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*African Ministerial Conference on the Environment*

**Thirteenth session**

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Consideration of the report on the implementation of the decisions of the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

**Report of the Secretariat July 2008–June 2010**

**Introduction**

**A. Foundation, mandate and activities of and institutional arrangements for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

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 events related to multilateral environmental agreements. It has led the process for the development of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to prepare a comprehensive regional report on the state of Africa's environment, entitled *Africa Environment Outlook*. Furthermore, AMCEN successfully facilitated the revision of the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention). Measures have been taken to strengthen the linkages between AMCEN and the region's two marine and coastal conventions, namely, the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention)<sup>1</sup> and the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention).

3. AMCEN has continued to pay particular attention to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements established pursuant to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the United Nations Convention to Combat

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\* UNEP/AMCEN/13/1.

<sup>1</sup> The Nairobi Convention has since been amended. It is now known as the Amended Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean.

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Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol (the Rio conventions).

4. Regular sessions of AMCEN are held once every two years in various African locations. Meetings are sponsored by development partners, UNEP and African States. The UNEP Regional Office for Africa serves as the secretariat of AMCEN.

5. Since the first session, a number of programmes and initiatives have been developed to facilitate the effective implementation of the AMCEN mandate for environmental protection in Africa. Of particular note are the development of the action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD and the publication of the *Africa Environment Outlook* report. In addition, AMCEN decisions have been implemented successfully, subject to the availability of resources.

6. The present report provides information on the status of implementation of decisions adopted by AMCEN at its twelfth session; the status of implementation of its work programme during the biennium; and follow-up activities mandated by AMCEN at formal meetings convened by the President during the intersessional period.

## **I. Status of implementation of the decisions adopted at the twelfth session**

7. The eight decisions adopted by AMCEN at its twelfth session covered the following themes:

- (a) Implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD;
- (b) Climate change:
  - (i) Africa's preparations for developing a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012;
  - (ii) Comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes;
- (c) Constitution of AMCEN,
- (d) Status and use of the general trust fund for AMCEN;
- (e) Chemicals and hazardous waste management;
- (f) Environmental education and technology-supported learning;
- (g) Africa Environment Day;
- (h) Africa Environment Outlook process and the Africa Environment Information Network.

### **A. Decision 1: Implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development**

8. The action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD was prepared at the continental level. The following six thematic areas were selected through consultative and participatory processes: combating land degradation, drought and desertification; conservation of Africa's wetlands; prevention, control and management of invasive alien species; conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and freshwater resources; combating climate change in Africa; and transboundary conservation or management of natural resources.

9. The cross-cutting issues set out in the action plan include: health and environment; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; assessment of and early warning on natural disasters; and the environment directory of NEPAD.

10. As part of the implementation of the initiative, subregional environmental action plans for Central, Eastern, North, Southern and West Africa and national environmental action plans in five pilot countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mozambique – have been prepared.

11. The African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (formerly the NEPAD secretariat) and AMCEN are each implementing aspects of the action plan. AMCEN is responsible for the implementation of the work programme and relevant decisions, which form an

integral part of the action plan. In this regard the work programme of AMCEN for the biennium was based mainly on the thematic areas set out in the action plan, in addition to policy and advocacy.

12. The three above-mentioned stakeholders have initiated a process to review the implementation of the action plan. This involves a comprehensive stocktaking exercise, analytical work, the preparation of relevant documents with recommendations, consultative meetings for key stakeholders and the establishment of a partnership platform. The review work began in April 2010 and is expected to be completed in July 2010 with the launch of the partnership platform. The report on the review of the implementation of the action plan will be circulated to member States.

13. At its twelfth session, AMCEN made a significant shift in paradigm by deciding to focus mainly on climate change, one of the six thematic areas of the action plan, for the biennium July 2008–June 2010. Significant achievements were made in implementing the AMCEN climate change initiative, as will be described in more detail below.

## **B. Decision 2: Climate Change**

14. At its twelfth session, AMCEN adopted decision 2 on climate change. That decision was divided into two parts: the first focused on Africa's preparations for developing a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012, while the second related to a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes.

15. The new thematic thrust of AMCEN with regard to its work on climate change in Africa was initiated in follow-up to the twelfth session, during which ministers underscored the importance of the decision and outcomes 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 Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, in particular the agreement on the Bali Action Plan, which set 2009 as the end date for negotiations on strengthening the climate regime beyond 2012.

16. The objectives of AMCEN work on climate change in Africa include the following:

- (a) To support efforts to implement the continent's process to achieve a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012;
- (b) To provide a platform to deliberate and agree on a shared vision and common position for Africa to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development;
- (c) To engage the international community in finding solutions to the challenges posed by climate change;
- (d) To develop a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes and its associated subregional climate change programmes.

### **1. Africa's preparations for developing a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012**

17. The following achievements were made with regard to Africa's preparations for developing a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012:

- (a) African countries attained a common negotiating position that was adopted at the highest political levels;
- (b) African countries defined, sharpened and articulated their national and regional policy positions throughout the global climate change negotiations that culminated in the climate change summit held in Copenhagen in December 2009;
- (c) African countries made policy statements at regional and global meetings, including those under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which generally took into account their national and regional positions agreed through the various consultative processes organized by AMCEN and others;
- (d) African countries generally had a shared vision in tackling the adverse effects of climate change.

18. In this regard AMCEN organized regional consultative meetings for policymakers and decision makers, in addition to African negotiators, and supported the negotiators to enhance the development of,

among others, a common negotiating position for Africa; and to build capacity in relevant areas upon demand. Regional consultations were held in Accra (August 2008), Algiers (November 2008), Poznań, Poland (December 2008), Bonn, Germany (March 2009), Nairobi (May 2009), Addis Ababa (October 2009), Copenhagen (December 2009) and Nairobi (March 2010). In addition, the secretariat accompanied the African negotiators to other climate change meetings held in Bonn (August 2009), Bangkok (September–October 2009) and Barcelona, Spain (November 2009), providing them with real-time policy and legal advice.

19. From the climate change meeting in Bonn in March 2009 to the summit in Copenhagen in December 2009, AMCEN provided policy and legal advice to the African negotiators and government officials at all global climate change meetings. It also provided fact sheets, policy and technical briefs to African negotiators and senior government officials. For example, the review and analysis of the negotiating text of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention in the light of the specific circumstances of Africa (document AMCEN/13/Ref/1) proved to be useful for African experts during the latter part of the climate change negotiations in 2009. An updated and revised version of that document has been made available as a reference document at the current session.

20. The support provided to the African negotiators by AMCEN is expected to continue until the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

21. To ensure that gender considerations were included in the negotiations, AMCEN established a gender group within the African negotiators. This group was instrumental in ensuring that gender issues were incorporated into the African common negotiating position that was presented in Copenhagen. It should also be noted that collaborative work was undertaken with some civil society organizations in Africa. Representatives of young people were sponsored so as to be able to attend some key meetings on climate change, including the Copenhagen summit.

22. Within the context of implementing the first part of the decision on climate change, some landmark regional meetings on climate change were held by AMCEN from May 2009 to June 2010. These included the special session on climate change, held in Nairobi in May 2009; the second extraordinary meeting on climate change, held in Copenhagen in December 2009; the first meeting of the African high-level expert panel on climate change, held in Nairobi in May 2009; the second meeting of the African high-level expert panel on climate change, held in Addis Ababa in October 2009; the meeting for African negotiators jointly organized by the African Union and AMCEN, held in Nairobi in March 2010; and the third meeting of the African high-level expert panel on climate change, to be held in Bamako in June 2010. An account of some of these meetings is given in chapter II to the present report.

## **2. Comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes**

23. As stated above, the second part of the decision on climate change relates to the preparation of a comprehensive framework of climate change programmes in Africa and associated frameworks of subregional climate change programmes under the auspices of AMCEN and the regional economic communities. The following achievements have been made in this regard:

- (a) A comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes has been prepared and will be presented for adoption at the current meeting;
- (b) Frameworks of subregional climate change programmes for Central, Eastern, North and Southern Africa have been developed and will be presented for endorsement at the current meeting;
- (c) A conceptual outline of a framework of climate change programmes for West Africa is being developed;
- (d) Experts' statements on combating climate change in each subregion have been devised.

24. West Africa independently prepared a vulnerability assessment and related action plan for the subregion. This is being taken into account in preparing the framework of subregional climate change programmes for West Africa.

25. Frameworks of subregional climate change programmes have already been prepared for Central, Eastern, North and Southern Africa. They were prepared mainly through desktop research that involved mapping the programmes, projects and initiatives in the region; identifying gaps; analysing

those gaps; making recommendations; and developing the framework. The outcomes of these studies were discussed at subregional consultative meetings held in Kigali (for Eastern Africa) and in Addis Ababa (for Central Africa) in August and October 2009, respectively. Similar meetings were held for North and Southern Africa in Nairobi in March 2010.

26. The comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes is based on an Africa-wide study and the subregional frameworks. At its third meeting, to be held immediately prior to the current meeting, the African high-level expert panel on climate change will consider the draft comprehensive framework with a view to submitting that framework for adoption at the current meeting.

27. The secretariat worked closely with the UNEP gender specialist and others to ensure that gender considerations were taken into account in preparing the frameworks of climate change programmes and in carrying out other major activities on climate change and related matters. For example, a presentation on gender and climate change was made at all subregional consultative meetings and gender specialists were invited to participate in working group sessions at those meetings.

28. It should be recalled that declarations made at the twelfth session and at the special session on climate change called for the involvement of women and young people in the development of climate change strategies, particularly in awareness creation and capacity-building, and in the mainstreaming of gender in all environmental programmes and strategies. The declarations also took cognizance of the vulnerability of women and children to the impacts of climate change and their needs in adaptation and mitigation interventions.

29. To tackle the linkages between gender and climate change from an African perspective, two main approaches were taken. Gender and climate change were discussed at subregional consultations and the capacity of various stakeholders to integrate gender into climate policies and plans at the national level built. For example, in October 2009, UNEP, together with Global Gender and Climate Alliance partners (the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Women's Environment and Development Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) conducted a training-of-trainers workshop back-to-back with the second meeting of the African high-level expert panel on climate change. The first orientation session for stakeholders (including representatives of non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and Governments) was held from 15 to 17 October 2009, with representatives of 22 African countries attending. Thereafter, representatives, African negotiators and senior government officials attended a one-day orientation session on gender and climate on 18 October 2009.

30. It is envisaged that work on gender and climate change will continue during the coming biennium to provide capacity-building for negotiators, experts, government officials and others as an integral part of the implementation of AMCEN work on climate change in Africa.

### **C. Decision 3: Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

31. At its eighth session, AMCEN decided to restructure its subsidiary institutional structure into a geographically balanced bureau, an intersessional committee and an inter-agency technical committee, instructing the secretariat to revise the constitution to reflect those changes. Document UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/9/2/Add.1 contained proposals for such changes and was considered at the ninth session. The outcome of those deliberations was inconclusive, however. Nevertheless, AMCEN operations were modified to reflect a new vision and strategy for AMCEN within the context of emerging African initiatives. A further review of the constitution was therefore required.

32. At its ninth session, AMCEN adopted the Kampala Declaration on the Environment for Development, which provided policy guidance on many issues pertaining to the effective implementation of the programme of work within the framework of emerging initiatives in Africa and the challenges of the new global economic order. AMCEN instructed the secretariat to revise the constitution on the understanding that the secretariat should initiate a process for further intergovernmental consultations, taking into account the need to follow closely the evolution of African Union and NEPAD initiatives.

33. By decision 3, taken at its tenth session, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in June 2004, AMCEN noted with appreciation the efforts by the secretariat to facilitate the completion of the document on the revised constitution. Noting that few countries had submitted comments on the draft

constitution, it requested the secretariat to circulate the draft revised constitution immediately, in both English and in French, to all African countries for their review and comments.

34. At its eleventh and twelfth sessions, AMCEN decided to defer any discussions on the constitution until the evolving structures of the African Union, with respect to specialized technical committees became clearer. AMCEN is now part of the specialized technical committee pertaining to agriculture, rural economy, water and the environment. Annex II to the present document contains the decision by which the African Union decided to incorporate AMCEN into the structures of the specialized technical committees.

#### **D. Decision 4: Status and use of the general trust fund**

35. Pursuant to decision 4 on the status and use of the general trust fund, adopted by AMCEN at its twelfth session, the secretariat has made every effort 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 have enabled work on climate change to be undertaken effectively, the implementation of the AMCEN work programme continues to be limited by financial constraints.

36. Denmark has been the main sponsor of the climate change initiative, supported by, among others, the African Development Bank, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (with funds provided by Norway), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (through the World Bank), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (with funds provided by the British Department for International Development), UNEP and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

37. The implementation of many AMCEN activities regarding its decisions and work programme has been undertaken by UNEP in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, UNDP, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Health Organization.

38. Other stakeholders involved in the process include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in addition to the African Union Commission, the NEPAD secretariat, the regional economic communities and a number of other institutions and organizations, such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory and the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).

39. A report on contributions to the general trust fund, their enhancement and use is available as document UNEP/AMCEN/13/5.

#### **E. Decision 5: Chemicals and hazardous waste management**

40. By its decision 5, on chemicals and hazardous waste management, AMCEN took cognizance of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, among others.

41. The integration of sound chemicals management into national development planning processes to support sustainable development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition was recognized as a priority in the Strategic Approach. To support this priority area and to facilitate and ensure financial resources for sound management of chemicals in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, UNDP and UNEP have developed a partnership initiative for the integration of sound chemicals management into development planning processes. The partnership aims at providing the basis for leveraging support from multilateral and bilateral partners for the development of national capacities to manage chemicals in a sound manner. In Africa, the partnership is working with Liberia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia. Activities in Uganda and Zambia are close to a successful finalization.

42. Some 234 project proposals were submitted to the Strategic Approach secretariat for the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund over the first eight rounds of applications. Following the secretariat's screening of applications for completeness and eligibility, 193 applications were appraised by the Trust Fund Implementation Committee. The Committee approved 100 projects for total funding of approximately \$20,265,064. In addition, 63 projects were recommended for further development and resubmission. The approved projects are being implemented by 90 Governments and 10 civil society

organizations and involve activities in 89 countries, including 42 least developed countries and small island developing States. In Africa, 34 countries are involved in government and civil society projects.

43. Africa has been active in submitting project proposals to the Quick Start Programme and its Trust Fund. Of 173 government and 61 civil society project proposals, 67 and 23, respectively, came from Africa. The Programme is providing funding to 38 government-led projects and five civil society projects in Africa.

44. The approved projects pertain to initial enabling activities related to developing or updating national chemicals management profiles and establishing integrated national programmes for sound chemicals management; strengthening capacities to control the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and chemicals in the context of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; developing a globally harmonized system of classification and labelling of chemicals; implementing the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and enhancing the safe management of public health pesticides. The region received approximately \$7.8 million of total funding of \$20.2 million after the eighth round of applications to the Trust Fund in March 2010.

45. The Strategic Approach secretariat and the Chemicals Branch of the United Nations Division of Technology, Industry and Economics organized the third African regional meeting on the Strategic Approach in Abidjan in January 2010. The objectives of the meeting were to provide a forum for regional Strategic Approach stakeholders to review the outcomes of the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management; to identify priorities for follow-up in Africa; to address thematic issues of particular importance to the region, such as illegal traffic, emerging policy issues (including e-waste) and the strengthening of linkages to the health sector; to prepare for the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its consideration of chemicals on that occasion; and to consider the work of the African core group thus far and offer further guidance to the group during its intersessional work back-to-back with the regional meeting.

46. Key outcomes of the meeting included: draft recommendations in the area of nanotechnology, electronic waste and illegal traffic; revised terms of reference (inclusion of an International Conference on Chemicals Management Bureau member; annual meeting). Further details of the meeting can be found at <http://www.saicm.org/index.php?ql=fc&pageid=6>.

47. Africa's input to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth session was developed at the regional implementation meeting held in Addis Ababa in October 2009 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The meeting served as a preparatory forum for the consideration of the thematic clusters to be reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development during its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, to be held in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Those themes are: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and sustainable consumption and production (including a 10-year framework of programmes).

## **F. Decision 6: Environmental education and technology-supported learning**

48. By its decision 6, on environmental education and technology-supported learning, AMCEN called for, among other things, the development of an action plan for technology-supported learning. By paragraph (f), it also requested Governments undertaking the pilot action plans to provide an interim report to AMCEN at the current session and a final report at the fourteenth session on the status of their implementation.

49. An interim report is available as document UNEP/AMCEN/13/INF/2. The environmental education and e-learning components of the decision are described in individual sections (3 and 4, respectively), while other sections consider both aspects holistically. Overall, considerable progress has been made during the intersessional period. A number of strategic partnerships have been established and some progress has been made in the area of South-South cooperation. A major survey on the status of environmental education and technology-supported learning has been conducted.

50. Building upon the results of the survey, UNEP has developed programmes to take environmental education and education for sustainable development in Africa forward strategically. The programmes cover such areas as capacity-building, curriculum review, the development of new courses, research and South-South collaboration between African universities, in addition to linkages with Asian and Caribbean universities. The UNEP partnership on mainstreaming environment and sustainability in African universities has been a major springboard in this process.

51. The backbone of the Pan-African e-Learning for Environment Network has been established and 18 countries are participating. Capacity development and training have been conducted, as have awareness-raising activities. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the issue of donor support for the implementation of the broad spectrum of activities embraced by the decision continues to be the main challenge facing African countries, UNEP, international partners and other stakeholders. One case study focused on Kenya showing the impact of the decision at the national level is presented in the annex to the above-mentioned report.

## G. Decision 7: Africa Environment Day

52. Africa Environment Day is celebrated on 3 March every year in accordance with decision CM/Dec.685 (LXXVI) of the African Union, taken in July 2001. It is generally aimed at heightening public awareness of issues linked to environmental conservation.

53. By its decision 7, AMCEN agreed that every year one African country should be requested, on a regional rotation basis, to host the continental celebration of Africa Environment Day. It also requested the Commission of the African Union and its cooperation partners to work with the hosting State to make adequate preparations for the occasion.

54. The seventh Africa Environment Day, in 2009, was celebrated in Dakar. The theme of the edition was “Greening Africa” and it focused on the initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel to plant an area of trees that would become known as a “great green wall” and the diverse environmental challenges that the initiative sought to resolve. The occasion was marked by the planting of trees and the organization of interactive programmes in partnership with local radio stations. In some cases, drawing and poetry competitions were organized with local schools.

55. The eighth Africa Environment Day, in 2010, was celebrated in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. Its theme was “African resilience to climate change: biodiversity conservation and enhancing traditional knowledge”. The occasion was marked by celebrations and meetings that placed 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 was a key topic considered. Both events were well attended by dignitaries and key stakeholders.

## H. Decision 8: Africa Environment Outlook process and the Africa Environment Information Network

56. By its decision 8, AMCEN reaffirmed its commitment to the Africa Environment Outlook process as a tool for monitoring sustainable development in Africa and a framework for environmental reporting at the national and subregional levels. It requested the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to support the production of the third report in the series.

57. AMCEN also expressed its appreciation to UNEP for the production of the publication *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* within the framework of the Africa Environment Outlook process. It requested the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to support its production on a regular basis and to assist countries to develop national atlases.

58. Kenya and Uganda have accordingly received assistance and have produced their national atlases. It is worth noting that work is continuing on the production of a national atlas for the Libyan

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