

Decision 18/1: Omnibus decision on enhancing the role of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

We, African ministers of the environment,

Having met in Dakar on 15 and 16 September 2022 at the resumed eighteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the outcomes of the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Durban from 11 to 15 November 2019,

Recalling also Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its twenty-fourth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2015,

Recalling further resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly, in which Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the sustainable development goals,

Recalling also the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the third international conference on financing for development held 27 July 2015, which aimed at strengthening the framework for financing of sustainable development and the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development,

Recalling the “Nairobi declaration on turning environmental policies into action through innovative solutions for environmental challenges in Africa” adopted at the seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Nairobi, 19 September 2018, where the ministers for the environment urged member States to invest in innovative approaches and accelerate implementation of innovative solutions to environmental challenges so as to unlock inclusive wealth, build climate resilience and support the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Decide:

Decision 18/1(a): Fostering sustainable soil governance in Africa

Recognizing the importance of soils for the survival of human beings and for protecting the environment and its resources,

Recalling Decision 17/1/V paragraph 19 of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment that adopted the Pan-African action agenda on ecosystem restoration for increased resilience as Africa’s commitment to implement the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030,

Recognizing that degradation of soil resources has been on the rise in Africa due to natural and anthropogenic causes,

Aware of the need of African countries to strengthen their soils management plans and programmes including information and data management,

Acknowledging the importance of strengthening national and regional policies and strategies on sustainable land management and,

Stressing the urgent need to enhance sustainable soil governance for protecting biodiversity, providing ecosystem services, food systems, combating climate change and pollution as well as promoting land degradation neutrality and the achievement of the sustainable development goals, among others.

Decide:

1. To urge member States to strengthen national policy, institutional and legislative measures to protect soils and optimally utilize soils for maximized socio-economic dividends.
2. To encourage member States to enhance public awareness, build capacity on sustainable soil management, and create relevant incentives for resource efficiency in soil-dependent socio-economic activities.

3. To urge member States to establish mechanisms for collection of scientific data and information on sustainable soil management to inform policymaking.
4. To request member States to cooperate in the development of regional frameworks, plans and programmes on sustainable soil management.
5. To encourage civil society, the private sector, the youth, women, and other stakeholders to raise awareness and promote sustainable soils management among the population.
6. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, other United Nations Agencies, and development partners to support member States in enhancing awareness, mobilization of technical and financial resources and development of national and regional frameworks, plans and programme on sustainable soil management.

Decision 18/1(b): Towards phasing out open burning of waste in Africa

Recognizing that Africa should benefit from an integrated waste management ecosystem, supported by a comprehensive framework and sufficient infrastructure, funding and capabilities,

Acknowledging the direct implication of waste management with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and therefore on climate change, biodiversity, human health, food systems, resource scarcity, social and economic development,

Acknowledging the direct and indirect implications of waste management on achieving the sustainable development goals and Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want,

Recognizing that open dumping and burning of waste occurs widely in Africa due to poor waste management,

Appreciating that a large amount of waste generated in urban areas of Africa is recyclable and that only a small amount of the waste is recycled mainly by informal waste service providers and recyclers,

Noting that open dumping and burning of waste is a significant source of pollution that contributes to premature deaths in Africa particularly affecting vulnerable populations and marginalized communities,

Further noting that methane emissions from open dumps and landfills as well as decomposing organic waste contribute to climate change,

Recalling the 10-year implementation plan for 2014–2023 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union which set an ambitious aspiration that by 2023 African cities will recycle at least 50 per cent of the waste they generate,

Appreciating the work of the United Nations climate change high-level champions in facilitating collaboration between non-state actors and national and local governments in the fulfillment of commitments to address climate change through, among others, multi stakeholder partnerships and fully phased out open burning of waste by 2050,

Recognizing the need to address structural and institutional deficiencies in waste management through a holistic approach and promoting circularity through the use of waste as a resource for value and job creation so as to build more inclusive and sustainable economies,

Noting that the context of extreme climate emergencies and the consequences on biodiversity require an implementation framework in order to accelerate the effective execution of decisions taken by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recognizing the important role of local authorities in anchoring and effectively implementing decisions on the ground regarding sustainable waste management and plastic waste management,

Welcoming the efforts made by local government organizations to mobilize cities and contribute to the strengthening of the framework of inter-city decentralized cooperation in the field of waste,

Noting the findings of the report on integrated assessment of air pollution and climate change for sustainable development in Africa, in response to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment decision 17/2, which

urges that countries support the development and implementation of the 37 recommended measures as a continent-wide Africa clean air program, coordinated with strong country-led initiatives, cascaded to the regional economic communities and higher levels of policy setting.

Decide:

1. To encourage member States to mobilize and allocate the financial resources needed to develop the required institutional frameworks and physical infrastructures for efficient and integrated waste management systems.
2. To promote public education, capacity building and awareness creation at all levels of society on the health and environmental impacts of open waste burning with particular focus on those affecting vulnerable communities and populations.
3. To support private enterprises and informal waste service providers, with particular focus on women and youth groups, to actively engage in reprocessing of waste into valuable products that can create jobs, generate incomes, and sustain livelihoods.
4. To urge member States to eliminate open dumping and burning of waste through the strengthening and implementation of integrated solid waste management systems, policies and legislation including promotion of incentives for reuse of waste as a secondary resource input.
5. To urge member States to strengthen monitoring and assessment of the state of atmospheric pollution in Africa, particularly on methane and black carbon emissions, and its associated impacts on health and the environment.
6. To encourage member States, local authorities, civil society actors, community groups, private sector, and development partners to join the multi-stakeholder partnership in eliminating open waste burning and dumping of wastes.
7. To encourage member States, and all the relevant local, national and regional, stakeholders to join the Global Waste Initiative 50 by 2050 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change advocated by the COP-27 presidency, to achieve the 50 percent treatment and recycling target for solid waste generated on the continent by 2050, and further encourage member States and stakeholders to implement, as appropriate, necessary actions, in line with national circumstances, to address systemic deficiencies in waste management.
8. To request development partners, including the African Development Bank, the Resilience and Sustainable Trust of the International Monetary Fund and the Green Climate Fund, to support African countries to reduce methane and black carbon emissions associated with waste with a focus on reducing open burning of waste.
9. To invite waste management stakeholders to support efforts of local government organizations to accelerate effective implementation of decisions related to chemicals, waste, and plastics of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

Decision 18/1(c): Environmental solutions to antimicrobial resistance in Africa

Recognizing that the increasing anti-microbial resistance in human and animal life is a major health threat globally and in African countries,

Noting that antimicrobial resistance is an emerging issue of importance to the Africa region and that there is need to provide leadership on enhancing the environmental dimensions in the fight against antimicrobial resistance,

Noting the new tripartite definition of one-health approach as endorsed by United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/6 on biodiversity and health and the World Health Organization global action plan on anti-microbial resistance,

Taking note of 14/4 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity that adopted the global action plan for biodiversity and health,

Noting the need to agree on measures for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and digital sequence information shared under the one-health approach,

Aware that effective sustainable use, conservation, and restoration of biodiversity can result in improvements in health outcomes and benefits, and can be an effective means of promoting a healthier, more equitable and sustainable world,

Recognizing that mainstreaming of biodiversity-health linkages into national policies strategies, and programmes is crucial in promoting an integral approach to health,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/4 on environment and health, which notes that human, animal and plant health and the environment are interconnected; the World Health Assembly resolution 72/5; the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 5/1, on animal welfare and resolution, 5/6 on biodiversity and health that encourage awareness and understanding of the importance of addressing antimicrobial resistance,

Acknowledging the need for member States, stakeholders, and the general population in Africa to take ambitious and collaborative action to prevent and minimize the adverse impacts of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change in order to prevent and minimize anti-microbial resistance.

Decide:

1. To request the tripartite partnership for one health, in collaboration with the Secretariat, the African Union Commission and other partners, to undertake a regional assessment of environmental dimensions of antimicrobial resistance to identify medical and veterinary products with negative impacts to biodiversity as well as contamination hotspots taking into account the best practices.
2. To encourage member States and other relevant stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding of the need to address the threats of anti-microbial resistance to human, animal, plant, and environmental health.
3. To urge member States to consider one-health approach and the implications of genetic resources in addressing anti-microbial resistance in Africa by:
 - a. Strengthening participation of the environment sector in national coordination mechanisms, development and review of anti-microbial resistance specific policies, strategies, action plans, reporting, surveillance, and monitoring,
 - b. Reducing and minimizing release of pollutants from human and animal health sectors into the environment, and to integrate effective waste, wastewater, and vector control management systems,
 - c. Enhancing governance, planning and regulatory frameworks on the environment so as to strengthen multi-level coordination and intersectoral coherence in combating anti-microbial resistance including enhanced synergy in policy actions between the key sectors involved, such as land, agriculture, animal production, health, and the environment.
4. To invite member States, partners, and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to prioritize sustainable financing, research and innovation, capacity building, technology development and technology transfer to address the environmental aspects of antimicrobial resistance.
5. To request United Nations agencies, academia, scientific and research institutions, private sector, and civil society, to address gaps in knowledge and awareness on antimicrobial resistance to inform decision-making on prioritizing interventions to prevent and mitigate anti-microbial resistance and its spread in the environment.
6. To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to develop capacity enhancement programmes for Africa to enhance awareness and understanding of the importance of addressing antimicrobial resistance.

Decision 18/1(d): Strengthening collaboration with the African Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning

Recognizing that the planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss desertification, pollution and waste are exerting pressure on African countries to exploit their natural capital at the expense of achieving environmental protection and climate change ambitions,

Aware that the coronavirus (*COVID-19*) pandemic reversed the gains achieved by African countries in the attainment of the sustainable development goals, especially in relation to poverty, health, education, and employment, which in turn affects the gains made over the years in environmental protection,

Noting that environmental issues are too large to be addressed by any single entity, but rather requires concerted efforts of all sectors to foster joint actions and interventions to contribute to building Africa's prosperity,

Acknowledging that environment action is an enabler for socio-economic development requiring harmonization of policies and coherent implementation of actions across various sectors,

Noting further that the environment plays a strategic role in providing practical, affordable, and innovative solutions to bridge gaps in Africa's socio-economic development,

Acknowledging that alliances between finance, economic development and environment sectors can offer opportunities to accelerate environment and climate action for achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Noting that the fifty-fourth session of the conference of African ministers of finance, planning and economic development held in Dakar 11 to 17 May 2022 called for accelerated action and strengthened partnerships.

Decide:

1. That a joint session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the Conference of African Ministers for Finance, Planning and Economic Development be convened to forge innovative policy directions and actions to accelerate socio-economic and environmental development of and green investments and the mobilization of climate finance in the continent.
2. To engage the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development with a view to accelerate a sustainable, long-term formal collaboration that will ensure impactful, innovative socio-economic and environmental transformation in Africa.
3. To request the President to hold meetings with the Bureau of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on collaboration with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
4. To request the secretariat to engage with the secretariat of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, and the African Union Commission on collaboration with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
5. To urge member States to develop incentives and innovative financing mechanisms for the environment and sustainable development to increase domestic fiscal and non-fiscal resource mobilization capacity for green investments.
6. To urge the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the Ministers of Finance Planning and Economic Development to develop a common African framework on sustainable budgeting to support mobilization of resources to facilitate coherent implementation of the priorities of UN Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the African green stimulus programme, nationally determined contributions, and national adaptation plans.

Decision 18/1(e): Enhancing the role of environment protection agencies in Africa

Recognizing that environment protection agencies (that is, government authorities, institutions, or entities entrusted with management, protection, enforcement, and compliance of the environment) play a critical role in enhancing, protecting, and promoting the environment,

Recalling the decision of the seventeenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to convene the first meeting of the conference of the parties to the 2003 Maputo African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources,

Recognizing that achieving long-term sustainable development in Africa will depend on effective implementation of environmental programmes, decisions and resolutions that have been agreed upon at national, regional, and global levels,

Recognizing that implementation of the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment decisions requires enhancing partnerships at national, regional, and global levels including with local authorities, development partners, private sector, foundations, and philanthropic institutions,

Acknowledging that environment protection agencies are a major custodian of scientific data and information that is necessary for policy and decision making as well as for development planning, and

Determined to support the work of environment protection agencies in implementing regional and global decisions and resolutions as well as in ensuring compliance and enforcement.

Decide:

1. To establish a forum that brings together heads of environment protection agencies in Africa to share experiences, knowledge exchange and best practices, advance science to policy interface, mobilize partnerships, and to find solutions on technical and operational challenges.
2. To urge member States to support environment protection agencies in implementation of decisions and resolutions adopted at regional and global levels, such as African ministerial conference on the environment, the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, the United Nation Environment Assembly and the various multilateral environmental agreements to which the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment member States are parties.
3. To urge member States to support environment protection agencies to ensure monitoring, enforcement, and compliance with national, regional, and global environmental commitments as appropriate.
4. To urge member States to support environment protection agencies to promote the utilization of appropriate and innovative methods for integrating, manipulating, and interpreting scientific data and information to enable sound policy and decision making as well as for development planning.
5. To request the United Nations Environment Programme, other United Nations agencies, African Union, and development partners to support the forum of heads of environment protection agencies.
6. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency, United Nations Environment Programme and other partners to convene the first meeting of the conference of Parties of the Maputo African Convention on the Conservation of nature and Natural Resources, to inter alia, consider providing additional support to the forum and its programme of work.

Decision 18/1(f): Review of the rules of procedure of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Recalling the first session of the conference in 1985 where the rules of procedure were adopted and the seventh session in 1997 where the Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was adopted,

Recognizing the crucial role that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment is playing in leading and advocating for Africa's positions and interests in the areas of Environment and sustainable development, at all levels including its active involvement in global negotiations on multilateral environment agreements,

Acknowledging that in accordance with Article 35 of the Constitution, the Secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and depository of the constitution is the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recalling the African Union Executive Council and Assembly of Heads of States and Governments decisions regarding the realignment of the African Union institutions,

Taking note of the important role of United Nations Environment Programme as secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in providing support in terms of technical assistance, financial resources, mobilization, networking and enhancing the visibility of the Conference,

Recalling previous sessions of the Conference, that is, the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth sessions, where decisions were adopted to revise the Constitution to forge cooperative links between the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union structures and to harmonize the relations with the United Nations Environment Programme,

Aware that the Constitution and rules of procedure of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment have not been reviewed since their adoption yet there have been several changes in the policy, legal and institutional arrangements of the environment sector at national, continental, and global levels.

Decide:

1. That the rules of procedure of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment be reviewed to identify areas that require revision in line with the Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
2. To request the secretariat, in collaboration with the Bureau, and in consultation with member States, to review the rules of procedure and make recommendations to the next ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for consideration.

Decision 18/1(g): Provisional agenda, date, and venue of the Nineteenth session of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Recalling the first ordinary session of the Conference that decided to institutionalize the Conference and agreed to meet once every two years,

Further recalling decision 2/1 of the Conference that decided that future sessions of the Conference could be held outside Nairobi if an appropriate offer is made by an African Government,

Recognising the importance of continued actions in delivering innovative environmental solutions to emerging challenges and the important role the Conference plays in delivering the environmental dimensions of UN Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want and Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the region,

Emphasizing that strengthening implementation of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment decisions requires deliberate steps and actions,

Noting that the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly will be held on February 2024 and the need for the Conference to provide policy guidance and decide on Africa's common position.

Decide:

1. To hold the nineteenth ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at a date time to be determined by the Bureau in consultation with host country,

2. To request the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to decide on the format and agenda of the nineteenth ordinary session,
3. To welcome the offer by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to host the nineteenth session of the Africa Ministerial Conference of the Environment.

ADVANCE