



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Distr.
General

UNEP/AMCEN/12/6
2 May 2008

Original: English

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Twelfth session
Johannesburg, 7–12 June 2008

Overview of implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development for the reporting period June 2006–May 2008 and efforts made to mobilize resources

1. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since its implementation commenced in 2004. That progress, however, has been limited by financial constraints. The AMCEN work programme is an integral part of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative and its implementation is being undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the NEPAD secretariat, the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and a number of institutions and organizations such as the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. This overview is based on information available and/or submitted to the AMCEN secretariat. A detailed account of the implementation of the action plan is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4. A brief account of the efforts made by the secretariat in raising funds is also given in the present document.

I. Implementation of the action plan

2. Environment is one of the eight components of NEPAD – a vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal. The action plan, covering the first decade of the twenty-first century, is designed to tackle the region's environmental challenges while at the same time combating poverty and promoting social and economic development. It will be recalled that the action plan was prepared through a participatory and consultative process involving over 800 African experts. AMCEN, in collaboration with the NEPAD secretariat, guided the process for the development and subsequent adoption of the action plan by the African Union at its first ordinary assembly, held in Maputo in July 2003 (see the annex to the present document for more information).

3. AMCEN is guiding the implementation of the action plan primarily through the development and implementation of its work programme, together with its collaborative efforts with the African Union and the NEPAD secretariat. For example, the 2007–2008 work programme includes 13 programme elements which are based on the traditional policy and advocacy role of AMCEN, environmental law, six thematic areas and one cross-cutting programme area.

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A. Thematic area of land degradation and desertification

4. The work carried out in this thematic area is presented as follows:

(a) First, a full project proposal on the integrated management of the Fouta Djallon highlands was approved by the Global Environment Facility Council in November 2005. The participating countries include the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Implementation of the project is expected to commence in 2008, since the bulk of the \$24 million required for the first phase has been mobilized;

(b) Second, through the agency of the Regional Office for Africa and AMCEN, the Global Environment Facility Council has approved a strategic investment programme, within the context of the TerrAfrica partnership, aimed at tackling land degradation in Africa. The Global Environment Facility is committing \$150 million as grant funds to leverage a total of between \$750 million and \$1 billion from domestic sources and bilateral and multilateral partners to support investments in sustainable land management in Africa through its implementing and executing agencies;

(c) Third, the Global Environment Facility has become a financial instrument for land degradation, an initiative championed by AMCEN; and

(d) Fourth, over the 2006–2008 reporting period a number of projects were developed and some were implemented by collaborating institutions and organizations.

B. Thematic area of conserving Africa's wetlands

5. The secretariat of the Ramsar Convention is the lead partner in the implementation of this thematic area. Work was carried out in various African countries, first, to lay down broad foundations for the preparation of national wetlands policies for Central and Southern Africa; and, second, to develop national wetland policies and prepare action and implementation plans. The work undertaken can be classified into five categories; namely, wise use of wetlands; wetlands of national importance in Africa; threats to Ramsar wetland sites and sites listed on the Montreux Record; updated Ramsar information sheets; and international cooperation. A brief account is given here of the first two topics.

1. Wise use of wetlands

6. Since June 2004, the principle of wise use of wetlands has been applied in different ways throughout the Africa region. The Ramsar secretariat was involved in the preparation and the review of national wetlands policies of the following countries: Congo (outline national wetlands policy); Burkina Faso (preparation of the terms of reference to elaborate the national wetlands policy); Botswana, Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania (review of the draft national wetlands policies); and Nigeria (preparation of the draft national wetlands policy). Collaborative work with Benin led to the adoption of the national wetlands strategy by the Government in June 2007. Cameroon has also embarked on a national and participatory consultation process to elaborate its national wetlands policy with technical support from the secretariat. An outstanding example is the work done in Ghana, where the provision of funds and technical assistance led to the transformation of the national wetlands policy into an action plan, with a budget, with emphasis on poverty reduction.

2. Wetlands of national importance

7. The preparation of a rapid inventory of the wetlands of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to elaborate a national wetlands policy has been initiated. This project is using earth observation technologies and other geographical information system tools to achieve national coverage of the inventory. In 2008, the Africa Unit of the Ramsar secretariat will liaise with contracting parties to revisit the concept of national wetlands policies and discuss how the existing policies can best be included in the national development process. The aim is to produce another framework for the preparation of new policies, based on Ghana's example.

8. Since June 2006, 41 new African Ramsar sites, representing a total surface area of 12,899,786 hectares, were added to the list of wetlands of international importance. These include: Benin (2), Congo (4), Gabon (3), Gambia (1), Guinea (2), Madagascar (1), South Africa (2), Togo (2), Tunisia (19) and Zambia (5). Currently, 58 new designations and 24 Ramsar information sheet updates are in the pipeline.

C. Thematic area of the prevention and management of invasive alien species

9. Progress relating to the prevention, control and management of invasive alien species has been rather slow. Even though a number of activities are being carried out in Africa in connection with invasive alien species, no institution or country has formally offered to take a lead role in this programme area, notwithstanding efforts by the secretariat. As a result, a formal report cannot be given for this component for the reporting period.

D. Thematic area of the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and freshwater resources

10. The implementation of the marine, coastal and freshwater resources component of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative is being implemented through the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) and the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention). The Nairobi Convention area extends from Somalia in the north to South Africa in the south, and includes the five island States in the Western Indian Ocean. The contracting parties are Comoros, France (La Reunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Abidjan Convention area extends from Mauritania to South Africa. The countries that have ratified the Abidjan Convention include Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo. The two conventions provide a mechanism for regional cooperation, coordination and collaborative actions, which in turn enables the contracting parties to harness resources and expertise from a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups towards solving interlinked problems of the coastal and marine environment.

11. Many activities are being undertaken in this thematic area. At its eleventh session, held in Brazzaville in May 2006, AMCEN approved its work programme for the biennium 2007–2008. The component of the work programme on marine and coastal resources indicated that the implementation of Abidjan and Nairobi conventions would be continued under the four main themes of assessment, management, coordination and legal aspects, and cross-cutting issues such as information dissemination and exchange and emerging issues.

12. At the joint meeting of the contracting parties to both the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions – held under the auspices of AMCEN in Johannesburg in November 2007 – the contracting parties reviewed progress in the implementation of activities in the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and freshwater resources, as contained in the work programme of the two conventions and adopted a new work programme for the period 2008–2011.

13. The Global Environment Facility, with the support of the contracting parties to the Nairobi Convention and their development partners, has embraced an ecosystem-wide approach to management of the large marine ecosystems of the region. UNEP, the Global Environment Facility and the contracting parties are investing over \$78 million, between 2004 and 2012, to support large marine ecosystem projects in the Western Indian Ocean. The three main projects include: the South West Indian Ocean fisheries project, with a budget of \$35,670,000, implemented by the World Bank; the Agulhas and Somalia Current large marine ecosystem project, with a budget of \$31,186,000, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the project on land-based activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO-LaB) with a budget of \$11,413,000, implemented by UNEP.

14. In 2004 the contracting parties launched the WIO-LaB project funded by the Global Environment Facility and the project on strengthening the coordination mechanisms, management and assessment activities within the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions over the period 2003–2007, supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Both projects are executed by the secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the national focal points of the Nairobi Convention.

15. The primary focus of the WIO-LaB project is on major environmental problems that lead to the degradation of the marine and coastal environment as a result of land-based activities. The project is a direct follow-up to the recommendations of the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. The total budget for the WIO-LaB project is \$11,413,000, drawn from the following sources: contracting parties – \$3,136,750; the Norwegian Government – \$3,395,650; UNEP – \$375,000; and the Global Environment Facility – \$4,511,140. The WIO-LaB project is a demonstration project, designed to

achieve three objectives, namely: first, to reduce stress to the ecosystem by improving water and sediment quality; second, to strengthen the regional legal basis for preventing land-based sources of pollution; and, third, to develop regional capacity and strengthen institutions for sustainable, less polluting development. A report on progress in the implementation of the WIO-LaB project may be found in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4.

E. Thematic area of combating climate change in Africa

16. AMCEN convened high-level preparatory meetings and sessions for experts and negotiators of its member States ahead of the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first and second sessions of the Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol held in Montreal in 2005 and Nairobi in 2006 respectively. The main purpose of the preparatory meetings was to deliberate on issues of relevance to Africa. The discussions lead to the development of strategies and agreement on an African common position on important issues that were considered at sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

17. The secretariat also supported the meeting for African negotiators held in Abuja in October 2007, ahead of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol held in Bali in December 2007.

18. The African Ministerial Conference on Hydropower and Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg from 6 to 9 March 2006, reached a number of conclusions, recommendations and decisions, which were set out in its ministerial declaration, and an action plan for sustainable hydropower development in Africa. In paragraph 5 of the action plan, the conference calls on Egypt and South Africa to support other African countries in developing their designated national authorities for clean development mechanisms and to provide technical assistance for project development. Following discussions on the matter, Egypt and South Africa agreed to sign a protocol to support African countries in clean development mechanism projects. They reaffirmed their willingness to assist in building the capacity of other African countries at the twenty-second meeting of the Bureau of AMCEN, held in Johannesburg in November 2007.

19. The Tunisian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development organized an international conference on international solidarity on climate change strategies for African and Mediterranean regions in Tunis from 18 to 20 November 2007 under the patronage of the Tunisian President, Mr. Zine Elabidine Ben Ali. The outcomes of the meeting included a declaration and an accompanying action plan. These will be circulated to member States during the twelfth session of AMCEN.

F. Thematic area of the transboundary conservation or management of natural resources (including forests)

20. Information made available to the secretariat under this programme area was rather limited. Nevertheless a major component of the work carried out in Central Africa will have a positive impact on the natural resources management in the subregion. This relates in particular to the development of the subregional environmental action plan for Central African States.

21. The Congo basin is the second largest area of tropical forest in the world. Due attention was given to this fact in the formulation of the subregional environmental action plan for Central Africa by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), with support from UNEP, the Global Environment Facility and the NEPAD secretariat. As stated above, the subregional environmental action plan for Central Africa has been endorsed by the ministers of the environment in the subregion. The subregional environmental action plan was also taken into account during the preparation of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) strategic plan for environment and natural resource management.

22. The secretariat provided back-up assistance to UNEP in its support for the work of the goodwill ambassador for the Congo basin forests, Ms. Wangari Maathai, relating to the forests ecosystem of Central Africa.

23. Among other activities undertaken in Africa, attention is drawn to the projects on indigenous vegetation change and transboundary conservation; the management of protected areas; and the above-mentioned study on the lesser flamingo. A more detailed account may be found in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4.

G. Policy, advocacy, environmental law and capacity-building

24. The following are some of the achievements made in this area:

- (a) Major progress has been made towards harmonizing the work of AMCEN with that of the African Union Commission and making AMCEN one of the specialized technical committees of the African Union;
- (b) Interaction with the AMCEN member States has encouraged some member States to declare their intent to implement the action plan;
- (c) China-Africa cooperation has led to the implementation of some capacity-building aspects of the action plan;
- (d) Africa Environment Outlook reports (AEO-1 and AEO-2) have been issued and the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) established in many African countries. The AEO reports serve as a monitoring tool for the action plan, as well as a reference document on the environmental outlook for the region. The AEO process and AEIN are also helping to build capacity in data management, information exchange and data infrastructure in the region;
- (e) *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* has been published. This is a major contribution to the AEO process and it is envisaged that it will reinvigorate the interest of African countries in the use of remote sensing for environmental management;
- (f) Capacity-building efforts, relating in particular to certain multilateral and other environmental agreements, have made Africa's common position more coherent. Special mention should be made here of the recently approved European Community project supporting capacity-building efforts to implement multilateral environmental agreements in Africa;
- (g) Capacity-building initiatives involving the development of subregional environmental action plans for each of the five subregions in Africa, human and institutional capacity-building ventures and the synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements have been completed successfully;
- (h) At the request of AMCEN and with funds from Norway, UNEP is supporting five countries in Africa (one from each subregion) to develop their NEPAD national action plans with special emphasis on implementable projects and programmes. This is being done on a pilot basis;
- (i) The Partnership for the Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA) has contributed significantly to the implementation of the action plan through capacity-building efforts in the development, implementation, compliance and enforcement of environmental law in many African countries. This project, which has now ended, is acclaimed as a resounding success.

H. Cross-cutting issues programme area

25. The cross-cutting issues explored by AMCEN include health and environment; environmental education and training; environmental impact assessment; integrated environmental assessment; sustainable consumption and production; and disaster risk reduction and management.

26. The following are some of the achievements scored in this programme area:

- (a) *Health and environment*: The African Stockpiles Programme, aimed at the destruction of obsolete pesticides found in many African countries, is currently under way and is being facilitated by the NEPAD secretariat. Where chemicals management is concerned, a number of capacity-building activities have been undertaken by UNEP Chemicals and the chemicals-related convention secretariats. AMCEN actively participated in the development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and is involved in its implementation;
- (b) *Environmental education and training*: UNEP and its partners have been supporting the process of mainstreaming environment and sustainability concerns into the teaching, research, community engagement and management of universities in Africa;
- (c) *Environmental impact assessment*: Capacity-building efforts in Africa have brought tangible results and led to the formation of a regional network of environmental impact assessment experts, known as the "Capacity Development and Linkages for Environmental (Impact) Assessment in Africa";

(d) *Integrated environmental assessment*: As noted above, significant achievements have been made in the AEO process;

(e) *Sustainable consumption and production*: Activities carried out in this area include: implementation of the African 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production; and

(f) *Disaster risk reduction and management*: A disaster management centre for Central African countries has recently been established in Brazzaville, with financial support from China. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has also undertaken a number of activities in this area, such as facilitating the development of the subregional disaster risk reduction strategy for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

II. Efforts made towards resource mobilization

27. The decision adopted on 12 July 2003 by the Summit of the African Heads of State on an action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative, among other things, endorsed the action plan; invited the Commission of the African Union, the NEPAD secretariat, UNEP and other partners to pursue their cooperation in order to give effective support to all the member States and the regional economic communities in the implementation of the action plan; also invited bilateral and multilateral partners to participate actively in the donors' conference on the action plan, held in Algiers in December 2003; and further invited AMCEN and the NEPAD secretariat, in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the development banks, including the African Development Bank, and UNEP, to play a leading role in mobilizing additional financial resources for the implementation of the action plan and its associated projects (see the annex to the present document).

28. In furtherance of this decision by the African Union Summit, AMCEN held two partners' conferences on the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative. The first partners' conference was successfully held in Algiers in December 2003 and the action plan was launched at this meeting. The second partners' conference, held in Dakar on 15 and 16 March 2005, was convened to review the implementation of the action plan and initiate the process of establishing an operational financing mechanism for its implementation.

29. The second partners' conference adopted the Dakar Declaration, calling for enhanced partnership in the implementation of the action plan. With that declaration, AMCEN expressed its satisfaction with the progress made towards implementation of the action plan since its launch in December 2003 and further resolved, among other things:

(a) To urge African Governments to ensure sustained implementation of the action plan;

(b) To encourage the integration of the objectives of the action plan into national and subregional development plans and strategies, including those of the regional economic communities;

(c) To adopt the proposal for the creation of an African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank; the use of the existing financial mechanisms within subregional economic communities and other subregional organizations; and the use of inter-State mechanisms for the implementation of joint programmes where appropriate;

(d) To call upon the President of AMCEN urgently to commission, in collaboration with the African Development Bank and UNEP, a study on the modalities for the creation of an African Environment Facility as a potential mechanism for the mobilization of resources for the implementation

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