

## **ENGLISH VERSION**

### **AFRICAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS CONTRIBUTION AND KEY MESSAGES TO THE 8TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

#### ***Final Draft***

*We, comprising of Major Groups and Stakeholders from the African region, gathered virtually to discuss how Africa can enhance environmental action for effective post-COVID recovery and our contribution to the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment, agree on the following key messages to AMCEN:*

*Noting with concern* that the IPBES' 2019 IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services finding that Human actions threaten more species with global extinction now than ever before and that by 2100, climate change could also result in the loss of more than half of African bird and mammal species, a 20-30% decline in the productivity of Africa's lakes and significant loss of African plant species and that Africa's extreme vulnerability to the impacts of climate change will have severe consequences for economically marginalized populations in Africa.

*Noting further with concern* the threat that climate change poses to the future existence of humanity, including the negative impact it has on the achievement of sustainable development goals, and the fact that Africa continues to suffer most despite its minimal contribution to global emissions. Climate change is increasingly evident in the increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves, heavy rain, drought, wildfires and coastal flooding events. All of which result in negative impacts to human health, livelihoods, human rights and animal health.

*Deeply conscious* of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa and the need to urgently address threats to the environment particularly wildlife and ecosystems and the opportunity it presents to call for urgent action to tackle multifaceted environmental problems in Africa, which are growingly exacerbated by several interactive forces.

*Alarmed* that the postponement of several global sustainable development and environmental focused events is translating in a lack of support for urgently needed action.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

#### **1. Biodiversity**

- 1.1. **Call for** a well-articulated Declaration from AMCEN that highlights the urgency of action at the highest levels to prevent, halt & reverse the degradation and loss of ecosystems and species; promote conservation and sustainable use of

biodiversity, and ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge in order to contribute to an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and place Africa on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

- 1.2. **Call for** accelerated action aimed at realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and promoting investment in sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems in order to provide services that help people adapt to climate change as part of action to enhance the implementation of the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience which part of Africa's commitment to implementing the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) without jeopardizing benefits for indigenous peoples and local communities.
- 1.3. **Call for** action that promotes participatory, human rights-based, accountable and gender-sensitive and inclusive frameworks for action and demonstrate a commitment to scale up the implementation of the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa through consultations and involvement of civil society, major group and stakeholder in assessment and monitoring of Africa's effort to address biodiversity including efforts to address illegal wildlife and biodiversity trade as a move to promote accountability and ensure strong, implementable, measurable and universally applicable measures to ensure compliance and address environmental crimes.
- 1.4. **Call for** action that addresses the lack of enforcement, the problem of implementation & compliance of environmental law through by the development of comprehensive legal frameworks for nature action at regional and national levels, which builds synergies and coherence across provisions of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, human rights instruments & the Sustainable Development Goals and revolutionize the enforcement of laws related to biodiversity - its interlinkages with climate change, pandemic prevention, poverty and other development issues and objectives.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

## 2. Climate Change

- 2.1. **Urge** African leaders to set the pace, in the context of sustainable development, by driving African climate action towards pursuing and achieving a world on a pathway of resilience, transition to low carbon and carbon neutral economies focused on articulating, kick-starting and pursuing concrete measurable efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.

- 2.2. **Stress the urgency** of strengthening multilevel regional and national environmental governance in Africa for Climate Action.
- 2.3. **Recommend to** invest in education, enhanced institutional capacity building , development of integrated policy instruments, free movement of technological innovation and transfer and mobilization of finance aligned with the long-term finance goals of the Paris Agreement without jeopardizing human rights and development commitments.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

### 3. Plastic Pollution

- 3.1. **Commend** African Ministers' commitment to supporting global action to address plastic pollution including reinforcing existing agreements and the option of a new global agreement on plastic pollution that takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the full life cycle of plastics as stated in the Durban Declaration in the 7th Session of AMCEN.
- 3.2. **Recognise** the convergence of support, including that from the Africa Group representatives, for a new global legally binding agreement on plastic pollution as the preferred response option at the fourth session of the UN Ad-Hoc Expert Group on Marine litter and Microplastics.
- 3.3. **Call for** a Declaration from AMCEN to reinforce African Countries' commitment to work towards a new global response on plastic pollution that takes a comprehensive approach to address the full lifecycle of plastics, from production and design to waste prevention and management, while ensuring coherence and coordination of activities undertaken by existing regional and international instruments. Such a response needs to address technology transfer, research on alternatives to plastic, and adequate financing to enable African countries to implement the agreement. We underscore the need for a global agreement to address, inter alia, technology transfer, research on alternatives to plastic, and adequate financing to enable African countries to implement the agreement. We call for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to start negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

### 4. African Green Stimulus Programme

- 4.1. **Strongly invite** AMCEN to commit to support an inclusive African Green Stimulus to achieve the SDGs targets by 2030 through revitalizing economies

and livelihoods and mainstreaming environmental concerns into all policies and tools promoting economic recovery.

- 4.2. ***Underline*** that there should be a demonstrable plan exploring and utilizing green economy pathways, increasing resource efficiency, environmentally sound business models and sustainable finance, and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change in line with the Paris Agreement.
- 4.3. ***Underscore*** that we all have to work towards enhancing the resilience of our economies and societies to future crises, and contributing to poverty eradication, putting people on a trajectory towards a healthy and harmonious relationship with nature, including when it comes to animal health.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

## 5. Enhancing Implementation of AMCEN Decisions

- 5.1. ***Recognise*** the role that AMCEN has played in providing a platform for the African governments and stakeholders to deliberate, form common position and find solutions to address environment-related challenges at the continental level.
- 5.2. ***Indicate***, based on the preliminary findings of a study conducted within the African Major Groups and Stakeholders,
  - (i) *Our concern* on the inadequate translation of such solutions, in terms of decisions, from the AMCEN level to the respective Member States with limited implementation at the national and sub-national levels.
  - (ii) *Our conviction* that AMCEN should develop and operationalise a robust, clear and transparent monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanism that will regularly track progress, assess the results of implementation of the agreed decisions at the regional and national levels, and document best practices.
  - (iii) *Our Encouragement* to Member States to commit to environment discourse, strengthen their resource mobilisation strategies at the national level and fulfil their annual compulsory contribution of USD 10,000 to the AMCEN's general trust fund,
  - (iv) *Our Invitation* to Member States to strictly curb illicit financial flows from African natural capital that still hamper implementation of environment-related and sustainable development initiatives through a loss of natural and financial resources of up to USD 195 billion annually.

We, African Major Groups and Stakeholders

## 6. The Path Forward

- 6.1. **Call on** the leaders of Africa to commit to and support ambitious, accelerated and transformative action that delivers nature-based solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution for effective and sustainable post-COVID recovery.
- 6.2. **Further call** upon our African governments to foster a strategic partnership with African Major Groups and Stakeholders to further enhance implementation of AMCEN decisions at both regional and national levels. The African governments can leverage on African Major Groups and Stakeholders' technical expertise, networks with key stakeholders, linkages to communities and mobilisation of financial and human resources. To benefit from these, both AMCEN and Member States should enhance the African Major Groups and Stakeholders participation at the AMCEN processes and provide a conducive environment to contribute at the national level from planning, implementation to monitoring and evaluation.