



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

I. Background

A. General

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was established in December 1985, following a conference of African ministers of environment held in Cairo. Its mandate is to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa; to ensure that basic human needs are met adequately and in a sustainable manner; to ensure that social and economic development is realized at all levels; and to ensure that agricultural activities and practices meet the food security needs of the region.

2. AMCEN has continued to give guidance in respect of key political events related to the environment, including multilateral environmental agreements. AMCEN has also led the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). AMCEN is currently guiding implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative, including its work programme. The Ministerial Conference has continued to pay particular attention to the implementation of regional and global conventions.

B. Achievements and challenges of AMCEN

1. Achievements

3. AMCEN has been instrumental in advancing the environmental agenda in Africa in several areas. These include:

- (a) Leading the process for the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD;
- (b) Leading the process for the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD;
- (c) Prompting and encouraging the preparation of the regional comprehensive report on the state of Africa's environment, the Africa Environment Outlook;
- (d) Facilitating the revision of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention) of 1968;

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- (e) Highlighting environmental issues at all levels of society, including their linkages with poverty reduction, human and animal health, trade, water conservation, forestry management, river basin management and so on;
- (f) Providing a forum for the exchange of views and building consensus on issues of common concern among policymakers at national, subregional, regional and global levels;
- (g) Providing a conduit for the articulation of Africa's concerns on the environment to other regions and to the global community;
- (h) Providing a legitimate voice for Africa on environmental matters;
- (i) Building a network of environment ministers in Africa;
- (j) Producing a number of publications to assist with the dissemination of environmental information in Africa.

4. AMCEN has also continued to give guidance in key political events related to the multilateral environment agreements, paying particular attention to the implementation of environmental conventions agreed since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – the Earth Summit. The recent focus has been upon the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the development and implementation of the action plan for the environmental initiative of NEPAD.

2. Challenges

5. AMCEN faces challenges in many areas, including:
- (a) Securing sustainable financing for the implementation of its activities;
 - (b) Harmonizing regional and global environmental issues so that they receive equal attention at national and subregional levels;
 - (c) Translation of global environmental concerns into practical, feasible and achievable programmes of action at national, subregional and regional levels;
 - (d) Positioning AMCEN within the framework of new and emerging issues at the regional and global levels, for example, in the context of the African Union and NEPAD.
6. The recently published *History of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (1985–2005)* gives an objective account of the achievements and challenges of the Ministerial Conference. The history of AMCEN was reviewed through three different periods marked by significant shifts in the political context in which it was operating. It is evident that there has been continuity in the performance of AMCEN. The measures adopted by AMCEN in seeking solutions to environmental concerns in Africa have always involved participation and consultation, ever since the Ministerial Conference was established.

II. Trust fund

A. General

7. The general trust fund for AMCEN was established in accordance with article 28 of the AMCEN constitution. The main objectives of the fund are:
- (a) To strengthen cooperation between African Governments in economic, technical and scientific activities for the purpose of halting and reversing the degradation of the African environment and to pave the way for sustainable development in the future;
 - (b) To provide financial support, wholly or partially, for the functioning of the organs of the Conference and the implementation of the activities of AMCEN.
8. There has, however, been limited success in implementing those objectives, largely because of the continued failure of many AMCEN member States to pay their contributions. The rather slow mobilization of financial resources from AMCEN member States and other partners has been the major constraint in ensuring the effective implementation of the AMCEN programme of work, including meeting the administrative costs of running the secretariat. The

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has therefore had to provide resources and or facilitate their mobilization to implement the objectives of AMCEN.

9. At its eighth session, held in Abuja on 5 and 6 April 2000, AMCEN adopted a series of proposals for policy and institutional change. In decision 5, AMCEN resolved to restructure its institutional arrangements and adopt a scale of contributions to the trust fund for member States. In that same decision, AMCEN urged its members “to increase their current contributions to the trust fund to a total of \$3 million by December 2001 on the basis of the new system of contributions” agreed on at that session. An amount of \$32 million would be realized from the African Governments themselves over a five-year period, with a possibility of additional amounts accruing from donor countries and agencies.

10. The overall contributions to the AMCEN trust fund from its inception in 1996 to March 2003 amounted to \$1,852,186. Unpaid contributions for that same period totalled \$2,580,515. The current status of countries’ contributions to the general trust fund is shown in annex I to the present report. About 60 per cent of African countries have not made any contribution to the AMCEN trust fund since its inception.

11. It should also be recalled that, of the \$3,597,000 which it was planned to raise from AMCEN member States over the biennium 2000–2001, only \$457,366, or 12.7 per cent of the target, was actually paid. In decision 8 of its ninth session, held in Kampala on 4 and 5 July 2002, AMCEN therefore made another urgent appeal to member States to fulfil the pledges and commitments that had been made in Abuja, in order to allow the Conference to implement more meaningful activities.

12. As of 31 December 2007, the contributions paid to the trust fund by member States were as follows:

- (a) Total interest accrued amounted to \$342,069;
- (b) Total income from Member States in the biennium 2006–2007 stood at \$85,464;
- (c) Total unpaid pledges stood at \$2,138,376.
- (d) Actual cash already received is \$3,418,794.

B. Use of funds

13. In decision 4 of its eleventh session, AMCEN resolved:

- (a) To urge Governments to make every effort to pay their outstanding contributions to the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
- (b) That the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, should make proposals for sponsorship of some activities of the Conference, including meetings of the Bureau;
- (c) That the secretariat, also in consultation with the Bureau and the Commission of the African Union, should make proposals for sponsorship of the regular and extraordinary sessions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
- (d) That the Conference should extend its appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and urge the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to provide support to AMCEN;
- (e) That the interest generated by the general trust fund could be used and that proposals on the use of the interest earned on the general trust fund would be prepared by the secretariat and submitted to the AMCEN Bureau for approval prior to implementation;
- (f) That the general trust fund should continue to be managed by UNEP for as long as the AMCEN secretariat remained with that organization;
- (g) That the secretariat should continue to report on the status and use of the general trust fund at AMCEN meetings.

14. The support provided by UNEP and other partners has enabled AMCEN to carry out its work programme, which is an integral part of the action plan. This has been crucial in view of the financial constraints facing the Ministerial Conference. The implementation of the AMCEN work programme is being undertaken by UNEP in collaboration with other United Nations

agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and also with the African Union Commission, the NEPAD secretariat, the regional economic communities and a number of other 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.

III. Proposed use of the trust fund

15. Pursuant to decision 4 of the eleventh session, the secretariat prepared a modest budget for the use of part of the interest earned on the general trust fund to cover partially the cost of holding AMCEN Bureau meetings, and the tenth and eleventh sessions of AMCEN. The Executive Director of UNEP kindly made resources available, thereby obviating the need to draw funds from the general trust fund to cover the costs of the twenty-first, twenty-second and extraordinary meetings of the AMCEN Bureau.

16. UNEP has in the past been successful in mobilizing funds for AMCEN sessions. The Nordic countries, particularly Norway, have been particularly supportive. In addition, the Executive Director of UNEP had allowed the use of the UNEP trust fund to sponsor AMCEN activities. Recent developments, however, have shown that AMCEN needs to look ahead, as development partners have generally shifted their support to funding activities directly related to the implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative. In this regard, the Bureau considered how AMCEN meetings would be funded in future.

17. Since the interest earned on the AMCEN trust fund is relatively small, the following options may be considered as possible areas for using the trust fund in future: first, sponsoring of AMCEN meetings; and, second, adding value to AMCEN sessions.

18. It is recommended that some of the AMCEN trust fund should be used to fund meetings of the AMCEN Bureau. With regard to the Conference's regular sessions, it should be noted that, even on occasions when development partners do provide funds for such meetings, the Conference would still have to consider using some trust fund money to add value to those meetings.

19. AMCEN meetings include regular and special sessions and Bureau meetings. Despite the success of such meetings in the past, there is room for improvement. The main hurdle to be surmounted by the secretariat is the need to translate the working documents and provide interpretation for the sessions.

20. The table shown in annex V gives the estimated costs incurred in some aspects of holding or adding value to AMCEN sessions between January 2008 and June 2010. It demonstrates that \$82,380 will be required to hold three Bureau meetings; that some \$164,000 will be required to meet the direct conferencing costs for the twelfth session; and that the working visit to the African Development Bank in Tunis for three members of the Bureau and the Minister of Environment of Senegal will cost some \$12,210.

21. At its twenty-second meeting the Bureau approved the use in future of AMCEN funds for the purposes outlined in paragraph 18. These funds would be drawn from the interest generated on the general trust fund of AMCEN. In addition, the secretariat undertook to make a concerted effort to seek donor assistance for the conduct of the twelfth session of AMCEN scheduled to be held in South Africa in June 2008.

IV. Criteria for contributions to the general trust fund

22. UNEP is currently managing the general trust fund of AMCEN. In practical terms, the countries' contributions to the fund are provided on the basis of pledges made by each of them.

Countries are invoiced by the United Nations Office in Nairobi after they have made a pledge. As a rule, the United Nations Office in Nairobi cannot send an invoice to a country that has not made a pledge. This is clearly a limiting factor, since some countries do not make the necessary budgetary provisions to enable them to pay their contributions to the Fund in line with the commitments agreed by AMCEN at its eighth session.

23. The introduction of an indicative scale of contributions has been proposed as a means of overcoming this difficulty. Among others, the following principles were used in a pilot study in 2003 to develop such an indicative scale:

(a) Common but differentiated responsibilities and fair burden sharing. All payments to the fund remain voluntary. All member States are encouraged, however, to contribute either on the basis of the proposed indicative scale of contributions or an alternative basis identified by a member State;

(b) Minimum indicative rate of 0.001 per cent of the approved budget;

(c) Maximum indicative rate of 22 per cent, with a maximum indicative rate of 16 per cent during the pilot phase;

(d) Any member State that is in a position to do so is encouraged to increase its level of contributions above the level in the proposed indicative scale of contributions and thereby improve the financial situation of the Fund;

(d) The United Nations scale of assessments for 2003 should serve as guidance.

24. An alternative model for payments into the general trust fund of AMCEN is to determine the minimum financial base needed to earn sufficient interest to finance an agreed budget that would enable AMCEN to remain operational. The contributions made by the member States would then be calculated, taking into account a country's ability to pay but making provision for a minimum level of contributions.

25. When considering the criteria for contributions to the AMCEN trust fund it will be important to ensure that the burden of payment is shared by all the member States, since all are developing countries. For that reason the base level of payment should be sufficiently low to encourage all the member States to contribute to the fund. The better endowed countries should, however, also be encouraged to make higher payments.

26. It is envisaged that further information will be made available at the twelfth session to enable more rigorous discussion of this subject.

Annex I

Contributions made by member States of AMCEN

Country	Collections between 1996 & 1999	Total Govt. agreed pledges for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2000 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2001 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2002 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2003 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2004 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2005 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2006 for 2006 & fut. yrs.	Collections in 2007 for 2007 & fut. yrs.
Algeria	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Angola	0	100,000	0	99,925	75	0	0	0	0	0
Benin	5,000	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Botswana	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	100,000	0	0
Burkina Faso	10,000	50,000	0	3,382	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burundi	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cameroon	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cape Verde	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Afr. Rep.	0	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0
Chad	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comoros	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congo	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congo, Dem. Rep.	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cote d'Ivoire	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Djibouti	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Egypt	600,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equatorial Guinea	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eritrea	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ethiopia	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gabon	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gambia	0	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Country	Collections between 1996 & 1999	Total Govt. agreed pledges for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2000 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2001 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2002 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2003 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2004 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2005 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2006 for 2006 & fut. yrs.	Collections in 2007 for 2007 & fut. yrs.
Ghana	68,500	100,000	0	0	40,000	0	0	0	0	0
Guinea	0	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0
Guinea-Bissau	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenya	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lesotho *	0	25,000	16,122	0	8,878	0	0	12,500	0	12,500
Liberia	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madagascar	0	25,000	25,615	0	23,800	0	0	0	0	0
Malawi	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mali	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	83,527	0	0	0
Mauritania *	0	72,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mauritius	29,906	117,732	0	16,084	83,916	17,732	17,732	0	17,732	17,732
Morocco	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mozambique *	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	25,000	0	0	12,500
Namibia	0	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,509
Niger	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nigeria *	0	200,000	0	0	0	200,000	0	0	0	0
Rwanda	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	73,613	25,000
Sao Tome and Principe	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senegal	0	100,000	0	0	0	94,734	5,299	0	0	0
Seychelles	500	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sierra Leone	0	25,000	0	2,401	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Africa	5,000	200,000	100,000	100,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0
Sudan	0	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swaziland *	0	25,000	6,000	19,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Togo	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Col- lges n 1	Collections in 2000 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2001 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2002 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2003 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2004 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2005 for the biennium 2000–2001	Collections in 2006 for 2006 & fut. yrs.	Collections in 2007 for 2007 & fut. yrs.
,000	0	0	10,000	19,662	0	0	0	0
,000	0	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0
,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,263
,000	0	0	0	0	0	22,758	0	0
,000	0	0	3,011	0	0	0	0	0
,732	172,737	240,793	269,680	332,128	131,558	135,258	291,345	97,504