

AFRICA ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

*Policy and Action Recommendations
for a Sustainable Future*



Africa Environment Outlook

**Policy and Action
Recommendations for a
Sustainable Future**



Prepared for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) by UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) and the Regional Office for Africa (ROA).

No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purposes whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the United Nations Environment Programme.

For bibliographic and reference purposes this publication should be referred to as: (UNEP 2002) Africa Environment Outlook - Policy and Action Recommendations for a Sustainable Future, Nairobi, Kenya.

This publication is available from:

Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

P.O. Box 30552

Nairobi

Kenya.

Tel: +254-2-623287

Fax: +254-2-624309

Email: charles.sebukeera@unep.org

Internet: <http://www.unep.org/aeo>

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of UNEP or the agencies cooperating in this project. The designations employed and the presentations do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of cooperating agencies concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or of the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Mention of a commercial company or product in this report does not imply endorsement by the United Nations Environment Programme. The use of information from this publication concerning proprietary products for publicity or advertising is not permitted.

Trademark names and symbols are used in an editorial fashion with no intention of infringement on trademark or copyright laws. We regret any errors or omissions that may have been unwittingly made.

This report was prepared by the Africa Regional Coordination office of the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA).

Designed and printed by:

Printing Section, Division of Conference Services,

United Nations Office at Nairobi.

Funding

The governments of Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg and the UNEP Environment Fund have provided funding support for the Africa Environment Outlook Process. This publication may be reproduced for educational or policy development purposes without special permission from UNEP, provided that acknowledgement of the source is made. UNEP would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source.

Background

In December, 1985 the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), was formed by African ministers of the environment with support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Cairo, Egypt. The conference adopted the Cairo Programme to mobilize national, sub-regional and regional cooperation on the environment. In addition to being Africa's direct response to the Stockholm Conference, the establishment of AMCEN was also part of UNEP's response to Africa's environmental crisis at the time.

The Eighth Session of AMCEN held in Abuja, Nigeria in April 2000, approved its medium-term programme, a key element of which was the production of the Africa Environment Outlook report. This decision was reaffirmed at the AMCEN Inter-sessional Committee, which met in Malmo, Sweden in May, 2000. In response to this, the AMCEN Secretariat UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA), in collaboration with the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) embarked on a process to produce the AEO report.

The main purpose of the AEO report is to provide comprehensive and credible environmental information in a way that is relevant to policy making. The structure of the report combines comprehensive environmental information with policy analysis, within an overall context of socio-economic conditions and development imperatives. It is expected that the AEO report will provide the awareness and stimulus for action in the development of, and response to, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), regional

action plans and sub-regional cooperative arrangements.

The AEO report calls for specific policy action by AMCEN, national governments, sub-regional organizations, and development partners.

AEO provides a retrospective analysis of environment and development since the Stockholm Conference in 1972 to 2002 and perspectives of the future over the next 30 years to 2032.

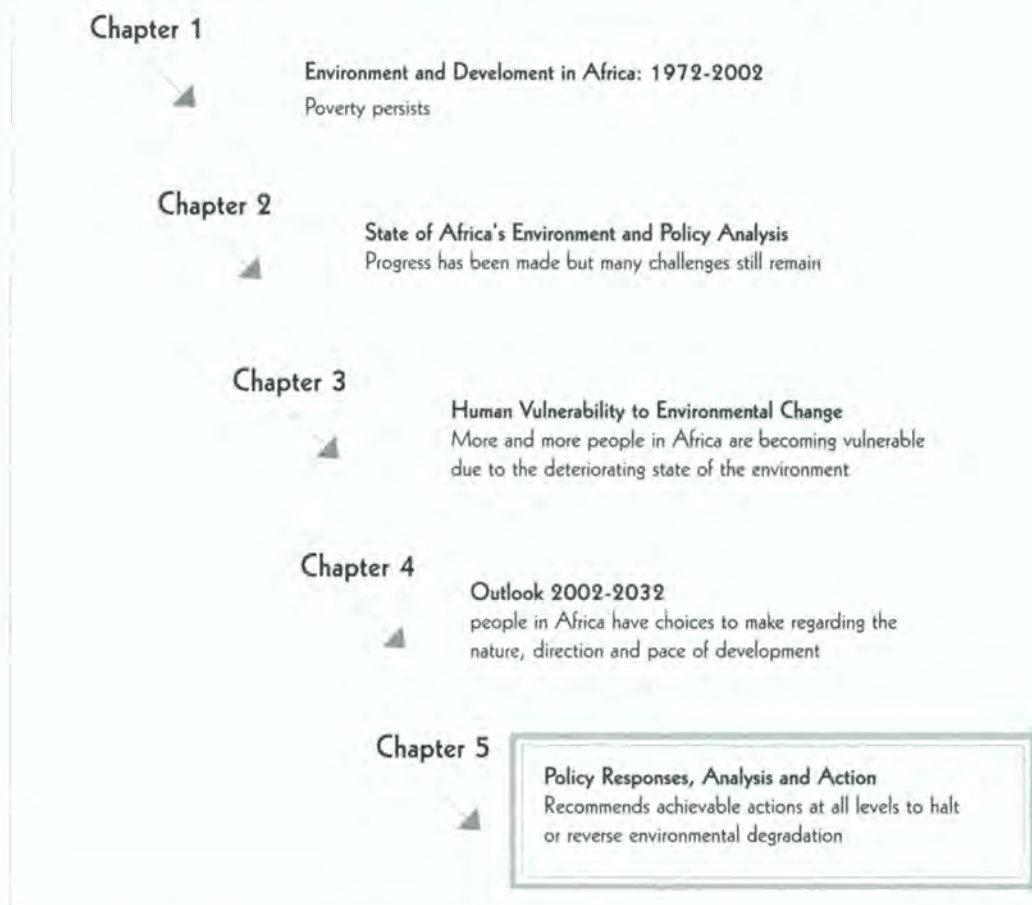
The AEO report focuses upon the evolution of environmental awareness and integration of environment and development issues in Africa, highlighting milestones in environmental policy and management over the last 30 years. It then details the state of the environment, trends and driving forces behind environmental change, and the resultant consequences for social and economic development.

These consequences are presented both in terms of impacts on ecosystems and human vulnerability to environmental change.

Building upon this analysis, a series of science-based alternative futures or scenarios are presented. Different policy choices and management interventions that potentially have far-reaching impacts upon socio-economic and environmental outcomes determine these scenarios. The report culminates in very specific policy and action recommendations critical to effective implementation of a sustainable environment and development agenda (see box 1.1).

Africa Environment Outlook - Policy and Action Recommendations for a Sustainable Future is a synopsis of the key policy issues arising from the 5 chapters of the AEO Report.

Box1.1 Structure of the 5 Chapters of the AEO Report



The role of policy responses in environmental management

The link between environment and development is particularly strong in Africa because many national economies are dependent on agriculture and natural resources at both the primary and secondary production stages for income. Although African countries have made improvements in environmental management in many areas, challenges still remain and these need to be addressed from a variety of perspectives but particularly from a policy perspective. For example, the current levels of land degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, over-harvesting of natural resources, atmospheric pollution, lack of access to clean and safe water, poor sanitation services, and poor urban conditions are some of the manifestations of unfavorable conditions. If nothing is done, these factors will continue to undermine Africa's prospects for sustainable development.

Furthermore, the inadequacy of economic opportunities in the region, the existence of trade barriers and farm subsidies in the developed countries, and the declining state of Africa's environment mean that the people are becoming increasingly vulnerable to adverse changes in the environment. Most African countries are not adequately equipped to deal with natural disasters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes and emerging health problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Improving the quality of life, and that of the state of the environment, requires the identification of sustainable development paths backed by the identification and implementation of concrete actions through the policy responses.

Policy responses for sustainable development

Policy has been described as:

A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve (Jenkins 1978).¹

Africa has over the past 30 years developed various socio-economic and environmental policies, collectively as a region under the purview of organizations such as the ADB, AMCEN, ECA and OAU; and individually as governments. Sub-regional-organizations such as ECOWAS and SADC have also been instrumental in developing policies on sustainable development, particularly since the 1990s. The region has, therefore, never been short of policy documents. In the 1980s, the Lagos Plan of Action was the blueprint for Africa to lift itself from under-development and deprivation. Agenda 21 and its derivatives at the national, sub-regional and regional levels dominated the policy agenda in the 1990s. While Agenda 21 remains the foundation for sustainable development in the region, Africa is now promoting among its partners the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). In addition to these major policy initiatives, Africa has also developed and tried to implement various sectoral and thematic policies with varying levels of success. Some of the policy responses have tried to address problems such as:

- Economic development, including agriculture;
- Poverty;
- Health;
- Natural resource management, including wildlife conservation;

- Land degradation, including deforestation;
- Hazardous waste management; and
- Freshwater resources management.

Despite these efforts, it is clear that the environment in Africa has been deteriorating, leaving millions of people more vulnerable to environmental change than ever before. Some policies have been effective while others have failed, and this is more evident in situations where human vulnerability to environmental change has become more pronounced.

In assessing policies and their impact on the environment, it is critical to acknowledge that the environment is the fundamental basis of human health, wealth well being and security. A healthy environment is the prerequisite for meeting the needs of people in Africa in terms of clean air and water, food, clothing, shelter, tools and recreation as well as other unseen services fully functioning ecosystems provide.

Environmental goods and services have high international, national and local value and there are economic and social costs associated with their misuse. Revenue and livelihoods can be lost with the erosion of soils from productive land, for example. Particularly ill-understood is the immense value environmental assets have as the vital underpinning of the livelihoods, survival ability and resilience of the poorest and most marginalized communities.

There is now a general acceptance that economic development, including poverty relief, and environmental stability should be mutual goals. For the environment to be able to meet present needs without compromising those of the future, environmental considerations should be well integrated into development agendas, in development decisions and into national strategies for sustainable development. Policy messages must be developed to focus on sustainable development rather than just economic development and growth.

¹ Jenkins, W.I. (1978). *Policy Analysis: A political and organizational perspective*. Martin Robertson. London, UK

In Africa, as is the case throughout the world, conclusive information on policy impacts and effectiveness is still scarce and difficult to obtain. The region lacks a clear picture of the environmental, social and economic consequences of policies implemented to date. With inherent time lags in the policy process – between decision-making, implementation and effect – there is urgent need to develop the means to assess long term policy risks and pay-offs as part of policy development, and to conduct comparative evaluation of existing policy instruments and approaches.

According to the UNEP third Global Environment Outlook (GEO-3, 2002)² report, there can be significant delays between human actions, including policy decisions, and associated impacts on the environment, specifically:

- ❑ much of the environmental change that will occur over the next 30 years has already been set in motion by past and current actions; and
- ❑ many of the effects of environmentally relevant policies put into place over the next 30 years will not be apparent until long afterwards.

Another lesson from GEO-3 is that 'achieving widely agreed environmental and social goals requires dramatic and coordinated action starting now and continuing for a number of years. Steps must include policies based on prevention and adaptation'.

The following sections outline the key areas for action for policymakers at different levels.

Key action areas

Urgent actions are required to halt and even reverse the current trend in environmental degradation in Africa. These actions must aim at eradicating poverty, and tackle the direct and underlying causes of environmental degradation.

- ❑ **Poverty** is complex and multidimensional, and as a manifestation of the economic situation, it is one of the driving forces of environmental degradation. Poverty in Africa is on the increase, notwithstanding some specific country exceptions. Much of the poverty is found in rural areas where the majority of the African population with limited livelihood choices live. There is no uniform solution to the problem of poverty. Country-specific programmes to tackle poverty and sub-regional, regional and international efforts supporting national ones are needed.
- ❑ **Direct causes of environmental degradation** must be tackled because the environment is the basis of human health, wealth, well-being and security. The majority of Africans derive their livelihoods directly from the goods and services provided by the environment. Consequently, the deterioration of the African environment has left many Africans more vulnerable to adverse environmental change than before. African countries need to halt or reverse the current trend in environmental degradation.
- ❑ **Underlying causes of environmental degradation** are those cross-cutting issues which if addressed would contribute to the halting and even reversing of environmental degradation and the reduction of vulnerability. The actions required to address underlying causes include: improving coping capacities; promoting cooperation and partnerships; mobilizing domestic and external financial resources; enhancing institutional capacity together with the greater involvement of civil society; addressing policy failures; defining sustainable development paths; promoting good governance; and enforcing compliance, setting targets and monitoring.

Policy and action recommendations

A. Reducing Poverty

Actions that are directly relevant to the environment and are imperative if Africa is to reduce poverty include the following:

A.1. Endorsement and promotion of the principles of sustainable development

One of the main outputs of the 1992 Earth Summit was the global Agenda 21, a blueprint for sustainable development and of Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). African countries have implemented some provisions of Agenda 21 at national, sub-regional and regional levels where this was possible within their means and through limited international support. The continued degradation of the African environment clearly shows that these efforts are inadequate.

The African Union (AU) in general and where environment is concerned, AMCEN in particular, need to advocate for the adoption of the NEPAD – as the framework for sustainable development in Africa, and to accelerate the establishment of the necessary mechanisms of the World Solidarity Fund (WSF). Through their own Agenda 21s, African governments also need to increase efforts towards attaining the poverty reduction goals of the Millennium Declaration. The international community also needs to accept NEPAD as Africa's Agenda 21. The focus on sustainable development is important for the balanced development of the continent.

A.2. Acceleration of industrial development

Industrialization is one way out of poverty for Africa. However, at present Africa's industrial base is narrow, and is arguably in a 'de-industrialization' phase. African countries have considerable resources, unfortunately, these resources are not being processed in optimally

beneficial ways. There is therefore, need to add value to Africa's natural resources and agricultural commodities as was recommended in the Lagos Plan of Action. Furthermore, the acceleration of industrial development would create increased employment opportunities for Africans and raise financial resources needed to promote accelerated economic growth. In this respect, regional cooperation is required to raise the industrial productivity and competitiveness of African states to international level. Efforts need to be devoted to agricultural development and natural resources based micro, small and medium – sized enterprises to add value to Africa's traditional exports and mobilize domestic financial resources. However, any national industrialization strategy must be environmentally friendly and sustainable and should not contribute to further degradation.

A.3. Increase of sustainable agricultural production

Africa's agricultural potential is not being optimally utilized to address food insecurity. Innovative ways should be sought to enhance the availability and accessibility to food by poor households. Furthermore, agricultural practices in Africa have largely not been environmentally friendly in many instances, incurring the bulk of the annual costs of degradation. It is unlikely that future generations of Africans will be able to pay this environmental debt. National governments must, therefore, increase financing for the agricultural sector and promote environmentally effective crop and livestock production practices. Regional and international support is needed for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Similarly, strong regional and international representation is needed to reverse the double standard of some developed countries in removing agricultural subsidies that are currently blocking the entry of African agricultural products into their markets while

at the same time encouraging the dumping of products onto the African market. Regional support is needed to convince the developed countries to apply the precautionary principle to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) which have unknown but potentially dangerous consequences for agricultural production in Africa.

A.4. Promotion of human health, well-being and development

Another factor contributing to poverty in Africa is the low quality and productivity of its human resources, caused by endemic, parasitic and infectious diseases many of which have their roots in the poor environmental conditions in which people live. Governments also need to improve environmental and social conditions that are responsible for spreading diseases, and to build the capacities of local communities to improve their own living conditions. International partnership is required to make both preventive and curative healthcare available. Regional and sub-regional technical assistance and national efforts are also needed to provide access to medicine at affordable prices while promoting public health and nutrition.

Part of the answer to the poverty problem and hence sustainable development lies in Africa's youth, if impediments such as lack of education and training can be overcome. African governments must, therefore, ensure greater access to affordable education, universal healthcare and access to medical technology. Governments also need to empower African women in social and economic development. Regional and sub-regional technical assistance is required to complement national efforts in promoting human resource development, capacity building, and education.

A.5. Advocacy for better terms of trade

While African governments have recognized the importance of trade in the fulfillment of their poverty reduction goals, unfortunately, the current

global trading system marginalizes the continent. Lobbying is required at all levels to support the efforts of the African governments in persuading developed countries to open their markets and eliminate subsidies on agriculture, textiles and other export products competing with those of the region. Better terms of trade would translate into increased income for development and reduced dependence upon aid.

A.6. Increased financing for sustainable development

While African states are implementing some of the provisions of Agenda 21, they face major limitations particularly the unmet financial commitments made at the Earth Summit. Furthermore, despite the progress African countries are making towards macro-economic stability, the flow of foreign direct investment is low. Some African countries have received debt relief through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. However, the amount of debt so far forgiven is small. Similarly the flow of funds through official development assistance (ODA) is also lower than the 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) agreed to by the developed countries. In addition, ODA flows have been benchmarked on conditionalities that are sometimes not supportive of the recipient countries. Finally, while African countries have benefited from funds through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), resources are limited and procurement procedures are often cumbersome and complex.

Therefore, efforts are required at all levels – national, sub – regional, regional and global – to promote greater flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa. Developed countries and the Bretton Woods institutions should be pressured to cancel Africa's crippling external debts. Efforts should be intensified to persuade developed countries to adhere to the agreed contribution of ODA. New partnerships are needed with UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank to increase the resources and improve upon the operational procedures and project implementation protocols of GEF.

A.7 Infrastructure improvement and promotion of sustainable human settlements

Many parts of Africa are poor simply because they are isolated and have no access to markets or inputs. Land is not being optimally utilized be it for agriculture, nature conservation or built-up areas. Human settlements are often poorly planned resulting in waste, congestion and reduced ability to provide public services. Governments need to improve access to, and the affordability and reliability of, infrastructural services. African governments also need the support of AMCEN in mobilizing external resources for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration of the 25th United Nations Special Session, to achieve sustainable settlements. Improved market access should contribute to the realization of higher household incomes and hence lower incidences of poverty; while better-planned and serviced human settlements would also result in improved quality of life.

A.8 Improved scientific and technological base in Africa in support of sustainable development

Africa has an opportunity to reduce poverty by harnessing science and appropriate technology. However, in order to improve access to science and technology, the continent needs adequate financing and an enabling environment. Barriers in accessing global knowledge are real constraint for Africa. Governments should intensify their efforts to gain access to new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and to create conditions for the development of indigenous technologies to enhance overall economic development and environmental management. Appropriate scientific knowledge and technological packages will allow African countries to raise productivity and improve agricultural commodity and natural resource processing, while minimizing waste and avoiding pollution.

Recommendations/action proposals	Key implementation actors	Timing
A. Reducing Poverty		
A1. Endorsement of the principles of sustainable development	AMCEN, national governments	Immediate
A2. Acceleration of industrial development	AMCEN, sub-regional organizations	Medium term
A3. Increase of sustainable agricultural production	National governments	Medium term
A4. Promotion of human health, well-being and development	National governments	Immediate to Medium term
A5. Advocacy for better terms of trade	AMCEN	Immediate
A6. Generation of increased financing for sustainable development	AMCEN, UNEP, UNDP and World Bank	Immediate
A.7. Improvement of infrastructures and promotion of sustainable human settlements in Africa	National governments and AMCEN	Medium term
A8. Increase of the scientific and technological base in Africa in support of sustainable development	AMCEN and sub-regional organizations	Medium term

B. Addressing environmental degradation

If environmental degradation in Africa is to be reversed and even halted, the following actions are imperative for the region:

B.1 Reduction and halting of activities that lead to land degradation

Africa's increasing population and higher levels of poverty are increasing dependence on the land for food and livelihood. Tenure policies, competition for land, and rising demand for food have forced many people to cultivate marginal areas and sensitive ecological sites. In some instances fragile habitats have been converted to agriculture or have been settled by refugees (including environmental refugees) or internally displaced people. These pressures have resulted in land degradation manifested by: increased erosion, loss of productivity and loss of biodiversity. Degradation of soils and vegetation result in lowered economic and nutritional status of the people, which when combined with extreme climatic variations such as drought and flooding, incur severe human and economic losses.

Efforts at national and sub-regional levels should be focused on environmental information, education and communication campaigns. Governments, for their part, need to ensure that they are in a position to implement the UNCCD in a timely and effective manner and, with the support of AMCEN, they need to ensure that the UNCCD is acknowledged as a sustainable development convention. Governments and sub-regional organizations should prepare sound land use policies and plans where these do not exist and to improve systems that address related gender, cultural and historical considerations where these are lacking.

B.2 Conservation and sustainable management of Africa's rich biodiversity

It is well known that Africa is rich in biological resources whether viewed from the ecosystem, species or genetic levels. Biological resources are the backbone of the African economy, as well as the life-support system for most of its people. However, this rich resource endowment is being threatened by loss of habitat and increased threatened and alien invasive species.

The current ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation is too narrow, a more comprehensive effort at all levels is needed to promote a 'landscape approach' with an emphasis on sustainable development in a wider context. In addition:

- ❑ African governments – with technical assistance from AMCEN and sub-regional organizations where necessary – need to develop and implement national legislation for the protection of the rights of local communities, farmers and breeders, and for the regulation of access to biological resources and biosafety, in line with the OAU Model Law.
- ❑ Sub – regional groupings and national governments should also endeavour to rehabilitate degraded wetlands areas. AMCEN's technical assistance will also be required to strengthen the Lusaka Agreement to facilitate implementation of the provisions of CITES and safeguard the conservation of eastern and southern African wildlife. Where there has been extensive poaching in wildlife protected areas, the relevant sub-regional organizations and governments should carry out rehabilitation work through among others, species re-introduction and habitat restoration.

- Governments with the technical assistance of AMCEN, should document and share indigenous knowledge and practices applicable to conservation. To the extent that Africa's biodiversity is not fully understood, sub-regional groupings and governments should undertake biodiversity inventories and document significant landraces of important agricultural crops. Governments should promote the establishment of ex situ conservation facilities for rare, vulnerable and endangered species and promote the conservation of agricultural biodiversity. Such efforts should include the promotion of in situ conservation of landraces of important agricultural crops.

B.3 Reduction in rates of deforestation in parts of Africa

Africa's forests contain rich biodiversity which provide resources for rural livelihoods and commercial operations. Forests are also a sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide and thus help to mitigate global climate change. In addition, forests regulate soil and water quality. Despite the importance of forests to local and national economies and global environmental stability, the natural forests of Africa are being lost or fragmented; and there are also increasing pressures on some forest resources as a result of selective harvesting.

Governments need to access and dedicate additional financial resources and technology to implement the provisions of the International Panel on Forests (IPF) / International Forests Forum (IFF) of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Similarly, African governments need to promote access to affordable energy supply and usage, and efficient uptake of renewable energy sources. The Western Indian Ocean Island states need to revitalize the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. AMCEN should, through technical assistance, contribute to strengthening of the operations of the African

Timber Organization (ATO) and support the Yaounde Declaration (YD). Governments should promote collaboration in forest management between forestry authorities and local communities. They should also review the pricing of forest products to reflect their true economic value to provide better earnings, discourage wasteful exploitation and further promote more efficient utilization of non-wood forest products. African countries need to rehabilitate degraded forest areas. They also need to attract private sector investment for sustainable forestry. AMCEN needs to assist African states in documenting the medicinal values of their forests and develop mechanisms for managing cross-border resources.

B.4 Mitigation of the adverse impacts of climate change and other atmospheric conditions

Africa is characterized by considerable climate variations, both spatially and temporally, and extreme events such as flooding and drought have been recorded for thousands of years. Second, although Africa contributes very little to the global emission of greenhouse gases, the continent is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Africa's fossil – fuel carbon dioxide emissions are low in both absolute and per capita terms in relation to other regions, but the rate of increase is significant, while ambient air pollution is also emerging as an issue, particularly in urban areas.

A priority for Africa is the finalisation of the Kyoto Protocol. Governments, with other stakeholders, need to lobby the global community to operationalize the Climate Change Fund (CCF) for developing countries as well as the Special Fund for Least Developed Countries. Similar efforts are required to facilitate the adoption of cleaner technologies in order to reduce industrial emissions in African countries. Combined efforts, at regional, sub – regional and national levels, to establish climate modeling programmes and early warning systems are also needed. African governments also need to ratify the United Nations Motor Vehicle Emissions Agreement; improve

enforcement of emission standards and regulations; and promote the use of unleaded gasoline where feasible. AMCEN should facilitate the north-south exchange of experience and knowledge between experts, and provide for the transfer of know-how between African countries. IGAD countries, with technical assistance from AMCEN, should support and make operational the Strategy for the Elimination of Hunger in the Horn of Africa. Through partnerships at international, regional and sub – regional levels, African states need to improve their understanding of the likely social, economic and environmental impacts of atmospheric pollution and to quantify them.

B.5 Improvement of waste management practices

Although Africa's population is still largely rural, this is rapidly changing. There are currently 40 cities in Africa each with a population of more than one million people. Lagos is the largest city in Africa and sixth in the world, with a population of over 13 million. By 2015, it is expected that 70 cities in Africa will each have a population in excess of one million people. This rate of urbanisation of people raises immediate concerns about waste management. Partnerships are required to put in place the funding and capacity required for effective management of non-hazardous wastes. AMCEN should take steps to counter the export of obsolete capital goods and equipment to Africa. Through partnerships at international, regional and sub – regional levels, African governments should implement the various conventions governing the generation, storage, transportation, and transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes, including radioactive ones. Effective waste management will lead to improved quality of life, especially in urban areas.

B.6 Promotion of environmentally sound management of chemical products

With increasing industrialization and greater interest in the intensification of agriculture, more chemicals

are entering African borders. There is a real threat of chemical poisoning of humans, animals, plants and water sources. African states need to establish partnerships to support the management of chemical products in accordance with Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 and the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Through such efforts, the threats of chemical pollution will be reduced.

B.7 Improvement of access to and quality of freshwater resources

Africa's share of global freshwater resources is around 9 percent. The region's freshwater resources are in turn distributed unevenly across the continent. Access to water is further constrained by its high variability within and between years. Not only is the availability of freshwater a major constraint to development, but in all regions the quality of freshwater is also declining. Through the improvement of access to and quality of freshwater resources, many environmentally-related diseases can be avoided or at least reduced.

- ❑ Recognizing the limited financial resources at their disposal, African governments need to promote public – private partnerships in water resources management. They also need to develop appropriate standards for water quality and to promote the use of economic instruments (incentives and disincentives) for water resources management, including the application of the polluter pays principle.
- ❑ International partnerships such as the Nile Basin Initiative, are required to support regional and sub - regional water resource management bodies.
- ❑ Governments, with the assistance of sub-regional organizations, should inventory important water catchments and develop guidelines for their sustainable utilization. They should also promote integrated water resource management and development as a standard practice. African governments,

through sub- regional and international support, should improve general access to freshwater resources.

- ❑ AMCEN should promote environmentally sound, low –cost technologies for water harvesting.
- ❑ African governments should also pay attention to and address water quality issues. In particular, where necessary, enforce national effluent discharge regulations and standards. They should also increase investments in the management of sewage in order to improve freshwater quality.

B.8 Improvement of living conditions in urban areas

African cities not only account for 60 per cent of the region’s GDP, but also for a large percentage

of the waste, pollution and crime. These problems are usually associated with unplanned or unserved settlements (slums) where predominantly poor inhabitants do not have access to adequate housing, water supply, sanitation, waste disposal, or electricity. The poor often suffer disproportionately more from unsuitable urban environmental conditions. Healthy urban living conditions can contribute positively to sustainable development. African governments need to plan urban areas appropriately for sustainable development. Furthermore, they need to formulate appropriate human settlement and waste management policies, laws and regulations and to promote private sector participation in improving urban infrastructure and provision of municipal services. African governments should also fulfill their national obligations under the Habitat Agenda and prepare integrated water and waste management strategies and action plans.

Recommendations/action proposals	Key implementation actors	Timing
B. Addressing Environmental Degradation Directly		
B.1. Reducing and halting of activities that lead to land degradation	AMCEN, sub-regional organizations and National governments	Immediate
B.2. Conservation and sustainable management of Africa’s rich biodiversity	AMCEN, sub-regional organizations, National governments, UNEP, UNDP and World Bank	Immediate to Medium term
B.3. Reduction of high rates of deforestation in parts of Africa	AMCEN, National governments	Immediate term
B.4. Mitigation of adverse impacts of climate changes and other atmospheric conditions	AMCEN, sub-regional organizations, National governments and international partnerships	Medium term
B.5. Improvement of waste management practices	National governments and AMCEN	Immediate
B.6. Promotion of environmentally sound management of chemical products	National governments	Medium term
B.7. Improvement of access to and quality of freshwater resources	National governments and AMCEN	Immediate
B.8. Improvement of living conditions in urban areas	National governments	Immediate to Medium term

C. Promoting cross-cutting actions

Cross-cutting actions are those that address underlying causes of environmental degradation. Cross-cutting actions that are recommended as being of absolute importance are the following.

C.1 Enhancement of the coping capacities of people in Africa

Human beings, are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and as such are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. One of the objectives of the global Agenda 21 is to assess human vulnerability in ecologically sensitive areas and centres of population to determine the priorities for action at all levels. Due to the deteriorating state of the environment, the people of Africa have become increasingly vulnerable to environmental change over the last 30 years through both natural processes and human actions. Poverty, unsatisfactory economic conditions, poor and inadequate shelter, tenure insecurity, lack of empowerment and public participation, poor governance and health conditions, food insecurity, lack of appreciation of indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights, conflicts, and extreme natural events are some of the factors contributing to the increased vulnerability of the African people. Compared to other parts of the world, Africans are probably the least equipped to cope with disasters. Therefore, decisive and appropriate actions are needed to reduce vulnerability and increase human security through the strengthening of coping capacities. African governments need to enhance their capacities to anticipate natural disasters and to cope with the ensuing impacts. They also need to invest in disaster preparedness planning, including the formulation of appropriate policies, laws and regulations. They should take steps to promote environmentally healthy living to reduce the incidence of associated diseases. They should also establish vulnerability assessments and early warning systems.

C.2 Promotion of human resources development

Most African countries have limited capacity for environmental planning and management. Governments should therefore, assess their human resource needs for improved environmental planning and management and put in place training programmes to fill identified gaps. AMCEN, in partnership with sub-regional and international organizations, should provide technical assistance to complement the efforts of national governments, particularly in the areas of identifying and strengthening the capacities of African centres of excellence in environmental planning and management. AMCEN should also promote intra – regional exchange of expertise, collaboration and networking. Human resources development is one of the key investments that will contribute to sustainability of capacity.

C.3 Promotion and enhancement of regional and sub – regional cooperation

At the international level, African states are participating actively in fora aimed at collective responsibility for the environment. The decision of African states to establish AMCEN is a key enabling factor in improving environmental management in the region. AMCEN's efforts are further strengthened through sub-regional organizations devoted to economic cooperation and environmental management. Regional and sub-regional cooperation will eliminate duplication of efforts, conflicts and facilitate economies of scale and scope of interventions. African governments should seek partnerships with the international community to support the operations of the newly formed AU and the institutions for sub – regional cooperation and economic integration. AMCEN and the sub – regional organizations should also provide technical assistance to governments in formulating programmes of action to support the management of shared water and other transboundary environmental resources.

C.4 Mobilization of domestic financial resources for environmental management

While Africa will in the short – term continue to require external financial support in reversing the trend in environmental degradation, countries should also recognize environment as a priority investment area by placing it among the priority interventions in national poverty reduction strategies.

African governments should double their efforts in mobilizing domestic resources for the environment. They should prioritize the environment in budgetary allocations. AMCEN and sub – regional organizations should, on the other hand, provide technical assistance to governments to develop win – win strategies to attract private sector investment for environmental management. AMCEN should provide technical assistance to governments in the areas of resource valuation and accounting, as a basis for raising non-tax revenues. These actions should contribute to more financial resources for environmental management, increased efficiency and less dependence on aid.

C.5 Enhancement of institutional capacity to coordinate, monitor and supervise environmental management

Perhaps the greatest achievements African countries have attained in environmental management relate to institutional structures and instruments. There exists a plethora of environmental policies, laws and regulations. The new environmental laws have also facilitated the creation of institutions responsible for coordinating, supervising and monitoring environmental management in Africa. Governments need to promote the long – term sustainability of these institutions and at the regional level they should support AMCEN in defining an appropriate institutional structure that is able to coordinate, monitor and supervise environmental management on a region – wide basis. This would also enable a stronger voice for Africa in international negotiations and other inter- regional

deliberations to ensure that Africa's interests are comprehensively and effectively represented.

C.6 Promotion of greater involvement of NGOs in environmental management

The increasing roles of non – governmental organizations (NGOs) in environmental management became evident in 1992 during UNCED, followed by the Habitat II Conference in 1996. NGOs, once viewed suspiciously in the development process by governments, have become, in many cases centre stage performers. However, Africa's NGOs need strengthening in both technical and institutional aspects in order for them to play a stronger role. African governments should also be encouraged to create stronger partnerships with national NGOs in environmental management. Likewise, AMCEN should promote the greater involvement of regional and sub – regional NGOs in environmental management through collaboration, networking and exchange.

C.7 Greening of development plans and strategies at all levels

Governments in Africa have routinely produced various sectoral, cross – sectoral and macro economic development plans. Often, the implementation of some of these plans comes at the expense of the environment. For example, prescriptions for reducing poverty, if not well handled, could hurt the environment and exacerbate poverty. AMCEN should provide technical assistance to African governments to build capacity for greening development plans and strategies at national and sub – national levels. In turn, African governments should make the greening of the plans and strategies mandatory and a precondition for allocation of financial resources to the various sectors of the economy. Greening of development plans, sometimes referred to as mainstreaming environment, will ensure that activities undertaken are sustainable and efficient.

C.8 Focus on policy challenges

In addition to having poverty reduction as a priority goal, African governments have put in place various macroeconomic, social, environmental and sectoral policies to promote sustainable development and improve environmental management. Some of these policies have not been very effective while others have undermined environmental integrity. African governments need to review their existing policies with a view to removing contradictions and other underlying causes of failure. Furthermore, governments, in partnership with sub – regional, regional and international organizations, need to create capacity for policy analysis to ensure timely detection of failures in implementation. Governments also need to demonstrate greater levels of commitment to the implementation of the policies they adopt. The assessment of the ecological, social and economic impacts of policies allows for better allocation of resources and decision making.

C.9 Promotion of greater public awareness and participation

Broad public participation in decision-making is an important element of the global Agenda 21 because, combined with greater accountability, it is basic to the concept of sustainable development. Individuals and members of various groups are the best source of knowledge about the cause of, and remedies for many environmental problems. There is also the need for public participation in the formulation of policies, strategic plans, and in the development of major projects through the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process. Governments and AMCEN, with support from UNEP and other international organizations and civil society have invested significantly in creating greater public awareness of environmental matters and sustainable development, and these efforts need to be sustained. Also, given the increasing levels of urbanization and industrialization on the continent, governments in partnership with sub – regional, regional and international organizations, need to increase public awareness about the accompanying 'brown issues' such as atmospheric pollution.

C.10. Promotion of environmental education

Investments in education have been proven over the years to yield handsome returns and have beneficial long – term impacts. African governments, in partnership with sub – regional, regional and international organizations, need to invest in the formulation and implementation of formal and informal environmental education strategies where these do not exist. Investment in environmental education guarantees long-term sustainability of conservation knowledge and ethos in society.

C.11 Improvement of environmental information systems

African states have introduced a number of tools that now facilitate better management of the environment. These tools include: environmental assessments, regulations, standards, and some environmental information systems. However, many of the interventions required to arrest environmental degradation now call for more elaborate organizational and management systems. Among these are databases and more sophisticated management systems, particularly for monitoring. African governments need to improve environmental information systems as the basis for sound decision – making. AMCEN, sub- regional and international organizations, should in partnership with governments, promote the creation of meta-databases at sub–regional and regional levels and at the same time enhance networking and collaboration among states. Monitoring the state of environment allows for more efficient and equitable investments.

C.12 Definition of sustainable development paths in Africa

Having learnt important lessons from being used as laboratories for various economic and social development paradigms in the past, African countries are now confronted with the task of

selecting suitable and sustainable development paths. The countries are at different points along the development continuum. The challenge, therefore, is for each country to select a suitable path toward sustainability. How this is done and the time it will take depends on the capacities and capabilities of individual African states. Nevertheless, the newly established AU and NEPAD will have a significant role to play in mapping an overall development framework for the continent. It will then be up to AMCEN to ensure that environmental concerns are adequately addressed in such a framework. AMCEN should provide technical assistance to individual African countries allowing them to design feasible and sustainable development paths within the overall AU framework and the NEPAD. Having a vision or a road map, for the future allows for informed decision making and effective implementation.

C.13 Promotion of good governance

From colonialism and apartheid to one party states and military dictatorships, democratic governance is taking root. This shift is facilitating a better focus on sustainable development. For example, through the efforts of AMCEN and sub-regional organizations, and at national levels, there is now stronger support for the better management of Africa's environment which features prominently in political pronouncements across the continent. Also, in countries where efforts have been made to devolve political power to lower levels, the principles of decentralized environmental management are taking root. However, the capacities of the lower levels of government and community-based organizations will have to be built to equip them for their new roles as environmental planners and managers. Improvements notwithstanding, governments still need to show real political will and commitment to building democratic institutions.

All stakeholders should encourage governments to address the problem of corruption in order to increase resource use efficiency and availability. They need to develop effective governance regimes for sustainable development where these are not in place. They need to provide resources and support for mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve or minimize conflicts, and to satisfy the

needs of refugees and internally displaced people and their host countries. The promotion of peaceful coexistence among and between African states is paramount for the region's development and reduction in poverty and vulnerability. African countries should also define mechanisms for sharing transboundary resources equitably to mitigate against conflict.

C.14 Compliance and enforcement

The history of the management of environmental goods and services indicates that the 'command control' approach has not been very effective unless accompanied by a strong level of compliance enforcement. Although there exists various laws and regulations governing environmental management in Africa, their enforcement is generally weak.

African governments need to create greater and more effective capacity for the enforcement of existing laws and regulations. They need to identify 'carrot and stick' approaches suitable to their own unique situations. AMCEN, in partnership with international and sub-regional organizations, should provide technical assistance to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies and their judiciaries, to allow them to better appreciate their roles in environmental management. Likewise, the capacities of African countries in using economic instruments in environmental management need to be built. By having penalties reflecting the true cost of environmental damage will go a long way to deter inappropriate behaviour.

C.15 Setting targets and monitoring performance

Governments need to demonstrate to the rest of the world, and to their own people, real improvements and success stories in environmental management. This calls for the measurement of performance over time, which in turn requires setting of targets and monitoring of programmes. AMCEN should persuade governments to agree on regional targets for environmental management.

Furthermore, through partnerships with national, sub-regional and international organizations, AMCEN should monitor progress towards the attainment of the agreed targets, at least in the medium term. AMCEN should also seek support for the continued production of the AEO Report as part of the monitoring process. African

governments should support the production of sub-regional state-of-environment reports that would subsequently feed into the AEO process, where such reports do not currently exist. The establishment of targets will assist in the measurement of performance through the AEO report and other mechanisms.

Recommendations/action proposals	Key implementation actors	Timing
C. Promoting Cross-Cutting Actions		
C.1. Enhancement of the coping capacities of Africa's population with regard to adverse environmental changes	African governments	Immediate
C.2. Human resources development and international partnerships	African governments, AMCEN	Immediate to Medium term
C.3. Promotion and enhancement of regional and sub-regional cooperation	AMCEN and international partnerships	Immediate
C.4. Mobilization of domestic financial resources for environmental management	National governments and AMCEN	Immediate
C.5. Enhancement of institutional capacity to coordinate, monitor and supervise environmental management	AMCEN	Immediate
C.6. Promotion of greater involvement of NGOs in environmental management	National governments and AMCEN	Immediate to Medium term
C.7. Greening of development plans and strategies at all levels	National governments and AMCEN	Medium term
C.8. Focus on policy failures	National governments	Immediate
C.9. Promotion of greater public awareness	AMCEN, sub-regional organizations, National governments, and NGOs and CBOs	Immediate and Continuous
C.10. Promotion of environmental education	National governments, and NGOs and CBOs	Immediate and continuous
C.11. Improvement of environmental information systems	National governments, AMCEN and sub-regional organizations	Medium term
C.12. Definition of sustainable development paths for Africa and individual countries	AU, AMCEN, and National governments	Immediate and Medium term
C.13. Promotion of good governance	National governments, AMCEN and sub-regional organizations	Immediate and Medium term
C.14. Compliance and enforcement	National governments	Immediate
C.15. Setting targets and monitoring performance	AMCEN	Immediate

Implementation: opportunities, and constraints

While opportunities exist for implementing the achievable actions specified in previous sections, Africa also faces real barriers and constraints.

Opportunities include:

- the existence of AMCEN and its Secretariat;
- a number of sub-regional organizations are in place and functional;
- the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) initiative;
- enabling environmental policy, legal and regulatory frameworks;
- improved environmental management systems;
- increasing awareness among Africans about the critical role environment plays in their lives;
- improved governance, and greater degree of democratization; and
- goodwill of development partners.

Despite the foregoing opportunities, the following barriers and constraints must be addressed:

- there has been more rhetoric than concrete actions to demonstrate political support for the environment;
- private sector often sees the environment as a public good and bad for profits;
- sectoral and some cross-sectoral policies and strategic plans undermine environmental integrity;
- scarcity of skilled human resources;
- small foreign direct investment inflow;
- environmental monitoring is expensive;
- inadequate or irrelevant environmental information to contribute to policy and political decision making
- reluctance of governments to price natural resources at their full economic value; and
- corruption and mismanagement.

Conditions for operationalizing the recommendations

The AU, AMCEN, national governments, civil society, and development partners all have critical roles to play if the proposed recommendations/actions are to be realized.

The AU Secretariat needs to follow up on the environmental component of the NEPAD in collaboration with AMCEN, UNECA and other relevant regional institutions. AMCEN should, on the other hand, seek ways for effective collaboration and joint programming between the Technical and Scientific Committee on Environment of the AU and AMCEN. Also, AMCEN needs to establish a more sustainable financing mechanism for its programme of work through support from member states. Furthermore, AMCEN needs to encourage member states to endorse the integrated environmental assessment (IEA) methodologies and tools as an effective approach for assessing and reporting on the state of the environment at regional, sub-regional, and national levels. Finally, AMCEN needs to urge member states to recognize and commit themselves to the principle that a healthy and productive environment is a pre-requisite for the success of NEPAD.

African governments need to show greater political will and commitment to solving environmental problems and must be prepared to devote financial and human resources to practical environmental action, including honoring their pledges to AMCEN. They must also address the issue of corruption if they are to improve efficiency in the utilization of resources, and embrace democratic

processes for better governance. African governments, in addition, need to strengthen coordination among policy makers and technocrats responsible for Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economic Planning and Development, and Environment, among others, as a means of moving toward sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated way.

There needs to be better collaboration between international and national NGOs and African governments. NGOs need to be actively involved in sustainable development planning and implementation. The financial resources of international NGOs need to be transparent and accountable as part of national resource envelopes for environmental management.

Development partners need to embrace the concept of collective responsibility for the state of Africa's environment recognizing the contribution of the continent's natural resources to global ecological services and the fact that Africa's poor incur a disproportionate share of the opportunity costs of conservation. Some of the specific areas in which development partners can assist with the implementation of the proposed recommendations/actions include the following: support materially, mechanisms for and processes of conflict prevention, management and resolution; acceleration of debt reduction, improvement of debt relief strategies and reversal of decline of ODA flows to Africa; greater market access and private sector investment; and provision of technical support.

The AEO Process

The AEO report process has been based on wide consultation and participation between UNEP and various partners in the Africa region. It therefore reflects a variety of sub-regional perspectives and priorities. The AEO process involves six collaborating centres (CCs) producing sub-regional state of the environment and policy retrospective reports for Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands. These centres engaged individual and institutional experts at the national and sub-regional level.

Consultants at regional level were then brought into the process to integrate the inputs and produce drafts of the various chapters. Consultations with regional experts, representatives of governments, NGOs and youth groups were organised to review and enhance various aspects of the report.

Internal and external experts from specialised organisations were also involved in the review process of the report to ensure sub-regional balance, scientific credibility, and comprehensiveness.



AMCEN/UNEP IN COLLABORATION WITH:



Association pour le Développement de l'Information
Environnementale (ADIE)
B.P. 4080 Libreville, Gabon
Tel: +241 763040/763019/763032 Fax: +241 774261
E-mail: jpvandeweghe@adie-plgie.org



National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
6th Floor Communications House, 1 Colville Street
P.O. Box 22255, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 41 251064/251065 Fax: +256 41 232680/257521
E-mail: csebukeyera@nemaug.org
www.nemaug.org



Centre for Environment and Development for the
Arab Region & Europe (CEDARE)
21/23 Giza Street, Nile Tower Building 13th Floor, P.O.
Box 52, Orman, Giza, Egypt
Tel: +202 570 1859/570 0979 Fax: +202 570 3242
www.cedare.org.eg



Network for Environment and
Sustainable Development (NESDA)
CBP 95 Guichet Annexe B&D, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Tel: +225 20 54 19 Fax: +225 20 59 22
www.ni.org/nesda



Indian Ocean Commission
Regional Environment Programme (IOC- REP)
Q4, Avenue Sir Guy Forget, Quatre Bornes,
Republic of Mauritius
Tel: +230 425 9564 Fax: +230 425 2709



Southern African Research and
Documentation Centre (SARDC)
India Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for
Southern Africa (IMERCSA)
15 Downie Avenue, Belgravia, P.O. Box 5690
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 4 738 894/5 Fax: +263 4 738 693





African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)
c/o UNEP Regional Office for Africa
P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 2 624616 Fax: +254 2 623928



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 2 621234 Fax: +254 2 623927
E-mail: cpinfo@unep.org