



AMCEN



AU



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## *African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

### **African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

#### **Eighth special session**

Expert and ministerial meetings

Online, 30 November and 4 December 2020

## **Information note for participants**

### **I. Background**

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), established in 1985, promotes regional cooperation between African Governments in addressing environmental challenges confronting the region. The work of AMCEN has supported policy responses by African Governments and the international community to the environmental and sustainable development opportunities and challenges facing the continent. AMCEN meetings provide guidance for the development of key regional policies and initiatives on the environment and sustainable development.
2. The eighth special session of AMCEN will be held online on 30 November and 4 December 2020. The expert group will meet on 30 November and the ministerial meeting will take place on 4 December. Logistical information is provided further below.
3. The session's theme, "Enhancing environmental action for effective post-COVID recovery in Africa", calls for increased environmental action to protect and restore the environment, contribute to building back differently and better, increase resilience in the face of future crises, and steer the continent along a more sustainable path. The goal is to enable countries to make much-needed environmental improvements an integral part of economic recovery.
4. Participants will consider key issues on the agenda of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (22–26 February 2021) with a view to agreeing on a common approach for African countries' engagement in the Assembly. The Assembly aims at consolidating environmental actions in the context of sustainable development and furthering more effective implementation. This is in line with the outcomes of the seventeenth regular session of AMCEN, at which participants called for an action-oriented approach with effective mechanisms for the implementation of environmental policies to fully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.
5. The special session will also provide an opportunity to find common ground in preparation for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in 2021. The Conference comes at a critical time, given the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the increase in the number of zoonotic diseases caused by the unprecedented destruction of natural habitats by human activity. The Conference will work to finalize the post-2020 global biodiversity framework that is expected to play a significant role in building resilience and galvanizing international cooperation.
6. The pandemic presents an opportunity to redirect the global economy on a path towards a more environmentally sustainable and low-carbon developmental trajectory. It is thus critical to redouble efforts to implement commitments by AMCEN and the African Union, with a focus on investing in innovative environmental solutions, including financing and policy interventions to facilitate Africa's recovery from the pandemic. These actions will lay a foundation for long-term contributions to a post-COVID-19 recovery plan for Africa, premised on using natural resources sustainably to rebuild better. It is therefore proposed that a green stimulus programme for Africa be developed and implemented as a priority to contribute to the post-COVID-19 recovery plan for Africa. A draft of this proposal will be considered at the special session.

7. The African Group of Negotiators on climate change will brief ministers on the preparations and key negotiation issues for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in 2021.

8. Participants in the special session are expected to adopt a ministerial statement and key messages reflecting the discussions under the various agenda items.

## **II. Practical information**

### **A. Confirmation of participation in the special session**

9. All participants are strongly encouraged to confirm their participation to the AMCEN secretariat and provide their e-mail address in order to receive the link for joining the meeting.

### **B. Documents**

10. The pre-session documents for the meeting will be sent to the AMCEN national focal points and other confirmed participants prior to the meeting. The documents will also be available on the AMCEN website: <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/conference/eighth-special-session-african-ministerial-conference-environment>.

### **C. Logistical information**

11. The meeting will be conducted in English and French. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French will be provided via the KUDO interpretation platform. (Be sure to download the latest version. Technical support is available via [support@kudoway.com](mailto:support@kudoway.com).) The platform will be open for participants starting at 11 a.m. (UCT + 3) on both meeting days.

12. The following recommendations are to facilitate successful participation in the meeting:

(a) Use a headset (if possible, a noise-cancelling model to prevent the sound from the earpad from being picked up by the microphone). Headsets with earbuds are not recommended unless you are following the meeting from your phone.

(b) Hold the microphone close to your mouth but avoid breathing into it.

(c) Use the Chrome or Firefox browser, ensuring that you have downloaded the latest version.

(d) Use a wired connection or, if that is not available, high-speed Wi-Fi.

(e) Use a quiet room with adequate lighting.

### **D. Associated meeting**

13. An online forum for major civil-society groups and stakeholders, organized by AMCEN, will take place on 26 November 2020. Its outcomes will feed into the discussions of the AMCEN special session.

### **E. Secretariat contacts and further information**

14. For more information about the AMCEN special session please contact the AMCEN secretariat at [unenvironment-amcen@un.org](mailto:unenvironment-amcen@un.org), with copies to [julie.kaibe@un.org](mailto:julie.kaibe@un.org) and [david.ombisi@un.org](mailto:david.ombisi@un.org).