



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

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Green Economy to Deliver Sustainable Solutions to Africa's Major Environmental Challenges

African Environment Ministers Gather for 13th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment



Bamako (Mali)/Nairobi (Kenya), 23 June 2010 –

Environment Ministers and Government representatives from over forty countries in Africa are convening in Bamako, Mali from 23 to 25 June to shape the regions environmental agenda for the next two years.

The Thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of this institution, which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serves as a secretariat.

The Conference kicked off this afternoon with President of Mali Amadou Toumani Toure's call to Ministers to take action now and chart a realistic and yet very strong position on the ongoing negotiations on climate change and biodiversity and propose clear approaches that use the environment as a tool for regional integration and good governance.

The Conference, which is held under the theme "Enhancing the interrelationship between climate change, biodiversity and desertification for sustainable development" is meant to produce a strong and updated African common position that captures region's priorities and expectations for climate talks leading up to Cancun, Mexico, December 2010.

UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said: "African countries have opportunities to achieve a transformation towards a Green Economy, one that delivers sustainable economic growth and development, employment creation and poverty reduction, while enhancing the continent's natural capital and reducing ecological scarcities and environmental risks."

"These opportunities can be achieved by significantly increasing investments in sectors such as renewable energies, low-carbon transport, energy efficient buildings, improved waste management, improved freshwater provision, sustainable agriculture, and management of forest and fishery resources. Such investments are driven by or supported by national policy reforms and the development of an international policy and market infrastructure," he stated.

He reassured Ministers that UNEP is committed to work together with Governments, and to build critical partnerships with other agencies, the private sector and civil society to support processes of transformative change that we see taking shape around the world.

During Three days, Ministers responsible for the environment and other government delegates from the region along with international and regional experts, representatives of international, regional organizations and members of civil society, will discuss issues related to Climate change, Biodiversity and desertification.

The Thirteen Session of the African Ministerial Conference is expected to deliver key major outputs on the following:

- A strong and updated common Africa position on the negotiation of a comprehensive international climate-change regime beyond 2012 and creating a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes
- A process leading to a common Africa position on access and benefit sharing in biodiversity negotiations leading up to the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010
- A call to partners for enhanced implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- A call to UNEP, WHO and partners to support implementation of the Libreville Declaration including the development of strategic alliances between health and environment sectors and joint plans of action
- A call to the African Union and UNEP to support the convening of the first the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa in 2010.

Note to editors:

On the Green economy: Two years ago, UNEP launched the Global Green New Deal/Green Economy Initiative, as nations around the world struggled with successive food and fuel price surges and persistent environmental challenges, compounded by a deep financial and economic crisis. The basic thrust behind the Green Economy thinking is that the economic models of the 20th century are unlikely to assist in achieving the multiple goals the international community has set ranging from combating climate change to supplying freshwater, sufficient food and overcoming poverty.

UNEP's Support to National Green Economy Initiatives in Africa

UNEP and other agencies within the United Nations system are keen to bring our support to regional and national initiatives on Green Economy. Many economies, including a large number of developing ones, are now requesting assistance on how best to tailor a Green Economy to their often differing developmental, social and environmental departure points and circumstances.

To date, close to 30 countries have requested UNEP's assistance towards making the Green Economy a reality in their economic planning and development strategies. This support is taking the form of policy advice and macro-economic assessments to better understand the full range of opportunities and challenges of a Green Economy in specific country and regional contexts.

For more information on Green economy please visit: **UNEP Green Economy Website;** <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>

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