda on plastics ban.

Further, we urge African Government to increase investment on research, advance clean technologies and implement existing laws to deal with all types of pollution and at all levels.

We encourage governments to address pollution related to mining, agriculture, waste, including transboundary pollution, by monitoring compliance with regulatory frameworks.

6. Illegal Wildlife Trade

We call upon member states to accelerate the implementation of the African Strategy on Combatting Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora. We further request governments to implement the Convention on Migratory Species to prevent the risk of poisoning of wildlife, develop and enforce legislation to regulate and restrict the use and disposal of toxic chemicals used to poison wildlife.

7. Gender, youth and indigenous peoples:

We call upon African Governments to embark on gender-responsive and participatory approaches where both women, men and youth are equally involved and well represented at all levels. Governments should harness the vast potential of indigenous knowledge of the African people to provide sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

We strongly reiterate our commitment, in collaborating and supporting efforts by our governments and other stakeholders, to promote initiatives geared towards investing in innovative environmental solutions to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in Africa.