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## *African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

**Thirteenth session**  
Bamako, 21–25 June 2010

# **Report of the ministerial segment held from 23 to 25 June 2010**

## **Introduction**

1. The ministerial segment of the thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held at the International Conference Centre in Bamako from 23 to 25 June 2010.
2. It was attended by representatives of AMCEN member States and representatives of African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations agencies, secretariats of various environmental conventions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The full list of participants at the thirteenth session may be found in document UNEP/AMCEN/13/INF/6.

## **I. Opening of the ministerial segment of the thirteenth session**

3. The opening ceremony began at 4.15 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 June 2010, with an introduction by the master of ceremonies. That introduction was followed by a musical performance featuring Malian musicians and dancers.
4. Opening statements were made by Mr. Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico; Mr. Jonathan Pershing, special representative of the President of the United States of America; Ms. Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Environment of South Africa and President of AMCEN; Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ms. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission; Mr. Idriss Ndele Moussa, President of the Pan-African Parliament; and Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of Mali.
5. In his statement, Mr. Elvira, referring to Mexico's role as the host nation of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, stressed that dialogue with Africa was vital because climate change affected the continent in every way. He expressed the hope that discussions in Cancún would put in place mechanisms for green growth and reinvigorate, deliver and mediate for specific actions for the coming years. The meeting was expected to provide a global and balanced package with renewed understanding between parties, increased levels of expertise and mutual respect. He stressed that the initiative to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, including agriculture and land management (REDD-plus), could effectively eradicate poverty and that financial support must be made available, both immediately and over time.
6. In his statement, Mr. Pershing, acknowledging the agreement on the need for clean air, clean water and sustainable land use, not just for the present generation but also for those to come, stressed that all countries had a special responsibility to solve the pressing problems related to those issues and affirmed the commitment of the United States to helping Africa to overcome the challenges that it faced. United States policies on climate issues were not narrowly focused but took a synergistic approach, incorporating energy security, the creation of new jobs and the promotion of sustainable land management. Hailing the Copenhagen Accord as an unparalleled agreement, he said that it provided a forum for developed and developing countries to move forward together, to strengthen efforts to control emissions and radically to scale up financing. While there remained no full consensus on all aspects of the Accord, all the countries involved should hold themselves and one another accountable for fulfilling

their commitments and reviewing the adequacy of the Accord's long-term goal. He stressed that countries had differing responsibilities and capabilities and that all needed to use their voices to create a common vision to ensure a better future for the generations to come.

7. In her statement, the President of AMCEN outlined the progress made since the twelfth session of AMCEN and lauded the accomplishments over that period, including the development of the African common negotiating position in the climate change talks. The development of the Africa comprehensive framework on climate change programmes constituted a first-ever attempt to provide a coordinated response for the continent and would put Africa in a position to achieve optimum results in adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer throughout the continent. Looking to other areas, she said that synergies between the Rio conventions should be accorded prominence in the AMCEN programme of work and that linkages should be made with other multilateral environmental agreements. She urged Africa to retain its united position on the issue of access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity and welcomed the expected establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services as a means of strengthening the science-policy interface and generating and sharing knowledge. She emphasized the urgency of dealing with the challenges faced by AMCEN and the importance of the process of integration between the African Union Commission and AMCEN. It was the responsibility of AMCEN to provide the leadership to convert public will into political will and political will into action, always bearing in mind that the priority for Africa was poverty alleviation.

8. Mr. Steiner, in his statement, remarked on the anomalous situation of Africa: while the continent had little influence on the world stage, with its population of 1 billion and immense natural wealth it represented a huge resource and not just a challenge, and the rest of the world had yet to come to terms with that reality. He called upon African ministers to resist the thinking that Africa had always to be the passive recipient in global transactions and that progress must always occur at the expense of the environment. In that context, he predicted that in years to come ministers of environment would be among the most powerful ministers in any cabinet as they would be the ones defining economic choices. Reviewing successful projects mounted in Africa, including the rejuvenation of the Lake Faguibine ecosystem in Mali, he expressed the hope that the green economy initiative would be pioneered on the continent.

9. Given that natural resources were dwindling, food security threatened and the very future of the planet itself placed in jeopardy, he said that business as usual was emphatically no longer an option and called upon African ministers to take the lead in such issues as REDD, climate change and biodiversity. The voice of Africa, he said, must be clearly heard at the major forthcoming environment meetings, bringing solutions and rejecting excuses not to act. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, Africa would stand proud as the pioneer of climate change innovations and solutions. He stated his belief that the next set of global environmental governance instruments would be shaped in Africa.

10. In her statement, Ms. Peace Tumusiime drew attention to the increasingly complex challenges being faced by Africa that demanded urgent action from its best technological minds and international partners. The environment being the very source of Africa's livelihood, environmental pollution, together with drought and flooding, affected health and reduced productivity and growth. To reverse the trends of climate change and climate variability and alleviate their impacts, Africa needed to shift the emphasis towards the green economy, for which resources would be required. She called for Africa to design new tools and to take new initiatives, treating climate change as a challenge and indeed as an emergency, given that the very survival of Africans was at stake. It was essential to strike a balance between agriculture and climate change. In establishing a united front on crucial issues, Africa was also working towards developing a disaster risk reduction agenda. In conclusion, she drew attention to the status of AMCEN as a specialized technical committee of the African Union, noting that the modalities of its operation would be discussed during the current session.

11. Mr. Ndele Moussa, in his statement, examined the role of the Pan-African Parliament in relation to climate change. He said that, once the Parliament had become a body with legislative powers, in 2011, it would be in a position to help meet the challenges of climate change in the context of its core business of dealing with issues related to democracy, good governance, environment and human rights. On the issue of the environment, he noted that climate change spelled disaster, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children. Biodiversity issues affected food production and security, raising the issues of biotechnology and genetically modified crops. The Parliament, as part of its supervisory and legislative role, would help to enforce the implementation of programmes against degradation, a significant issue currently afflicting Africa. He stressed that, following the disappointing outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, a common African position needed to be upheld, and the Parliament would assist in the matter.

12. Following the delivery of opening statements, there was a musical interlude. Following that interlude, Mr. Touré was awarded a special prize by UNEP for his services to the environment.

13. Accepting the award, Mr. Touré gave a statement in which he congratulated Africa on the successful football World Cup competition being held in South Africa, describing the hosting of the event as a prize in itself. Speaking of his award, he professed himself touched but said that there were many who deserved it as much as he, notably the young people of Mali, in addition to those involved in the water and forestry sectors. He spoke of the role of Africa in raising awareness of climate change and, in particular, the extremely important role of the ministers of environment. He went on to highlight the pressing issue of desertification, offering a personal experience of how that phenomenon had made inroads over the past 50 years, but deploring that climate change was robbing Africa not only of its land, rivers and crops, but also of its associated cultural heritage. Addressing the continent's young people, who represented the future, he said that they must become eco-warriors in daily life, ensuring that all development activities had an environmental component. Noting that the current session provided an opportunity to reaffirm Africa's common positions and to work together for its future negotiations with the rest of the world, he saluted the work of AMCEN in support of African efforts to reverse the adverse effects of climate change. He declared the session officially open at 6.15 p.m.

## II. Organizational matters

### A. Election of officers

14. The following countries were elected to serve on the Bureau of AMCEN for the period 2010-2012:

| Subregion       | Country                     | Position       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Central Africa  | Chad                        | Vice-President |
| Eastern Africa  | United Republic of Tanzania | Vice-President |
| North Africa    | Algeria                     | Vice-President |
| Southern Africa | Malawi                      | Vice-President |
| West Africa     | Mali                        | President      |

15. Mr. Tiémoko Sangaré, Minister of Environment and Sanitation of Mali, on assuming the presidency, congratulated Ms. Sonjica on her sterling work as President of AMCEN. He said that the rich and compelling debates that had taken place under the auspices of AMCEN were of crucial importance for the future of Africa and, indeed, the planet. He drew attention to the presence of representatives of the European Union, Mexico, the United States and UNEP at the current session as evidence of Africa's growing solidarity with the international community. He referred to the significant progress made towards a common African position on access and benefit-sharing, underlining the importance in that regard of capacity-building in preparation for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and drawing attention to the importance for Africa of adaptation and the need for appropriate national arrangements to manage adaptation funds. In conclusion, he invited all representatives to attend the first African Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in Bamako in November 2010.

### B. Adoption of the agenda

16. The representatives adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (UNEP/AMCEN/13/1):

1. Opening of the thirteenth session.
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Election of officers;
  - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
  - (c) Organization of work.

3. Consideration of the report on the implementation of the decisions of the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
4. Consideration of the report of the expert group meeting.
5. Ministerial policy dialogue on aspects of the implementation of the Rio conventions:
  - (a) Climate change: international climate regime beyond 2012;
  - (b) International regime on access and benefit-sharing;
  - (c) Desertification.
6. Consideration of matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment process:
  - (a) Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
  - (b) Amendments to the draft constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
  - (c) Consideration of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as part of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment of the African Union and related matters.
7. Venue for the fourteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
8. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment.
9. Other matters.
10. Closure of the session.

### C. Organization of work

17. The President of AMCEN introduced the draft programme of work and the list of documents for the ministerial segment contained in annexes I and II to the annotations to the provisional agenda (UNEP/AMCEN/13/1/Add.1).

## III. Consideration of the report on the implementation of the decisions of the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

18. Mr. Peter Acquah, AMCEN Secretary, reported on implementation over the biennium 2008-2010 of the eight decisions adopted by AMCEN at its twelfth session, in 2008. With regard to decision 1 of that session, on the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), he reviewed the six thematic areas identified in which work should be undertaken as a priority and recalled that, in the light of the need to prepare a consolidated African position for the negotiations on climate change in 2010, there had been a paradigm shift to a focus on climate change over the biennium. He explained that, following a meeting convened by the President of AMCEN and the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility on the TerrAfrica-Global Environment Facility strategic investment programme for sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa in Ouagadougou on 24 and 25 April 2007, \$150 million in grant funding from the land degradation focal area had been allocated to support sub-Saharan countries during the fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility in advancing programmatic approaches to scale up climate-resilient sustainable land management practices, which in turn was helping to leverage an additional \$880 million in co-financing from a variety of sources.

19. With regard to the implementation of the marine, coastal and freshwater resources component of the action plan, he said that that thematic area continued to be implemented through the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions. Implementation took place under the four main themes – assessment, management, coordination and legal aspects – and taking into account cross-cutting issues, such as information dissemination and exchange and emerging issues. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme formed part of the overarching implementation framework. Over the period 2008–2010 the Programme had continued to assist the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions to respond to the

need for more effective management of coastal and marine ecosystems under increasing threat of degradation attributed to both natural and human-caused factors. The Programme had directed efforts towards enhancing the technical, legal and management capacities of African coastal States, including small island developing States, for the sustainable management of the environment of the Western Indian and Atlantic oceans. He also made brief presentations on the work undertaken in cross-cutting areas of the action plan, such as sustainable consumption and production; environment and health; and environmental impact assessment.

20. With regard to decision 2, on climate change, he highlighted achievements in the areas of updating the African common negotiating position, capacity-building, the development of a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes, the forging of partnerships and the mobilization of resources. Looking to decision 3, on the constitution of AMCEN, he explained that the issue had been deferred since the Conference's eleventh session, pending the final evolution of its various structures, and that a decision would be submitted at the current session on a proposed way forward. On decision 4, on the status and use of the general trust fund, he said that every effort was being made to mobilize resources and forge partnerships to implement the decisions of the twelfth session and the work programme for the biennium 2009–2010. While those efforts had enabled work on climate change to be undertaken effectively, the implementation of the AMCEN work programme continued to be limited by financial constraints.

21. He said that, by its decision 5, on chemicals and hazardous waste management, AMCEN had taken cognizance of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, among others. Of the 234 project proposals submitted to the Strategic Approach secretariat for the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund over the first eight rounds of applications, 100 projects had been approved for total funding of \$20,265,064. In addition, 63 projects had been recommended for further development and resubmission. With regard to decision 6, on environmental education and technology-supported learning, he said that the backbone of the Pan-African e-Learning for Environment Network had been established and 18 countries were participating. Capacity development and training had been conducted, as had awareness-raising activities.

22. Regarding decision 7, on Africa Environment Day he said that the eighth Africa Environment Day, in 2010, had been celebrated in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, under the theme of "African resilience to climate change: biodiversity conservation and enhancing traditional knowledge". The occasion had been marked by celebrations and meetings placing special emphasis on the application of science to combat the threats posed by climate change. The initiative to reduce emissions from forest deforestation and forest degradation had been a key topic considered. Both events had been well attended by dignitaries and key stakeholders. With regard to decision 8, on the Africa Environment Outlook process, he said that Kenya and Uganda had received support in producing their national environment atlases and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was also receiving support in that regard. He drew attention to the fact that work on the third edition of the Africa Environment Outlook report was progressing, with greater emphasis being laid on the nexus between health and environment. The work was being carried out by UNEP in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO).

23. Recalling that the implementation of the action plan had been under way for some seven years and that the AMCEN secretariat had been at the forefront of that process and noting that the current session would be his last in his capacity as AMCEN Secretary, he took the opportunity to acknowledge the many partners who had lent assistance and paid tribute to the architects of the action plan, recognizing, in particular, the contribution of Mr. Mohamed Sessay, Regional Coordinator for Africa for Land Degradation within the UNEP Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination, who had worked on its development since 2002.

24. In the ensuing discussion, representatives commended the secretariat on its work. Reviewing the issues arising in the report, they stressed the need for Africa to speak with one voice at the forthcoming climate change negotiations in Cancún and expressed appreciation to the Government of Algeria for championing the continent's cause in Copenhagen. One representative rued what he perceived as the discord within the African camp in Copenhagen, which, in his view, had undermined its position. Another voiced the opinion that Copenhagen, while a failure at the global level, had not been a total failure for Africa as it had demonstrated the continent's common resolve. Yet another suggested that African positions in the continued negotiations should be harmonized with those of other regions that shared its concerns.

25. A number of representatives voiced concern at the predominant focus on climate change, which was diverting attention from other important environmental issues, and called for the restitution of balanced coverage for the six thematic areas of work. Greater attention should be paid to such issues of

crucial importance to Africa as land degradation and desertification; the transboundary nature of environmental challenges; the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and the need to balance environmental conservation imperatives with efforts to combat poverty and achieve necessary economic growth; the need to take account of vulnerable groups and post-conflict countries in developing environmental actions; the need to mainstream gender considerations in environmental work; the importance of national adaptation programmes of action; the development of carbon trading frameworks to benefit from enhanced conservation; progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals; the need to forge partnerships with United Nations agencies and, in general, with relevant intergovernmental, international non-governmental and civil society bodies; and the need for awareness-raising, outreach and environmental education.

26. A number of representatives drew attention to the fact that work in all the areas enumerated would require considerable financial resources and therefore urged member States to pay their contributions to the general trust fund of AMCEN to enable the Conference to scale up its work and also tackle the perennial financial constraints facing it.

27. One representative stressed the need for a firm African stance in the negotiations on an international regime for access and benefit-sharing and expressed support for the establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services which, he said, should be hosted alongside UNEP. Another noted the importance of the theme for the current session, which went beyond climate change and invoked synergies between the three Rio conventions; a third suggested that the link between biodiversity and desertification should underpin the African partnership in Cancún, which could serve as a model for other countries. Several drew attention to the initiative to create a great green wall for the Sahara and the Sahel and cited forthcoming desertification-related events in their countries.

28. Two representatives commented on the operation of AMCEN itself: they applauded its growth and development over the 25 years of its existence but suggested improvements to its workings and institutional structures, citing the need for better communications and more time for consultation among its Bureau members prior to its sessions. One representative expressed concern at the plethora of environmental instruments and forums, suggesting a need to streamline the operation of international environmental affairs. Another highlighted the need, when reviewing the Conference's institutional structures, to ensure that they matched the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues. Yet another, cautioning against overburdening the African Union Commission with too many responsibilities, suggested the establishment of a dedicated commission under the African Union on the environment. Some drew attention to the issue of funding, pointing out the need to ensure that the secretariat was endowed with the resources that it needed to perform its mandate. In that context, one representative pledged to settle her country's arrears to the trust fund upon her return home and called upon her colleagues with arrears to do likewise.

29. Many representatives called for African negotiators to shape a common vision and to send forth a strong message from Bamako, one suggesting that the declaration to be issued at the close of the current session should be used to secure the stronger involvement in environmental activities of ministers of finance while others, highlighting the importance of turning challenges into opportunities, reiterated the importance for the continent of speaking with a united and strong voice.

30. In response to some of those observations, Ms. Peace Tumusiime endorsed representatives' call for the strengthened provision of resources to secure the operation of the AMCEN secretariat, with which the African Union Commission cooperated closely. She also supported the call by a number of representatives for a strengthened focus on desertification control activities and drew attention to a decision on that issue by African Union Heads of State and Government. Lastly, she highlighted the need for partnerships with all relevant agencies and called for the closer involvement and empowerment of women in efforts to safeguard the environment.

31. In conclusion, the Chair, endorsing the call for strengthened resources to support the operation of the AMCEN secretariat, suggested the formulation of a resource strategy that included elements on the mobilization, management and use of resources and on access to resources.

32. The representatives adopted the AMCEN Secretary's report.

#### IV. Consideration of the report of the expert group meeting

33. Mr. Fundisile Mketeni, Chair of the expert group segment held from 21 to 23 June 2010, presented the report of the segment, contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/13/3, drawing attention to

the salient points in the group's deliberations and introducing the draft declaration and decisions prepared by the experts and submitted for consideration and possible adoption by the ministers. He noted that an interim draft indicative work programme of AMCEN for 2011–2012 prepared by the secretariat had been welcomed during the expert group segment, with the understanding that a more comprehensive indicative work programme would be prepared after the review of the action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD had been completed.

34. The representatives adopted the report of the expert group meeting.

## **V. Ministerial policy dialogue on aspects of the implementation of the Rio conventions**

### **A. Climate change: international climate regime beyond 2012**

35. Mr. Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, chair, Africa group of climate negotiators, gave a presentation on aspects of the negotiations regarding the international climate change regime beyond 2012, in which he evoked Africa's vulnerability to climate change caused by greenhouse-gas emissions, for which it bore little responsibility, and the potential impacts resulting from higher temperatures and rising sea levels. He highlighted the need for verified scientific data in support of Africa's position. While Africa remained fully committed to the two track approach, there was a move on the part of Annex I parties to maintain a single pledge based approach. That served to reinforce the need for Africa to pursue what he referred to as a "top-down" science-based approach.

36. Although Africa could adopt some mitigation actions, adaptation was the preferred option, through an adaptation fund and compliance mechanisms, which should be financed by developed countries' contributions. Those had to date had proved inadequate and, indeed, funds pledged at Copenhagen had yet to be disbursed. Africa must persist in its efforts to obtain more funds, he stressed.

37. In conclusion, he considered the prospects for Cancún and beyond. Given the failure of Copenhagen, it was likely that the Mexico negotiations would have very limited success, although Africa could hope for more at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in South Africa in 2011. It was imperative that the Annex I parties should not scale down their commitment; at the same time, Africa needed to ensure that there was a balanced and realistic approach, ensuring that some concepts, such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), were not favoured at the expense of others and that there would be an adequate total package on the basis of a multilateral approach, leading to balanced outcomes under both tracks. There was a need to identify transparent modalities for African participation at all levels and to affirm support for a science-based rather than pledge-based approach. Clear benchmarks for negotiations must be established during 2010

38. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives emphasized the importance of securing the accession of all developed countries to a legally binding regime. In that regard, most representatives felt that the United States, given that climate change legislation was deadlocked in that country's Senate, was not yet ready to accede to any legally binding instrument on climate change and that, as long as the United States was not party to the treaty, it was unlikely that the Cancún negotiations would lead to a legally binding outcome. A number of representatives pointed out that it could be some time before the United States was ready to accede to binding legislation. They therefore argued that Africa should not allow itself to be held hostage by those reticent to ratify, including the United States, and should push for a legally binding framework in any case. The threats posed by climate change were real and the survival of Africa and its peoples were at stake. There was, they said, a need to act, and a legally binding framework would be most fitting in that regard. Most representatives said that Africa would do well to consider ways to achieve a legally binding instrument in the long term.

39. Several representatives emphasized the importance of maintaining the two-track system under the Convention's two working groups, with all those who took the floor of the view that the Kyoto Protocol should not be abandoned, the efforts of some developed countries to do away with it notwithstanding. They also said that it was crucial to push for a second commitment period for Annex I parties under the Protocol. Representatives differed in their views when it came to the emissions by some developing countries, such as Brazil, China and South Africa, and no consensus could be reached in that regard.

40. Looking to temperature reduction targets, many representatives of least developed countries suggested that emissions should be capped at such a level that any temperature rise would not exceed

1.5° C. Representatives generally agreed that, whatever the eventual target set, the equivalent temperature experienced in Africa would be much higher than in other parts of the world, as Africa was the continent most vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change, a reality already evident from the various negative climate phenomena bedevilling the continent. Where funding for mitigation and adaptation activities was concerned, some representatives suggested that at least 1.5 per cent of the gross domestic product of developed countries should be channelled to developing countries through public funding.

41. Several representatives stressed the importance of communication with Heads of State and Governments in the negotiating process. Given that there were many bodies, organizations and stakeholders involved, it was essential to ensure that the leaders of all countries were apprised of developments so that they were able to react swiftly and also to provide their own input into the process. A number of representatives bemoaned the mixture of politics and science, pointing out that it was harming equitable allocation. In that context, representatives emphasized the importance of taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

42. A number of representatives called for nationally appropriate, voluntary mitigation actions and national adaptation programmes of action to be taken and prepared, respectively, with a view to improving the continent's chances in efforts to combat the scourge of climate change.

## **B. International regime on access and benefit-sharing**

43. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister of Environment of Namibia, gave an overview of the status of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing. Following that presentation, Ms. Betty Kauna Schroder (Namibia) presented the African common position for the negotiations of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing, as adopted at the pan-African ministerial conference on access and benefit-sharing held in Windhoek from 8 to 10 March 2010.

44. The representative of Gabon announced that his country had undertaken to host a meeting of African ministers of environment, finance and economy, on aspects of the international regime, with a view to the forthcoming tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

45. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives welcomed the presentation, saying that it showed the existence of proven expertise in Africa. One representative suggested that the negotiations should also cover genetic resources acquired before the international regime on access and benefit-sharing came into force.

46. One representative proposed that an internationally recognized certificate to accompany goods and ensure the traceability of finished products should be incorporated into the African common position on access and benefit-sharing. Another asked what additional work had been undertaken beyond engaging negotiating groups. He stressed that the strategy should incorporate both civil society and the private sector and said that negotiations must involve regional and subregional parties and the United Nations.

## **C. Desertification**

47. Mr. Boubacar Cisse, Regional Coordination Unit for Africa, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, delivered a message from the Executive Secretary of the Convention. In his

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