

Decision on the African process for combating climate change

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Recalling the decision by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its twelfth session, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in June 2008, to develop and submit for adoption a common negotiating position on an international climate change regime beyond 2012 in addition to a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes,¹

Recalling also the outcome of the third African Ministerial Conference on Financing for Development, bringing together African ministers of finance, held on 21 and 22 May 2009 in Kigali, which expressed concerns at the negative impacts and serious threats of carbon emissions to Africa's economies and the continent's ability to attain the Millennium Development Goals and reduce poverty,

Recalling further the outcomes of the joint conference of African Union ministers of agriculture, land and livestock held on 23 and 24 April 2009 in Addis Ababa, which called for integrated agriculture and environment approaches, including development of an agriculture-based climate change adaptation framework and discussed the issue of land-based carbon,

Recalling the outcome of the African Conference on Coastal Erosion, held in Dakar on 18 and 19 May 2009, which advocated regional efforts to combat such erosion, while calling for strengthened cooperation in meeting this challenge;

Reaffirming all African Union decisions and declarations including the Algiers Declaration on Climate Change of 19 November 2008,

Reinforcing the role played by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as a specialized technical committee of the African Union in providing leadership for environmental management and advocacy in Africa,

Expressing concern at the scientific conclusions contained in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, particularly as they relate to the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change in Africa and noting that, while Africa has contributed the least to the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, it is the most vulnerable continent to the impacts of climate change and has the least capacity to adapt,

Emphasizing that Africa's priorities are to implement climate change programmes in such a way as to achieve sustainable development, in particular to alleviate poverty and attain the Millennium Development Goals, with emphasis on the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and disabled persons,

Recognizing the need to integrate Africa's existing climate change initiatives and programmes into a consolidated framework to ensure coordination and coherence in the implementation and review of climate change initiatives and sustainable development plans in Africa at all levels,

Welcoming, in this context, the decision of the Executive Council of the African Union, adopted in January 2009 in Addis Ababa, approving the action plan for the implementation of the Great Green Wall initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel;

Appreciating the efforts of the African group of negotiators under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, working with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Commission of the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other relevant intergovernmental institutions, in the development of a common African position on the comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012, beginning with the common position for the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, agreed in Naivasha, Kenya, in September 2006, through to the Algiers Platform agreed as a common position in Algiers in November 2008 for the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

¹ UNEP/AMCEN/12/9, annex II.

Decide:

1. To welcome the work of the African high-level expert panel on climate change in providing technical support to the development of a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes, and the work of the African group of negotiators under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process in developing Africa's common negotiating position;
2. To adopt the outcomes of the meeting of the African high-level expert panel on climate change serving as the experts meeting for the special session on climate change of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
3. Also to adopt the outcome of the meeting of the African group of negotiators in the development of Africa's common negotiating position;
4. To reaffirm the endorsement of the indicative conceptual outline of a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes and the work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in combating climate change;
5. Also to reaffirm that Africa, in the context of environmental justice, should be equitably compensated for environmental resources, economic and social losses;
6. To emphasize that Africa requires substantially scaled-up finance, technology and capacity-building for adaptation and risk management;
7. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit Africa's common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012 in addition to the conceptual framework of African climate change programmes to the Executive Council of the African Union at its ordinary meeting and to African heads of State at their summit to be held in July 2009, and also to submit those outcomes through the Commission of the African Union;
8. To request the Chair of the African group of negotiators under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to base submissions to the negotiation process for the international climate change regime beyond 2012, as appropriate, on Africa's common negotiating position;
9. To invite the Commission of the African Union, the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and other partners to pursue their cooperation to give effective political, financial and technical support to all member States and regional economic communities in the implementation of measures to combat climate change;
10. Also to invite bilateral and multilateral partners to support the implementation of measures to combat climate change in Africa;
11. To welcome the offer by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to host the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment meeting of Africa's high-level expert panel on climate change in October 2009 and the African Group of negotiators at its headquarters in Addis Ababa, in preparation for the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to take place in Copenhagen in December 2009;
12. To invite the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to inform member States of the outcome of that meeting;
13. To keep under review the implementation of the African process for combating climate change and its associated programmes and projects;
14. To invite the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its thirteenth session, to be held in 2010, a detailed report on the implementation of the African process for combating climate change;
15. To express our appreciation to the Government of Kenya for hosting the special session on climate change of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.