



AMCEN



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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Report of the secretariat for the period from December 2019 to July 2021*

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was established in 1985 and promotes regional cooperation between African Governments and stakeholders in addressing emerging environmental challenges. Through the work of AMCEN, there has been heightened policy responses and actions by Governments, civil society and private sector to transform Africa's sustainable development pathways.
2. The Conference holds its ordinary sessions once every two or three years and provides a platform for African ministers to develop decisions and resolutions to help to move forward the environmental agenda in the region. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Africa serves as the secretariat for the Conference.
3. The aim of the present report is to provide information to participants at the first part of the eighteenth session of the Conference on the status of implementation of decisions adopted by the Conference at its seventeenth session, held in Durban from 11 to 15 November 2019, and its eighth special session, held online on 4 December 2020, and of other activities during the reporting period.
4. The report provides a summary of a number of key activities related to the Conference and their associated outcomes and should in no way be considered exhaustive in terms of the activities that may have been undertaken since the seventeenth session. The report also provides information on key documents produced by the secretariat during the intersessional period. Finally, the report highlights some considerations for the Conference at the first part of the eighteenth session.
5. It is worth noting that the implementation of the decisions and of other activities during the reporting period has to a large extent been negatively affected by the on-going covid-19 pandemic. However, despite the challenges brought by the Pandemic, the work of AMCEN has continued, largely through virtual engagements.

II. Status of implementation of the decisions adopted by the Conference at its seventeenth session

6. The following two decisions were adopted by the Conference at its seventeenth session. Decision 17/1: Taking action for the sustainability of environmental and natural resources in Africa had twelve sections, namely on (i) Taking action on decisions (ii) Blue economy (iii) Circular economy (iv) Bamako Convention (v) Biodiversity (vi) Land degradation, desertification and drought (vii) Maputo Convention (viii) United Nations Environment Assembly (ix) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (x) Poverty, environment, gender

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

and youth (xi) Africa Environment Partnership Platform (xii) Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment thereto.

A. Taking action on decisions

7. The decision called for necessary action to accelerate the implementation of past and future decisions of the Conference. With regard to the implementation of AMCEN decision 13/4, the Conference called on countries that had not yet paid their contributions to urgently meet their obligations and to provide additional resources to the trust fund. To this end, the secretariat continued to engage countries and send reminder letters to the countries to make their contributions to the trust fund. Some outstanding contributions from a few member States have been received.

B. Blue economy

8. The decision welcomed the formulation of the African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy strategy and to contribute towards its implementation in line with the mandate of the Conference, and invited the secretariat of the Conference, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, to prepare a report on the matter, in consultation with member States, taking environmental considerations into account, for consideration by the Conference at its eighteenth session. This will be followed up in due course.

C. Circular economy

9. The decision called for the development of a regional programme to promote and scale up the circular economy and requested the African Union Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic communities and other partners to support that programme. Under guidance of the African Union Commission, and with the participation of other regional partners, an expert working group and terms of reference for the development of a "Regional Framework on Circular Economy" was established and agreed respectively. Two meetings of the working group were held and agreed on a roadmap for the development of a regional action plan on circular economy.

10. An invitation was extended to African countries that are yet to be members of the African Circular Economy Alliance, a country-led coalition of African nations, to join the Alliance in order to strengthen the continental coalition to drive the circular economy agenda in Africa. Several countries have expressed interest to join the Alliance.

D. Bamako Convention

11. The decision requested the United Nations Environment Programme to work closely with the Government of the Republic of Congo, the African Union Commission and other relevant partners in the organization of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention. The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention was organized under the theme "*From decisions to action: working for Africa with a safe chemicals and waste future*", in Brazzaville from 12 to 14 February 2020.

12. The third Conference of the Parties adopted a set of decisions reaffirming the Parties' commitment to strengthen the Convention in order to prevent African countries from receiving unwanted hazardous waste in their territories as well as promoting sound management of chemicals and waste produced within the continent. The Conference acknowledged the updated list of hazardous substances and encouraged Parties to use the list in their national implementation plans of the Bamako Convention.

13. Parties reaffirmed their commitment to take concrete actions to implement decisions adopted at the first and second Conference of the Parties. They also agreed on a common scale to enhance their financial contributions to the Convention. Parties further called upon African States who have not yet ratified the Convention to do so. Parties also agreed to reinforce collaboration and create more synergies between the Bamako Convention and the related Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

E. Biodiversity

14. The decision endorsed the establishment of a core group to facilitate the coordination of the African group of negotiators in developing a common regional position to strengthen Africa's voice on biodiversity. A coordination group comprising UNEP, the African Wildlife Foundation, IUCN, WWF,

AUDA-NEPAD and the African Union Commission was established. UNEP facilitates monthly coordination meetings among these organisations.

15. The African group of negotiators on biodiversity has since been engaging and articulating African perspectives, priorities and common positions during all the meetings of the open-ended working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and in preparations for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A programme on young African fellowship on biodiversity negotiations which intends to integrate the youth in international biodiversity negotiations has been established.

F. Land degradation, desertification and drought

16. The decision requested member States and development partners to support the implementation of land degradation neutrality transformative projects and national drought plans, and to promote appropriate action to combat desertification and drought under the drought initiative of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

17. To this end, an online meeting of Heads of United Nations Entities and multilateral agencies on the Great Green Wall was held on 25 June 2020. All participating entities reiterated their strong commitment to the Great Green Wall Initiative and enhanced coordination and collaboration in support of the initiative. They expressed support for transformational projects and a joint programmatic approach and financial mechanism to scale up efforts.

G. Maputo Convention

18. The decision requested the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the African Development Bank and the WorldWide Fund for Nature, among others, to support the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention.

19. Efforts towards implementing this decision were initiated in early 2020 with the development of a concept note and roadmap for the organization of the Conference of the Parties. However, the preparations were disrupted because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this inaugural meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Maputo Convention has yet to take place.

H. United Nations Environment Assembly

20. The decision encouraged the African group of States to engage and develop a common African approach to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, prior to that session in 2021. It will be noted that due to Covid-19, a two-stage approach of holding a short online session as the first part of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in February 2021 to consider only the medium-term strategy and the programme of work and budget, to be followed by a resumed in-person session in 2022 to consider substantive matters was put in place. Member states and the Africa Group in Nairobi successfully raised Africa's voice and contributed to the outcomes of first part of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

I. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

21. The decision requested the African Union Commission and partners to establish a platform for African negotiators on matters pertaining to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in order to foster a coherent African position and enable African countries to speak with a common voice in global negotiations. This will be followed up in due course.

J. Poverty, environment, gender and youth

22. The decision encouraged the establishment of platforms and networks for women and youth that enhance their involvement in the management of natural resources. To this end, youth in DRC, Nigeria, Togo, and Uganda were given technical assistance in adapting their skills to drive climate action solutions. Part of these interventions entailed the transformation of environmental value chains, including through the conversion of waste to bio-fertiliser to catalyse adaptation in food systems, waste to fuel briquettes.

23. Youth in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda were guided to participate in the development and decentralisation of affordable solar dryers to provide affordable clean energy for agro-value chain actors. In the process, they are not only implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in waste, agriculture and clean energy and creating enterprise opportunities for themselves but also providing data to refine policy by addressing specific bottlenecks to drive practical NDCs.

24. Women groups from the District of Chongoene in Mozambique were empowered and equipped with technical and business skills in renewable energy technology. These women groups are now entrepreneurs in the energy sector where they are selling and distributing solar kits and clean cooking stoves to rural communities and households in Chongoene district.

K. Africa Environment Partnership Platform

25. The decision requested member States and regional institutions to work closely with the African Union Development Agency and the African Union Commission and provide the needed technical and financial support for, and participate in, the multi-stakeholder Africa Environment Partnership Platform and provide the requisite data to enrich the geospatial portal. The African Union Development Agency continued to engage member States to train staff on the use of the geospatial portal.

26. The African Union Development Agency in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo is convening the 2nd edition of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform on 8 and 9 September 2021. The aim of the 2nd edition is to strengthen the coordination mechanisms of the platform through enhanced engagement with its stakeholders, and identify and mitigate special challenges of Covid-19 to the platform and examine opportunities for using the environment as a vehicle for post-covid recovery and sustainability.

L. Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment thereto

27. The decision urged African States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol as soon as possible. Since the AMCEN meeting, several countries (Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Eswatini, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia and Zambia) have ratified the Kigali Amendment.

Decision 17/2 on Climate Change

28. The seventeenth session also adopted decision 17/2 on climate change. This decision and key messages endorsed at the seventeenth session were used as a basis for Africa's common negotiating position during the 25th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25) in Madrid, Spain. A consultative meeting of African ministers was organized in Madrid prior to the start of the high-level segment that provided an opportunity for the African group of negotiators to brief the Ministers on the status of the negotiations.

29. The African group of negotiators made some key submissions on behalf of the continent at the Conference of Parties. For example, the African position on the review of Warsaw Implementation Mechanism where the African group of negotiators submission made it clear on the need for Parties to report to both Conference of Parties and meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (whereas other Parties wanted to report only to the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement) and pushed the item to remain on the agenda (whereas other Parties wanted it closed).

30. The meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA2) agenda was limited to mitigation and reporting and did not include finance or work on adaptation. The African group of negotiators pushed for inclusion of the elaboration of Global Goal on Adaptation which ensured a balance of mitigation and adaptation-which is of key interest to Africa.

31. The African group of negotiators was successful in the advancement of the issue of Africa's Special Needs and Circumstances, and stranded assets and its reflection in the Conference of Parties agenda.

32. Decision 17/2 on climate change also emphasized the benefits of improving air quality, including through managing and, as nationally appropriate, reducing short-lived climate pollutants in the environment, agriculture, health and forest conservation sectors, while responding to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals, noting the need for an assessment of the linkage between policies to address air pollution and policies to address climate change.

33. To this end, communities of practice were established and support was provided for building institutional capacity on improved air quality and air quality assessments. This was realized through the implementation of the pilot project “*Urban Air Quality Monitoring in African cities*”, targeting Addis Ababa, Cape Town and Nairobi. The three pilot cities were supported to formulate legal instruments and frameworks to manage air quality.

III. Implementation of Conference-related activities for the period from December 2019 to July 2021

34. Several Conference-related activities were undertaken during the reporting period, which are highlighted below.

A. Africa Green Stimulus Programme

35. The African Green Stimulus Programme was developed and adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) as an innovative African-led initiative to support the continent’s recovery in a sustainable manner, to the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

36. The programme will provide an overarching framework that will support the implementation of environment and sustainable development initiatives in Africa, while identifying new areas requiring strategic interventions. It is intended to bring about a common and unifying continental response by enhancing and forging cooperation and partnerships between and among African governments, non-state actors, inter-governmental organisations, and the private sector in support of a comprehensive green recovery for Africa.

37. The programme was presented to the special session on environment and natural resources of the African union’s specialised technical committee on agriculture, rural development, water and environment on 13 November 2020. Subsequently, the programme was presented to the African ministers of environment at the eighth special session of the Conference that took place on 4 December 2020 where the ministers welcomed its development, provided inputs, and expressed their general support for the programme. The programme document incorporating the amendments proposed by member States during the special session of the Conference was finalized and eventually adopted as of 31 December 2020.

38. After the eighth special session of the Conference, the programme document was finalized highlighting the objectives of the stimulus programme; the proposed twelve key elements of the programme; institutional arrangements; governance and coordination; as well as the anticipated enabling conditions, assumptions and risks. The document was translated into french with the support of the African Development Bank and shared with all member states.

39. A detailed progress report on the development and implementation of the African green stimulus programme has been prepared as document AMCEN/18.1/4.

B. Development of an African strategy for ocean governance

40. In the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa’s Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, adopted by the Conference at its fifteenth session in 2015, African ministers for the environment agreed to “develop a governance strategy, in accordance with the United Nations CONVENTION on the Law of the Sea and regional seas conventions, on oceans and seas in Africa for the effective management of the region’s shared maritime resources”.

41. In the Nairobi Declaration on Turning Environmental Policies into Action through Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges in Africa, of September 2018, adopted by the Conference at its seventh special session, African ministers for the environment agreed to “urge African States to promote the growth and development of the regional ocean sector in a sustainable blue economy pathway and support the mainstreaming of aquatic biodiversity in all productive sectors with a view to sustainably harnessing the blue economy”.

42. As part of the implementation of the above decisions, two consultative meetings were convened during the reporting period. The second consultative meeting on the development of an African strategy for ocean governance was held online on 21 and 22 October 2020 to discuss possible elements to be included in the strategy.

43. The discussions at this consultative meeting focused on the scope of the strategy, linkages to regional and global structures, cooperation and coordination and the implementation of existing and future strategies. The meeting addressed issues related to ecosystem approach, science for ocean governance as well as stakeholder engagement and blue economy. Meeting participants agreed that the development of the strategy should begin immediately upon the conclusion of the consultative meeting.
44. The third consultative meeting was held online on 15 and 16 June 2021. The purpose of the third meeting was to review the draft strategy, provide inputs and comments, build common ground on its shape and content and provide a way forward for its finalisation.
45. One of the outcomes of the third consultative meeting was the recommendation that a working group be established composed of AUC, UNEP, UNECA, AUDA-NEPAD and AMCEN secretariat to review and finalise the revised draft strategy before it is submitted to members states and stakeholders at the fourth consultative meeting scheduled to take place in December 2021. UNEP is currently incorporating the comments from the third consultative meeting into the revised draft strategy. A fourth consultative meeting is planned for December 2021 before submission of the draft strategy to the next session of AMCEN.
46. It is expected that after the conclusion of the regional consultations, a final draft strategy will be prepared and reviewed by all member States and other stakeholders before submission to the Conference and the African Union for endorsement.

IV. Conventions

Bamako convention

47. The Bureau of Conference of Parties to the Bamako Convention met online on 10 September 2020 and 16 March 2021. The meetings followed reports of the illicit trafficking of 282 containers of hazardous household waste to Tunisia from Italy and the illegal disposal of 119,000 tonnes of contaminated plastic waste to Liberia from Greece in violation of the provisions of the Bamako Convention, which bans the importation of hazardous waste into Africa.
48. The objectives of the meetings were to receive full updates from the two parties to the Bamako Convention about these situations, discuss the available courses of action and make concrete recommendations on the possible mechanisms to be adopted to ensure that the waste leaves the territory of the African continent.
49. During these meetings, the Bureau called upon African countries to increase vigilance to protect the continent from illegal dumping of medical and hazardous waste, especially during the ongoing health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Bureau cautioned that the current Covid-19 health crisis is generating huge amounts of hazardous medical waste as well as increased use of plastics which may cause serious health and environmental consequences in Africa.
50. In view of the illicit exportation of hazardous waste materials to Tunisia and Liberia, the Bureau urged the two countries to use every diplomatic and legal means, including through the African Union, AMCEN, the European Union, and the implementation and compliance committee of the Basel convention, to stop the hazardous waste dumping in Africa.
51. The Bureau called upon UNEP, the AU, AMCEN and other international, regional and sub-regional bodies to lobby for the continent-wide ratification/accession to the Bamako convention as well as its subsequent domestication to prevent Africa from being an easy target for illegal dumping of hazardous waste from outside the continent and to accelerate the implementation of national and regional plans for the management of hazardous waste.
52. The President of the Bureau sent a letter to the President of the Bureau of AMCEN to bring these two cases of illicit trafficking of hazardous waste to the attention of the Bureau of AMCEN and to request cooperation and collaboration between the Bamako convention and AMCEN to support Liberia and Tunisia in their efforts to repatriate the hazardous wastes back to the countries of origin.

V. Outcomes and outputs of Conference-related meetings

A. Eighth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

53. The 8th special session of the Conference took place online on 30 November and 1 December 2020 for the experts and 4 December 2020 for the ministerial segment under the theme “*Enhancing environmental action for effective post-Covid-19 recovery in Africa*”. The theme was to encourage countries to take 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 make the environment an integral part of their economic recovery to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was attended by 42 member states with 30 at ministerial level. A pre-AMCEN major groups and civil society meeting was held on 26 November 2020.

54. The meeting supported the proposal for the holding a short virtual fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) session in February 2021 to consider only the Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work and Budget and a physical session in 2022 to consider substantive matters. It was also highlighted that the Africa region will assume the presidency of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) and hence the need to agree on the African country to be nominated for the Presidency.

55. The meeting welcomed the process to develop an ambitious and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on biodiversity (CBD COP15) and agreed to continue working with the global community through the African group of negotiators on biodiversity to secure a robust, ambitious and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework in order to reverse biodiversity loss by the year 2030.

56. The special session emphasized the special needs and circumstances of Africa should be recognised and agreed to continue, under the leadership of the African group of negotiators on climate change, to effectively participate in the climate change negotiation process leading to the 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26). The meeting called for the finalization of the revised African climate change strategy led by the African Union Commission before COP26 through consultations with member states and relevant stakeholders. The meeting agreed to fully support the African member state that will host COP 27 in 2022.

57. The session recognized that the Covid-19 pandemic had placed additional pressure on Africa’s socio-economic development and efforts to achieve sustainable development and called for continued efforts to conserve, protect and enhance the resilience of Africa’s environment in order to avoid similar crises in future. The session agreed to adopt the continental-wide Africa green stimulus programme to support the continent’s recovery to the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 in a sustainable manner.

58. The session emphasized the need to align and integrate biodiversity conservation, climate action, waste and sustainable resource management, amongst others, as priorities in the post-Covid recovery phase in Africa.

59. At the end of their meeting, the ministers adopted a ministerial statement and key messages focusing on the items on the agenda and other key issues.

B. Meetings of the Bureau of the Conference

60. Two formal meetings of the Bureau of the Conference were held during the reporting period. The thirtieth meeting of the Bureau of the Conference took place on 28 May 2020 while the thirty-first meeting of the Bureau of the Conference took place from 26 to 27 May 2021. Outcome statements of the key issues discussed at these Bureau meetings were circulated to all member States.

1. Thirtieth meeting of the Bureau of the Conference

61. An online meeting of the Bureau of the Conference was convened by H.E. Ms. Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa and President of the AMCEN on 28 May 2020, to discuss Africa’s response to Covid-19 from the environment perspective.

62. The meeting was attended by all the Bureau countries namely Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, South Africa and Sudan. It was also attended by the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency (NEPAD-AUDA), UNEP and AMCEN Secretariat.

63. The Bureau expressed its concern that Covid-19 posed a serious challenge to achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The containment measures in Africa had consequences on the environment, due to waste from used face masks and gloves, and pollution because of chemicals being used to spray and sanitize places and buildings.

64. Due to Covid-19, key environmental meetings such as the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on biodiversity (CBD COP15), the Fifth Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) and 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) had been postponed. The postponement of these meetings was a concern as the international community was losing critical time to address the challenges associated with biodiversity loss, climate change and chemicals management, among other issues. To this end, the Bureau re-iterated the need to enhance the implementation of decisions of the Conference, including decisions emanating from the seventeenth session of the Conference that took place from 11 to 15 November 2019 in Durban, South Africa, which could contribute to Africa's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

65. The Bureau took note of the theme for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) which focuses on nature-based solutions in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and agreed to ensure Africa's effective engagement during the first part of UNEA-5, as this theme addresses the priority of utilizing Africa's rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems.

66. The Bureau observed that Covid-19 presented an opportunity to reset the global economy on a pathway towards a more environmentally sustainable and low-carbon developmental trajectory. Consequently, the Bureau agreed on the development of a green stimulus programme as a priority initiative to contribute to the overall Covid-19 recovery plan for Africa.

2. Thirty-first meeting of the Bureau of the Conference

67. During its thirty-first meeting that was held online on 26 and 27 May 2021, the Bureau of the Conference reviewed implementation of the decisions of the eighth special session of the Conference held on 4 December 2020 and discussed developments and emerging issues.

68. The Bureau acknowledged the progress made towards the operationalization of the African green stimulus programme and reiterated the importance of the programme to support the continent's recovery from the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in a sustainable manner.

69. The Bureau took note of the need to align the stimulus programme to Africa's agenda 2063 and recommended the inclusion of a key result area on disaster risk management, as well as strengthening of plastic use and management. In their deliberations, the Bureau called upon member States to actively engage in the global actions to combat plastic pollution, including through support for a global agreement to address plastic waste and to prepare for common African positions for global discussions on this issue.

70. The Bureau recognized that the 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) offered an opportunity for countries to scale up ambition to address climate change and encouraged the African group of negotiators on climate change to continue advocating for the interests of Africa. The Bureau acknowledged that African countries remained committed to updating their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

71. The Bureau appreciated the work of the African group of negotiators on biodiversity who have continued their engagements to formulate common African positions on key biodiversity issues. The Bureau emphasized the importance of finalizing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the need to ensure Africa's concerns are taken into consideration, including means of implementation, together with set targets which should be an integral part of the framework.

72. The Bureau reiterated the decisions on biodiversity made at the seventeenth session of the Conference and for the Africa group of negotiators to continue developing common positions on key issues including resource mobilization, raising the levels of ambition, biodiversity and human health linkages, local community participation, as well as the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The Bureau supported the proposal to hold an extraordinary session of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP15) to be organized in a virtual format in December 2021, to adopt an interim budget while understanding that the Conference of the Parties will be rescheduled to a later date in 2022.

73. The Bureau took note of the outcomes of the first part of the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly, which took place online on 22 to 23 February 2021, especially on the procedural decisions, namely, the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for 2022 to 2025, programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022 to 2023; management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; and adjournment and resumption of the fifth session of the Assembly to February 2022. In this regard, the Bureau urged African member states, at the earliest moment, to express their willingness to represent the region and serve on the Bureau of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, including its Presidency.

74. The Bureau, considering the on-going spread and impacts of Covid 19 pandemic, recommended the convening of the eighteenth session of AMCEN in two parts, that is, part one during the week of 13 to 17 September 2021 (in an online format) to deliberate on urgent and procedural matters, and part two to be held between June and October 2022 (in a physical format) to deliberate on substantive matters.

VI. Considerations for the Conference at the first part of its eighteenth session

75. The urgency to accelerate progress, in turning decisions to action cannot be overstated. Effective implementation of the decisions of the Conference and the African green stimulus programme is key in supporting the continent's recovery in a sustainable manner, to the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

76. Member states should take immediate steps to clear the arrears and sustain their contributions to the trust fund of the Conference which is one of the mechanisms available for financing for the implementation of the decisions of the Conference, including the Africa green stimulus programme.

77. The present report is submitted for noting and consideration by the Conference at its first part of the eighteenth session. An updated version of the report will be submitted by the Secretariat for further consideration by the Conference at the resumed in-person second part of the eighteenth session in 2022.
