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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Eleventh session
Brazzaville, 22–26 May 2006

Report of the ministerial segment held on 25 and 26 May 2006

Introduction

1. The ministerial segment of the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006.
2. It was attended by ministers from AMCEN member States and representatives of African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations agencies, secretariats of various environmental conventions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The list of participants is contained in annex III to the present report.

I. Opening of the ministerial segment of the eleventh session

A. Opening statements

3. The ministerial segment was officially opened by Mr. Isidore Mvoumba, Prime Minister of Congo, at 5.10 p.m. on Thursday, 25 May 2006, following a musical performance and a number of opening statements.
4. In his address, Mr. Mvoumba welcomed ministers and conveyed the greetings of the President of Congo, Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who was regrettably unable to attend. He said that although Africa offered huge potential for human, social and economic development its progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals had been hampered by the numerous challenges it faced and by the failure of the international community to meet its commitments to sustainable development. In that regard, he said that, although Central African countries had made a commitment to promote sustainable environmental management, their efforts remained largely insufficient and they needed additional support. He therefore emphasized the urgent need to mobilize resources.

5. Although there was a need, he said, to promote further South-South cooperation, steps had already been taken to encourage dialogue between ministers from the Congo, Mekong and Amazon river basins. It was hoped that the first meeting of those ministers would be held in Brazzaville before the end of 2006. He urged African ministers to accord particular importance to the issue of sustainable forestry management, drawing attention to the efforts made by Congo in that regard. In conclusion, he expressed his gratitude to the Government of China for its commitment to promote cooperation with Africa in the area of the environment, in particular by providing initial funding for the establishment of a subregional disaster prevention and management centre in Brazzaville.
6. Opening statements were also made by Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Leonard Good, Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Mr. Zhu Guangyao, Vice Minister, State Environmental Protection Administration of China, Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economy and the Environment of Congo, Mr. Heiko Liedeker, Executive Director of the Forest Stewardship Council, Ms. Rosebud Kurwijila, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, and Mr. Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer, Minister of the Environment of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and outgoing President of AMCEN.
7. In his opening statement, Mr. Kakakhel observed that the wealth of natural resources in Congo, including the Congo River and large areas of tropical rainforest, made it a fitting venue for the eleventh session of AMCEN. Responsible environmental management was, he said, a necessity for sustainable development, peace and security; African countries therefore needed to consider how to mitigate the effects of economic development on the environment. In that regard, AMCEN deserved praise for recent initiatives, including the publication of the second Africa Environment Outlook report and the associated Africa Environment Information Network, which would help African Governments understand, monitor and address the environmental problems they faced. UNEP was proud of its involvement in such work.
8. In addition, he said that the various important policy proposals, including the crucial issue of how to finance environmental projects in a sustainable way, which would be considered by AMCEN at its eleventh session would play an important role in determining the success of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Consideration of ways to exploit the synergies between the work of AMCEN and the African Union and to foster collaboration with other environmental forums would also be of great value. He concluded by paying tribute to the Government of China for its support to the African region, notably in the areas of capacity-building and disaster management, which demonstrated the potential value of South-South cooperation.
9. Mr. Good said that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) had supported the work of AMCEN through substantial investments in hundreds of environmental projects in Africa, including projects to control invasive species, expand energy availability and alternatives, support internationally-shared water systems and aquifers, combat land degradation and desertification and contribute to the multi-country Africa chemical stockpiles programme through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.
10. Noting the consistent interest of AMCEN in an African Environment Facility, complementary to GEF, he pointed out that a significant number of the funding requests to be evaluated by the Council of the Global Environment Facility at its meeting in June 2006 related to environmental work in Africa and he urged AMCEN to support those funding requests. Acknowledging concerns among AMCEN members about the resource allocation framework of GEF, he highlighted the transparency of such an approach and the benefits it would provide to African countries; he observed, however, that the approach could be modified if necessary at the end of the current funding cycle. He concluded by emphasizing that GEF remained a strong supporter of AMCEN and the African environment and would continue to make substantial investments in Africa.
11. In his opening statement, Mr. Zhu said that the Conference was a symbol of the coordination and solidarity between African countries in matters relating to the environment and represented an opportunity to strengthen the cooperative relationship between China and Africa for environmental protection. Noting the historic parallels between China and Africa, he said that the two regions were now facing the common challenge of sustainable development through mutual support. China was also contributing to global sustainable development through other bilateral cooperation and multilateral processes. He reaffirmed the commitment of China to South-South cooperation and expressed support for the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. He announced the imminent

establishment of the China-Africa Environmental Centre of UNEP and said that he looked forward to seeing it play an important role in the environmental efforts of African countries.

12. Mr. Djombo said that the environmental protection, and in particular sustainable forest management, formed a significant part of his Government's development agenda. Despite the development of international forestry regulations, a very small percentage of the world's tropical forests were managed in a sustainable way. Further to the development of a forestry management programme in his country by a Congolese forestry company with the endorsement of the Congolese Government, the Forest Stewardship Council had awarded the company a certificate of responsible forestry management. He noted that Congo was the first country in Africa to have received such recognition for its work. In conclusion, he underscored his Government's firm commitment to sustainable forest management and other sustainable development activities.

13. Mr. Liedeker, also referring to the Forest Stewardship Council's certification of the Congolese forestry management programme, praised those responsible for creating an enabling environment for the achievement of the high standards required for the certification, thereby setting an example for tropical forest management in Africa and beyond. He drew attention to the environmental, health, social, cultural and economic benefits of sustainable forest management and called on Governments and others in the international community to ensure that regulatory frameworks allowed those exploiting forests responsibly to maintain their market positions. After delivering his statement, he presented copies of the certificate to the Congolese Prime Minister and to other contributors to the forestry management programme.

14. Ms. Kurwijila, noting that the Commission of the African Union was active in a wide range of environmental initiatives, said that the close involvement of the Commission in the preparations for the current meeting of AMCEN signified an important step in the joint efforts of both bodies towards achieving environmental sustainability in Africa. Recalling the request made by the African Union at its extraordinary summit on agriculture and water in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in February 2004, to the chair of the Commission of the African Union to adapt the mandates, structures and activities of the African Ministers' Council on Water, AMCEN and the African Ministerial Conference on Agriculture, in order to integrate them into the activities of the Commission of the African Union and its specialized technical committees, she said that the Commission saw a strong linkage between agricultural development and the sustainable management of environmental resources and was committed to integrating the efforts of African ministers of the environment, agriculture and water, as well as development partners.

15. Mr. Elwaer thanked the Government and people of Congo for their hospitality and expressed his gratitude to UNEP for its financial support to the eleventh session of AMCEN and to the Programme's former Executive Director, Mr. Klaus Töpfer, for having championed the Conference during his tenure. Recalling that UNEP had hosted the AMCEN secretariat since its creation in 1985, he thanked all the other partners that had contributed to the success of the Conference since then, noting in particular the contributions of the Government of Norway over the years. He also noted the recent contributions of the Government of China in the context of the cooperative arrangements between China and Africa in the area of environmental protection. Outlining achievements since the tenth session, he said that the main objective of the present session was to provide a platform for environment ministers to review implementation of action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD and to consider financing strategies and links to the African Union. He expressed his full support to the newly elected President of AMCEN and concluded by officially launching a publication on the history of AMCEN from 1985 to 2005, which demonstrated the Conference's influence on important political processes.

B. Launch of the second Africa Environment Outlook report

16. After the opening statements, Mr. Mvoumba announced the launch of the second Africa Environment Outlook report and a short film was shown on the African environment.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

17. The following countries were elected to serve on the bureau of AMCEN for the period 2006–2008:

Subregion	Country	Position
Central Africa	Congo	President
Southern Africa	South Africa	Vice-President
West Africa	Benin	Vice-President
Eastern Africa	Rwanda	Vice-President
North Africa	Egypt	Rapporteur

18. On assuming the presidency, Mr. Djombo emphasized the need for collaboration among AMCEN members in order to meet the environmental challenges facing Africa, particularly with regard to financing environmental activities, and he congratulated the outgoing and the newly elected members of the Bureau. Referring to a recent treaty signed by countries of the Congo River basin in which those countries made a commitment to place forestry and environment at the centre of their development agendas, he urged the member States of AMCEN to honour those commitments by defining funding mechanisms to make such initiatives sustainable. In addition, he called for the establishment of an environmental prize which could be awarded to Africans in recognition of their efforts to protect the environment. He concluded by expressing his personal commitment to achieving specific objectives during his tenure in collaboration with other members of the Bureau, the outgoing President and the secretariat of AMCEN.

B. Adoption of the agenda

19. The ministers adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (UNEP/AMCEN/11/1):

1. Opening of the ministerial segment of the eleventh session.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Consideration of the report of the Expert Group segment.
4. Ministerial policy dialogue.
5. Consideration of matters related to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment process:
 - (a) Amendments to the constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
 - (b) Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
6. Venue for the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.
7. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment.
8. Other matters.
9. Closure of the session.

C. Organization of work

20. The President of AMCEN introduced the draft programme of work and the list of documents for the ministerial segment contained in annexes I and II to the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/AMCEN/11/1/Add.1). He drew attention to a number of side events, including a tree planting ceremony and an event to launch the establishment of a subregional disaster prevention and management centre in Brazzaville.

III. Consideration of the report of the Expert Group segment

21. The Chair of the Expert Group segment, held from 22 to 24 May 2006, presented the report of the segment, contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/11/3, drawing attention to the salient points in the Group's deliberations and introducing the draft declaration and decisions prepared by the experts and submitted for consideration and possible adoption by the ministers.

22. In particular, the Chair highlighted the sections of the report relating to the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, the general trust fund of AMCEN, the second Africa Environmental Outlook report and other environmental issues of relevance to Africa.

23. Following a brief discussion in which a number of ministers commended the Government of Congo on the excellent facilities provided and arrangements made for the eleventh session of the Conference, the ministers adopted the text of the report with some amendments, noting that further consideration would be given to the draft Brazzaville declaration on the environment and development and the draft decisions, as contained in annexes I and II to that report.

24. In considering the draft decision on the Constitution of AMCEN (draft decision 3), several ministers indicated that, although they were in favour of ensuring continuity in the work of the Conference, they had some concerns about the constitutional implications of the provision in the draft text allowing the outgoing President or at least one member of the outgoing Bureau to participate in the meetings of the AMCEN Bureau after the expiry of their tenure. Accordingly, the secretariat was entrusted with the task of drafting a resolution on the issue, for consideration by ministers, which would not require an amendment of the Constitution. The ministers adopted that resolution, as contained in annex II to the present report.

25. Following additional discussions, in which a number of ministers proposed amendments to the text of the decisions and the declaration, the ministers adopted, as orally amended, the Brazzaville Declaration on the Environment for Development, as contained in annex I to the present report, and the decisions, as contained in annex II.

IV. Ministerial policy dialogue

A. Introduction

26. In considering the item, the ministers had before them the policy dialogue briefs contained in documents UNEP/AMCEN/11/4, UNEP/AMCEN/11/4/Add.1 and UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/11/5.

B. Financing environmental activities

1. African Environment Facility

27. The representative of the African Development Bank provided an overview of the proposed African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank and outlined a feasibility study of that Facility which was currently being prepared for submission to the Bank's President. The aim of the Facility, he said, was to support the environment in Africa, particularly through NEPAD and national environmental action plans. Rather than become another multilateral financing institution, the Facility would serve as a special fund within the African Development Bank, adding an environmental dimension to the funding of policies and programmes that supported sustainable development. The Facility would complement the funding of environmental activities undertaken by GEF, the African Development Bank and donors and would focus on financing innovative environmental projects rather than new studies. Capital would be sought from new and existing international funding sources. It was

expected that the establishment of the Facility would commence sometime between March 2007 and May 2008.

28. The representative of GEF said that, while the fourth replenishment of GEF and other complex challenges were currently the focus of the work of GEF, he welcomed the proposal for the establishment of an African Environment Facility, especially in the light of the concerns of African ministers about the difficulties of financing environmental projects. He noted that the mandate of the African Environment Facility would not duplicate that of GEF, since the latter merely financed incremental costs of projects, whereas the former would provide for broader funding criteria. GEF would be willing to offer institutional and technical support to the new facility and to co-finance specific projects, but would be unlikely to channel funds directly into such an institution. In conclusion, he stressed that African countries needed to increase their capacity to access GEF and similar sources, in particular by developing their understanding of the ways such funds operated. The appointment by Governments of an individual exclusively responsible for raising such awareness would be very beneficial in that regard.

29. During the discussion of the issue, there was consensus that AMCEN should continue to seek the establishment of the African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank. Some representatives said that the Facility would make the environmental sector more visible, helping ensure that ministers of finance and economy understood that environmental protection was crucial to development. It was suggested that the importance of the Facility should be better explained to finance ministers to enable them to advocate within the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank the establishment of the African Environment Facility. In that context, several ministers suggested that AMCEN should seek to highlight the importance of the environment at the next African Union meeting of heads of State, to be held in Banjul, the Gambia. One minister suggested that the President of Senegal, who was coordinator of the environment initiative of NEPAD, and the President of AMCEN, should be requested to undertake that task. It was further suggested that the establishment of the Facility could help attract external donor support, in part because it would require the establishment of a reliable supervisory body that could manage initiatives.

30. With respect to the characteristics of the proposed Facility, there was widespread support for the notion that it should set less demanding criteria for accessing funds than GEF. It was further observed that the African Environment Facility should have clear and flexible funding criteria, designed to address national and continental priorities; that the feasibility study under way should be completed and circulated swiftly to provide ministers with greater understanding of the issues; that the assessment of funds available from the African Environment Facility should extend beyond the incremental cost approach of GEF and include the total costs of environmental projects; that the Facility's success would depend on adequate contributions; and that African countries should lead the way with generous commitments.

31. There were calls from some ministers for more information on the operation of the African Environment Facility, including the means by which it would be financed and the ways in which it would help Governments locate funds from outside sources. Although there was widespread acceptance that the African Environment Facility would complement GEF, some ministers expressed concern that its creation would deter Africa countries from taking the necessary steps to meet the criteria for accessing GEF and other such facilities. In that context, one minister said that GEF was keen to help countries build their capacity to access funds. Others called for reform of GEF, in particular its criteria for accessing finance.

2. Other financing approaches

32. The representative of UNEP made a presentation on the financing of environmental activities, in which he discussed four financing approaches: environmental funds, which could be regional, country-specific, site-specific or theme-specific; payment for ecosystem services; debt-for-nature swaps; and trading in carbon credits.

33. In the ensuing discussion, one minister shared his country's experience in preserving its natural biodiversity and forest cover by pursuing several environmental financing approaches appropriate to the local situation. He highlighted the fact that debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative had released funds to support the protection of biodiversity in his country. Other financing mechanisms, including ecotourism initiatives, which involved local communities and the provision of subsidies, were also employed in the country's conservation programme.

C. AMCEN work programme for 2007–2008

34. In considering its programme of work for the biennium 2007–2008, the Conference was invited to focus on a number of issues, as set out in the annotated provisional agenda for the segment (UNEP/AMCEN/11/1/Add.1).

35. The ministers adopted the draft indicative work programme for the biennium 2007–2008, based on the draft contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/11/4 and modified on the basis of the discussions in the Expert Group segment, on the understanding that the draft would be finalized by the secretariat and submitted to the Bureau for approval.

D. Linkages between AMCEN and the African Union

36. Introducing the item, the outgoing President of AMCEN described the progress that had been made since the request made by the African Union at its extraordinary summit on agriculture and water in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in February 2004, to the chair of the Commission of the African Union to adapt the mandates, structures and activities of the African Ministers' Council on Water, AMCEN and the African Ministerial Conference on Agriculture, in order to integrate them into the activities of the Commission of the African Union and its specialized technical committees. He recalled that, in subsequent discussions, AMCEN and the African Union had agreed on the need to establish a separate and distinct specialized technical committee to accommodate the Conference and allow it to support the African Union in its decision-making. The main outstanding issue was whether responsibility for running the AMCEN secretariat should be transferred from UNEP to the African Union. In addition, he said that the specialized technical committees were to fall under the responsibility of the Executive Council of the African Union in accordance with the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

37. The representative of the African Union provided additional information on the progress made in integrating AMCEN into the activities of the African Union, noting that a final decision on the matter was expected to be taken at the African Union summit in July 2007. He stressed the need for continued cooperation between the Commission of the African Union and AMCEN in the interim period and said that UNEP would remain a vital development partner for AMCEN, even though it was anticipated that the African Union would assume ultimate responsibility for the secretariat.

38. In the ensuing discussion, several ministers voiced support for the integration of AMCEN into the activities of the African Union and reiterated the need for the Conference to maintain strong links with UNEP.

V. Consideration of matters related to the AMCEN process

A. Amendments to the AMCEN constitution

39. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that, during the eighth session of AMCEN in Abuja, Nigeria, in April 2000, ministers had raised the question of revising the constitution of AMCEN in the light of the reinvigoration of AMCEN and the evolving structure of the African Union. The secretariat had reported progress on the revision at the ninth and tenth meetings of AMCEN and feedback had been incorporated into further revisions. Following legal advice, the secretariat recommended that the finalization of the revision of the constitution should be deferred until the debate on the matter within the African Union, and between the African Union and AMCEN, had been concluded. Accordingly, the ministers agreed to defer consideration of the issue.

B. Status of the general trust fund for AMCEN

40. In considering the sub-item, the ministers had before them document UNEP/AMCEN/11/5/Add.1 on the status of the general trust fund for AMCEN.

41. The representative of the secretariat noted that, although there had been a considerable improvement in the level of country contributions to the trust fund since 2002, over fifty per cent of countries had not contributed. In accordance with the request of the Conference articulated in decision 4 on the status and use of the general trust fund, adopted at its tenth session, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 30 June 2004, the secretariat in consultation with member States had been developing criteria for contributions by member States.

VI. Venue for the twelfth session of AMCEN

42. The minister from South Africa informed the ministers that, following consultations among the southern African States and at the request of Namibia, which had previously offered to host the twelfth session of AMCEN, he had been mandated to convey the offer of his Government to host the twelfth session of the Conference, in 2008. He would duly inform the secretariat of the dates and venue for onward communication to other member States of AMCEN.

43. The minister from Rwanda, emphasizing that he had no objection to South Africa's serving as host of the twelfth session, reiterated the willingness of his Government to host a future meeting, as had been conveyed to the Conference at its tenth session in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. He said that he would have liked to be informed in advance of the change in the host country for the twelfth session of AMCEN.

44. A representative of the secretariat clarified that, while there was no explicit rule, since the seventh session of the Conference the host countries for successive sessions of AMCEN were typically selected by rotation across the southern, western, eastern, northern and central subregions of the continent. The member States were free to select any country as a future host, he said, but, in accordance with the established pattern, the twelfth session of the Conference would be hosted by a country in the southern Africa subregion and the thirteenth session would be hosted by a country in West Africa.

45. The minister of one country noted that, while the facilities and services provided for the current AMCEN session by the host country were well appreciated, the money spent on those might have been better directed towards other AMCEN activities. He further observed the importance of AMCEN presenting a clear, public message of environmental consciousness. He therefore requested the secretariat to prepare a set of standards for future meetings of AMCEN that would not deter member States concerned about such expenses from offering to host the Conference and that would demonstrate an environmentally-friendly attitude.

46. Following that discussion, the Conference confirmed by acclamation the selection of South Africa as the host country for the twelfth session of the Conference.

VII. Other matters

A. Linkages with partner organizations and multilateral environmental agreements

1. Statement by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

47. In his statement, Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, noted the special problems affecting the continent of Africa and praised the contribution of AMCEN to assisting the work of the desertification, climate change and biodiversity conventions. Drawing attention to some of the important initiatives of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, such as the preparation of national action programmes and the launch of events related to the International Year of Deserts and Desertification 2006, he said that the Convention aimed to address the challenges of desertification from the perspective of sustainable development. Further financing was needed, however, for the implementation of activities under the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. The fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, to be held in Buenos Aires in October 2006, would review global thematic issues concerning desertification.

2. Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals

48. Mr. Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, said that the Convention covered six primary species groups – migratory birds, terrestrial mammals, marine mammals, marine turtles, fish and insects – all of which were present in Africa. They were categorized in the Convention into Appendix I or Appendix II species according to their conservation priority, with different types of action applicable in each case. Agreements and memorandums of understanding had been entered into for a number of African species, including the Sahelo-Saharan antelope, the West African elephant, marine turtles and gorilla species. The Convention

had 35 Parties in Africa, nearly 40 percent of the global total, and additional African countries were being encouraged to become signatories. In its activities, the Convention secretariat followed the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. In conclusion, he said that there was no evidence that avian influenza was currently being spread by migratory species of birds and noted that it was important to guard against overreaction and the implementation of inappropriate measures.

3. Statement by the representative of UNIDO

49. In his statement, the representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) said that his organization appreciated the contribution made by AMCEN to the protection of the African environment and was keen to strengthen existing links. UNIDO supported the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, considering it a credible response to the environmental degradation creating poverty and threatening economic growth in Africa, and encouraged further coordination for joint decision-making and joint action between AMCEN and such organizations as the African Union and the secretariat of NEPAD with respect to implementation of the action plan. Finally, he extended an invitation for the president of AMCEN to visit UNIDO headquarters with a view to consolidating relationships between the two organizations.

4. Statement by the representative of AMCOW

50. In his statement, the representative of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) recalled that AMCOW had been established in 2002 to address the pressing water policy challenges of Africa and provide a framework for regional cooperation and action in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. AMCOW had established the African Water Facility, hosted by the African Development Bank, as a mechanism for coordinated resource mobilization for financing water sector development in Africa, and would be very willing to share its experience with AMCEN as it set up the African Environment Facility. In conclusion, he suggested a number of ways to increase coordination between African intergovernmental ministerial bodies, including by co-hosting events and meetings.

5. Bamako Convention

51. Noting that the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa had been signed by representatives of 53 African countries, one minister pointed out that the financial commitment expected from the African Union had not yet been realized. He requested the secretariat and the representatives of UNEP and the African Union to address that pending issue.

6. Statement by the minister from Kenya

52. The minister from Kenya informed the Conference that later in 2006 his country would host the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. He expressed the hope that an African perspective on the environment would be clearly articulated at both international conferences, which were being held for the first time in Africa. He sought the cooperation of AMCEN member States in that regard.

B. Elephant management policy in South Africa

53. The representative of South Africa said that the success of conservation efforts in southern Africa had led to an unsustainable rise in elephant populations, from approximately 6,000 in 1900 to 300,000 in 2005. Problems attributable to large populations of elephants included increasing damage to forests and vegetation in national parks and frequent conflicts between local human communities and elephants that foraged on agricultural lands. A number of passive and active interventions were discussed, ranging from no action to contraception, translocation and culling of elephant populations. Each of the options had ethical and financial implications and there were varying levels of certainty as to the effectiveness and long-term environmental impact of each option.

54. Because of international sensitivities concerning elephants, their iconic status both in tourism and as a representation of Africa and South Africa's commitment to international relations, the

Government of South Africa had initiated a wide-ranging discussion regarding strategies to manage the elephant population in southern Africa. A regional perspective was useful, given the transboundary movement of elephant herds; he therefore sought the advice of fellow AMCEN members on the issue.

55. In the ensuing discussion, ministers commended South Africa for its conservation efforts and for its sensitive presentation of a difficult wildlife management issue. Ministers from countries throughout the continent, and from southern Africa in particular, concurred that a regional perspective was necessary in view of the natural transboundary movement of elephants and also because of the emotive power of elephants in the international arena. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species pointed out that Article 4 of that Convention provided a tool for regional agreements on migratory species and indicated that the Convention secretariat would be pleased to facilitate an agreement for southern Africa, as had recently been done for west African states, in partnership with the World Conservation Union.

C. Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes

56. In the afternoon of Friday, 26 May 2006, Rwanda and Gabon became signatories to the Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes, which had been adopted at the Intergovernmental Meeting on Great Apes and the Great Apes Survival Project, held in Kinshasa on 9 September 2005, and which aimed to create partnerships between countries with great apes in their territories and donor countries, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other concerned parties. It was noted that 19 out of 21 African great ape range States had now signed the Declaration.

VIII. Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment

57. In the afternoon of Friday, 26 May 2006, the ministers adopted the report of the ministerial segment on the basis of the draft report which had been circulated in the meeting, on the understanding that finalization of the report would be entrusted to the secretariat, working in conjunction with the Rapporteur.

IX. Closure of the session

58. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the ministerial segment and the session closed at 7.10 p.m. on Friday, 26 May 2006.

Annex I

Brazzaville Declaration on the Environment for Development

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting with satisfaction the contribution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in providing political guidance and leadership for environmental advocacy in Africa,

Recalling the outcome of recent major United Nations conferences and summit meetings, in particular the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000, in which the international community recognized the special challenges facing Africa and made a commitment to support Africa in achieving sustainable development,

Concerned about the increasing number of environmental threats facing Africa and the continent's vulnerability to global environmental change, which in turn compromise the efforts of the continent to promote sustainable development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goals on extreme poverty and hunger,

Recalling the commitments made at the two Partners' Conferences on the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development held in Algiers, in December 2003, and in Dakar, in March 2005,

Noting with satisfaction the progress made in the early stages of the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recognizing the weak capacities of African States to implement the programmes and projects identified in the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Noting also the progress made in the implementation of the coastal and marine component of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development within the framework of the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region and the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region,

Noting further the progress made in the development and early stages of implementation of the TerrAfrica initiative since its launch in Nairobi in October 2005, including the preparation of the Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management of the Global Environment Facility,

Emphasizing the importance and relevance of the TerrAfrica initiative as a means to broaden sustainable land management projects in sub-Saharan Africa and thereby support the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling chapter 3 of Agenda 21, as adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which calls for the engagement and participation of major groups in the intergovernmental processes considering sustainable development issues,

Recalling also the preamble to the African Union Constitutive Act, in which member States made a commitment to build partnerships between Governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, young people and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among peoples,

Noting the adverse effect of conflicts on the environment and the need for peace and security in Africa, as the basis for stability, sound environmental management and sustainable development,

Recognizing the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of African countries to cope with the adverse effects of environmental change and to manage emergencies and disasters,

Recognizing also the roles of regional, subregional and national bodies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and financial development institutions in the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Emphasizing that policy, legal and institutional frameworks at all levels are essential for achieving sustainable development,

Noting also the role played by the Global Environment Facility in funding the implementation of environmental programmes and projects,

Noting with concern the changes made to the Global Environment Facility in respect of its fourth replenishment, in particular the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to adopt the resource allocation framework, and gravely concerned that the resource allocation framework will limit the resources available to Africa,

Welcoming the offer of the Government of South Africa to host the third meeting of the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility and associated meetings in Cape Town from 27 August to 1 September 2006,

Further welcoming the offer by the Government of Kenya to host the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to that Convention, to be held from 6 to 17 November 2006, as well as the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, to be held from 27 November to 1 December 2006,

Noting the need to adopt the revised Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment with a view to linking the Conference to the organs of the African Union,

Acknowledging the usefulness of the second Africa Environment Outlook report as the second comprehensive report on the state of Africa's environment and its contribution to the understanding of the benefits to be derived from the environment in Africa,

Recalling the Durban Declaration on Environmental Impact Assessment, adopted by the Conference in 1995, and recognizing the role of the pan-African Capacity Development and Linkages for Environmental Assessment in Africa network as a tool to increase the awareness and capacity of African professionals with respect to environmental assessment and management, as needed for the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Acknowledging the role of the Partnership for Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa project in promoting efforts to build the capacity of selected African States in the development and implementation of environmental laws and institutions,

Welcoming the launch of the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development,

Acknowledging with appreciation resolution 58/211 of the United Nations General Assembly, which declared 2006 to be the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

Welcoming the adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its first session, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 6 February 2006, and the subsequent endorsement of the Approach by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in its decision SS.IX/1 of 9 February 2006,

Noting with appreciation the work of the Government of South Africa, as presented at the eleventh session of the Conference, regarding elephant management in southern Africa,

Hereby declare our resolve:

1. To continue to implement fully the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, in particular its capacity development programme, and to finalize and adopt the subregional action plans;
2. To urge Governments to take necessary action in support of the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions as the framework for implementation of the marine and coastal component of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and invite them to support the implementation of projects on large marine ecosystems;

3. To promote the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, in particular the priority areas identified by the Conference, and reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of thematic centres of excellence in support of capacity-building in Africa;
4. To urge Governments to take necessary action to ensure that the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment is replenished during the intersessional period;
5. To request the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to ensure the establishment of the African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank;
6. To call on the Global Environment Facility to continue to give high priority to African countries in allocating financial resources for the successful implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and to urge African members of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to advocate within the Council support for the implementation of the action plan at country and subregional levels;
7. To call on the Global Environment Facility to continue to support at significant levels the goals and efforts expressed by African countries and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in the context of the action plan for the environment initiative and TerrAfrica;
8. To urge the Global Environment Facility to allocate resources in a transparent and equitable manner, based on the needs and priorities of countries and regions and to request the Facility to streamline and simplify its procedures and review the system of co-financing, so as to create greater opportunities for African countries to access the resources of the Global Environment Facility;
9. To request the Global Environment Facility to review and reform its current governance system to provide for greater transparency and equity and increased representation, in order to ensure the participation of all African countries in its structures and decision making processes, in line with the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
10. To request the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility to include in the high-level segment of its third meeting, to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, a political debate on the issues of equity, access to the resources of the Facility and the challenges and opportunities that the Facility presents as a financing mechanism to support Africa;
11. To urge the Assembly of the Global Environment Facility to create a platform during its third meeting to enable Africa to showcase the progress and challenges experienced in implementing the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and to meet and work with the secretariats of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in this regard;
12. To urge development partners to support Africa in meeting Millennium Development Goal 7 on environmental sustainability and, in particular, to provide adequate resources to the special climate change fund established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
13. To call upon countries that have not ratified the three conventions adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, namely, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and their related protocols, to do so, and to urge Africa's development partners to assist and support African countries in the implementation of such conventions;
14. To commit ourselves to further strengthen implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, thereby contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and ensuring the achievement of relevant Millennium Development Goals;
15. To support the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in Africa 2006 and to urge Governments and civil society to promote and implement related activities, with the aim of enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;
16. To urge all African countries to take steps to sign, ratify and implement the revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, adopted by the African Union at its second summit, in Maputo, on 11 July 2003;

17. To welcome the initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme to develop issue-based tools to facilitate coherent implementation of the three Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions and to request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to complete the development of these tools and mobilize the necessary resources to ensure their implementation in all African countries;
18. To call on the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to sustain efforts to forge cooperative links with the relevant structures of the African Union, with a view to harmonizing institutional arrangements and strengthening the relationship of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment with the United Nations Environment Programme;
19. To call upon the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to forge and strengthen linkages with other relevant ministerial bodies, with a view to harmonizing policies and programmes;
20. To reaffirm our commitment to make every effort to mainstream environment into national development agendas in Africa;
21. To encourage the sustainable use of chemicals and commit ourselves to the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes, in order to realize the goals of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;
22. To encourage the use of the regional centres of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal as centres of excellence for capacity-building in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements relevant to chemicals and hazardous wastes;
23. To commit ourselves to the issues highlighted at the eleventh session of the Conference, namely: resource mobilization for implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; regional and multilateral environmental agreements in Africa; environmental law; poverty and environment; environment and health; environmental assessment; capacity-building; disaster risk reduction; sustainable consumption and production in Africa; the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in Africa; environmental assessment; post-conflict environmental assessment; health and environment; disaster risk management; the Green Wall for the Sahara initiative; and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;
24. To request the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its eighth meeting to endorse the establishment of a sustainable funding stream for the implementation of the Basel Convention in Africa;
25. To reaffirm our endorsement of the Africa Environment Outlook process as a monitoring and reporting tool for sustainable environmental management and to provide a framework for national, subregional and regional integrated environmental assessment and reporting and to note with appreciation the implementation of the Africa Environment Information Network at the national, subregional and regional levels to strengthen access to reliable environmental data and information in Africa;
26. To request African countries to use the comprehensive national Landsat data sets distributed by the United Nations Environment Programme and to request the United Nations Environment Programme to support the effective use of those data sets for environmental management;
27. To support the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development and to urge the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme to work together to support African countries in their efforts to achieve the goals of the Decade, aimed at contributing to the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and lifestyles and environmental sustainability;
28. To urge the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to ensure the expansion of the Partnership for the Development of Environmental Laws and Institutions in Africa and its integration into the regular programme of the United Nations Environment Programme on environmental law;
29. To support the implementation of the convergence plan of the Central Africa Forests Commission on the sustainable management, use and conservation of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in Central Africa;

30. To establish a coherent policy and programme of support for small island developing States in the light of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted by the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Port Louis, Mauritius, in January 2005;
31. To continue to promote capacity-building in the use of environmental assessment in development activities in Africa;
32. To invite Governments to engage in the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, in particular by participating actively in its second inter-governmental review, so that the priorities of Africa are reflected in the implementation of the Programme of Action;
33. To form mutually advantageous partnerships with African environmental non-governmental organizations and initiatives in order to secure Africa's environmental sustainability within a framework of sustainable development;
34. To encourage African countries to participate fully in the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the second Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, as well as in the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, with a view to giving prominence to issues of importance to Africa;
35. To acknowledge our shared responsibility for a sustainable approach to elephant management that will protect and enhance biodiversity and support affected African countries;
36. To give effect to the decisions adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session, held in Brazzaville, on 26 May 2006;
37. To mandate the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit the report of the eleventh session of the Conference, including the Brazzaville Declaration and its other annexes, to the Executive Council of the African Union;
38. To pay tribute to the President of the Congo and the Congolese people for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended to participants, the excellent facilities made available and the generous support given by the Government and people of the Congo to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session, which vastly contributed to the success of the session.

Annex II

Decisions and resolution adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session

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

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Decide:

- (a) To request the Commission of the African Union:
 - (i) To lend high-level political support to the successful implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
 - (ii) To strengthen its environment section and those of the relevant technical units of the regional economic communities;
 - (iii) To develop appropriate communication mechanisms between countries and the regional economic communities;
- (b) To urge development partners to assist in providing required resources for developing the capacities of the regional economic communities, to enable them to discharge their responsibilities;
- (c) To call on the Global Environment Facility and other development partners to provide financial support for the implementation of the projects and programmes of the action plan at country and subregional levels;
- (d) To request the United Nations Environment Programme to provide technical support to the regional economic communities in the finalization of the subregional action plans of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
- (e) To request the United Nations Environment Programme to maintain and develop further its issue-based modules for the coherent implementation of environmental agreements to cover agreements for all African States and to include other relevant topics;
- (f) To request further the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Conservation Union and development partners to provide financial support to African countries to develop and maintain the issue-based modules for the coherent implementation of environmental agreements;
- (g) To request the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to enhance its facilitation of United Nations agency consultations, coordination and collaboration with respect to the thematic cluster of United Nations bodies and the New Partnership for Africa's Development that is concerned with the environment, population and urbanization, as well as sub-clusters concerned with water, energy, biotechnology, biosafety and post-conflict environmental reconstruction and other relevant sub-clusters;
- (h) To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to mobilize support for the successful expansion of the Partnership for the Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa and its necessary integration into the regular programme of the United Nations Environment Programme on environmental law in order to benefit a greater number of African States in terms of providing advisory services and technical assistance activities at the regional, subregional and national levels;
- (i) To request the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization to strengthen its technical support to African countries to implement the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, particularly the management of transboundary ecosystems;

- (j) To request countries to implement the projects of the action plan in conformity with the spirit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
- (k) To maintain effective communication between the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the relevant organs of the African Union and the regional economic communities.

Decision 2: Institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of the implementation of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting with appreciation the adoption of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development by the African Union at its summit meeting in Maputo in July 2003,

Reaffirming that the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development is a coherent, strategic and long-term programme of action aimed at promoting Africa's sustainable development,

Further reaffirming our commitment to the effective implementation of the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recognizing that the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development will contribute to building Africa's capacity to implement regional and international environmental agreements and effectively to address African environmental challenges,

Acknowledging the support provided by African countries, the secretariats of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Environment Facility and the New Partnership for Africa's Development and development partners of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Welcoming the offers made by African countries and development partners during the Partners' Conferences on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, held in Algiers, on 15 and 16 December 2003, and Dakar, on 15 and 16 March 2005,

Recognizing the commitment of the heads of State and Government of the African Union on the linkages between the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Union, in paragraph 9 of the Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Water in Africa, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its second extraordinary session, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on 27 February 2004,

Decide:

- (a) To pursue the goal of the Conference to become a separate and distinct specialized technical committee of the Commission of the African Union;*
- (b) To ensure that the integration of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment into the African Union does not jeopardize the activities of the Conference but rather strengthens and expands its work and the strong relationships that already exist between the Conference and the United Nations Environment Programme and other existing partners;
- (c) To advocate further linkages between the Conference and other relevant organs of the African Union;
- (d) To provide overall guidance on the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

* A specialized technical committee of the African Union is a ministerial body that provides policy advice and guidance to the African Union, through the Executive Council, on issues falling within its particular portfolio.

- (e) To follow-up with the regional economic communities on the implementation of the action plan;
- (f) To cooperate with the relevant international and regional organizations and bodies and civil society on strategic issues related to the implementation of the action plan;
- (g) To cooperate and establish linkages with the other relevant institutions such as the African Ministers' Council on Water on strategic issues related to the implementation of the action plan;
- (h) To continue to mobilize political support for the successful implementation of the action plan;
- (i) To request the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, with the support of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Commission of the African Union, to secure sustainable financing to sustain the Conference's collaboration with the regional economic communities in undertaking the activities of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in the context of the implementation of the action plan;
- (j) To review periodically progress made in the implementation of the action plan and make recommendations;
- (k) To advocate the harmonization of any existing and new environmental initiatives, within the framework of the implementation of the action plan.

Decision 3: Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Aware of the mandate conferred upon the Conference by ministers at the eighth session of the Conference, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 3 to 6 April 2000, as contained in paragraph 31 of the ministerial report of the session,¹

Also aware of the mandate conferred upon the Conference by ministers at the ninth session of the Conference, held in Kampala, Uganda, on 4 and 5 July 2002, as contained in decision 4 of the ninth session,

Mindful of the request made to the secretariat by ministers at the tenth session of the Conference, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 29 and 30 June 2004, as contained in decision 3 of the tenth session,

Noting that the process of further intergovernmental consultations is under way, thus necessitating the close monitoring of the evolution of other initiatives under the African Union,

Decide:

- (a) To note with appreciation the efforts of the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to facilitate the completion of the document on the revised Constitution;
- (b) To note also the potential implications that the evolving structures of the African Union have on the Conference;
- (c) To request the secretariat to defer the process of revising the Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment pending the complete establishment of the institutional structures of the African Union and to report to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its twelfth session on any progress made in this regard.

¹ UNEP/AMCEN/8/7.

Decision 4: Status and use of the general trust fund for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the Conference's decision 5 on financial resources adopted at its eighth session, in Abuja, Nigeria, on 6 April, 2000,

Further recalling its decision 4 on resource mobilization, taken at its special session in Nairobi, Kenya, on 16 October 2001,

Noting its decision 8 on resource mobilization and the status of the general trust fund, of 7 July 2002, adopted at its ninth session, in Kampala, Uganda, on 5 July 2002,

Noting its decision 4 on the status and use of the general trust fund, adopted at its tenth session, in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 30 June 2004,

Recognizing that Africa is taking measures to address its environmental challenges through major initiatives such as the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Aware that the implementation of its environmental initiatives, in particular the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, will require additional human and financial resources,

Expressing our appreciation to those Governments that have contributed to the Conference's general trust fund and, in that regard, also expressing our appreciation to the development partners for their support,

Appreciating the financial and technical support that the United Nations Environment Programme provides to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recognizing the need for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to finance its core activities,

Mindful of the evolving linkages between the African Union and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the implications for funding the activities of the Conference,

Decide:

(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 and urge the Executive Director to continue to provide support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

(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 will be prepared by the secretariat and submitted to the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment for approval prior to implementation;

(f) That the general trust fund should continue to be managed by the United Nations Environment Programme for as long as the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment remains with that organization;

(g) That the secretariat should continue to report on the status and use of the general trust fund at meetings of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

Decision 5: Implementation of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville, Congo, on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the initiation of the development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in its decision SS.VII/3 of 15 February 2002 and the endorsement of that decision by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in its decision 5 adopted at its tenth regular session on 30 June 2004,

Recalling also the commitment to the development of the Strategic Approach expressed by Heads of State and Government in the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg on 4 September 2002 and in the 2005 World Summit Outcome adopted by the General Assembly at the high-level plenary meeting of its sixtieth session in New York on 16 September 2005,

Noting the important contribution made to the development of the Strategic Approach by the holding of regional consultations, including those for the African region in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 26 May 2004 and in Saly, Senegal, from 15 to 18 March 2005,

Welcoming the completion and adoption of the Strategic Approach by the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its first session in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 6 February 2006 and the subsequent endorsement of the approach by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in its decision SS.IX/1 of 9 February 2006,

Applauding the establishment of a "Quick Start" Programme to support initial enabling capacity-building and implementation activities for the Strategic Approach in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition,

Noting with appreciation the contributions of the Government of South Africa and other donors to the Quick Start Programme trust fund,

Recalling decision 23/9, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on 25 February 2005, at its twenty-third session, held in Nairobi, Kenya, which requested the Executive Director, as a matter of high priority, to make appropriate provision for fulfilment of the organization's responsibilities under the Strategic Approach and to make provision for activities to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in implementing the Strategic Approach, taking into account the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,

Acknowledging the initial work done to develop an African regional action plan for the implementation of the Strategic Approach,

Decide:

- (a) To endorse the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management as a policy framework to support achievement of the goal set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that, by 2020, chemicals must be used and produced in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment;
- (b) To urge Governments to nominate national Strategic Approach focal points and establish inter-ministerial or inter-institutional arrangements to oversee implementation of the Strategic Approach at the national level;
- (c) To emphasize the need for the Strategic Approach to be implemented on an inclusive multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral basis, engaging representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector drawn from all relevant sectors, including agriculture, environment, health, industry and labour;
- (d) To urge Governments to commence planning for national action plans for implementation of the Strategic Approach, building on work already undertaken in the context of multilateral environment agreements such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, as well as regional environmental agreements

such as the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa;

(e) To encourage recognition of the cross-cutting nature of chemical safety and hazardous waste as a sustainable development issue and the inclusion of sound chemicals and hazardous waste management considerations in national planning strategies and programmes, where appropriate;

(f) To encourage the exploration of possible regional approaches to the implementation of the Strategic Approach, where synergies can be identified, including through the holding of regional and subregional consultations and the further development of a regional action plan for Africa;

(g) To request the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and subregional organizations such as the Arab Maghreb Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Basel Convention regional centres and others to participate actively in the implementation of the Strategic Approach as an integral part of efforts by African Governments to achieve the goals of sustainable development and poverty eradication;

(h) To urge the participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to give priority to the needs of African countries when developing activities to support implementation of the Strategic Approach within the work programmes and mandates of those organizations;

(i) To support plans for the holding of a symposium on illegal international traffic in hazardous chemicals by the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with the Governments of the Czech Republic and Germany, which should address the issue of hazardous waste consistent with chapter 19 of Agenda 21, as adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992;

(j) To request international and regional partners to support efforts to strengthen the ability of the Basel Convention regional centres to undertake capacity-building for chemicals and hazardous waste management in related multilateral environmental agreements in Africa, in line with the objectives of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Decision 6: Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa Environment Information Network

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting with appreciation the production of the second Africa Environment Outlook report, entitled "Our Environment Our Wealth", which was achieved with the continued support of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recalling the decisions adopted at the ninth and tenth sessions of the Conference, in Kampala in 2002 and Sirte in 2004, and further reaffirming our commitment to the Africa Environment Outlook process as a means to monitor sustainable development in Africa and as a framework for environmental reporting at the national and subregional levels,

Noting with appreciation the implementation of the pilot phase of the Africa Environment Information Network at the national, subregional and regional levels, aimed at strengthening access to reliable environmental data and information in Africa,

Recognizing the important role that the Africa Environment Information Network initiative has played in enhancing national capacities to contribute to the Africa Environment Outlook process and to undertake national integrated environmental assessments that provide input into national reporting processes and mainstream the environment in poverty reduction strategy papers,

Welcoming the decision of the United Nations Environment Programme, with the support of development partners, to extend Africa Environment Information Network activities from 12 to 38 countries,

Welcoming with appreciation the distribution by the United Nations Environment Programme of comprehensive Landsat data and its efforts to support the effective use of those data sets and noting the potential synergies available with other initiatives, such as the Preparation for the Use of the Meteosat Second Generation Satellite in Africa and African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development projects,

Decide:

(a) To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to continue mobilizing financial support for capacity-building through the Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa Environment Information Network processes and to support the production of the third Africa Environment Outlook report as one of the main components of the programme of work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;

(b) To call upon Governments to mainstream the findings and policy options identified by the second Africa Environment Outlook report when formulating and implementing their national environmental programmes;

(c) To endorse the proposal for the extension of the Africa Environment Information Network from 12 to 38 countries in Africa to promote data access, sharing and harmonization in the Africa region;

(d) To call upon the United Nations Environment Programme to extend further the Africa Environment Information Network to cover all countries in Africa;

(d) To call upon Governments to undertake regular national integrated environmental assessments, using Africa Environment Outlook methodologies, to provide input into national reporting processes, making use of the comprehensive Landsat data distributed by the United Nations Environment Programme and data available through other initiatives in Africa, to ensure that the environment is mainstreamed into national plans, including poverty reduction strategy papers.

Decision 7: Integration of environmental dimensions into disaster risk reduction programmes in the context of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting with concern that Africa continues to experience devastating natural and human-induced disasters with serious economic, social and environmental consequences, particularly for the survival, dignity and livelihoods of its people,

Expressing concern over the economic, social and environmental impacts of disasters on affected countries in the short, medium and long term,

Welcoming with appreciation the report of the African Union on the outcome of the first meeting of the African Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,

Noting with satisfaction the recommendation by that Conference that environmental dimensions should be incorporated into disaster risk reduction strategies in order to mitigate the severity of disasters and facilitate post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation,

Noting the information provided by the Commission of the African Union on the outcome of the ministerial meeting on disaster risk reduction and the Executive Council decision approving the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in January 2006,

Commending the Commission of the African Union for keeping the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment updated on its activities at the continental level in the area of disaster risk reduction and for the efforts it has deployed towards the implementation of the Executive Council decision,

Noting the need for greater participation of African Governments in international and regional forums on risk reduction and management,

Decide:

(a) To urge Governments to integrate disaster risk reduction into development policies and programmes, such as poverty reduction strategy papers and common country assessments of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to support and promote understanding and awareness of the interrelationships between disaster risk reduction and development;

(b) To request Governments to develop and review policies, laws and disaster management plans and programmes to take into account environmental dimensions, particularly those relating to land use, river and lake basins and flood plains;

(c) To request Governments to support and develop capacity-building programmes, including activities to increase institutional capacities, training and environmental emergency management education programmes, covering the issues of prevention, preparedness, response and mitigation for implementation at the national and local levels;

(d) To request Governments to promote increased intercountry cooperation and coordination for environmental emergency prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response, assessment, recovery and rehabilitation;

(e) To request development partners across the United Nations system, including the private sector and civil society, to support Governments in promoting integration of environmental dimensions into disaster management;

(f) To request the United Nations and the donor community to support the participation of African Governments in international forums on disaster risk reduction and management with a view to fostering greater linkages and integration of environmental dimensions into humanitarian aspects of natural and human-induced disasters in the continent;

(g) To invite development partners to assist Africa to establish subregional disaster risk reduction and management centres.

Further decide:

(h) To commit ourselves to the implementation of the decisions of the Executive Council of the African Union at the national level;

(i) To request the partners of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, particularly the inter-agency secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, to provide assistance to national Governments in carrying out the Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Draft decision 8: Implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the outcomes on international environmental governance and the decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its seventh special session, at which ministers from Africa participated, calling for the development of an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building to increase country-level delivery of environmental capacity-building and technology support,

Welcoming the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its twenty-third session, in February 2005, as an intergovernmentally agreed approach to enhancing the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and the implementation plan of the United Nations Environment Programme for the Bali Strategic Plan, presented at the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Dubai in February 2006,

Taking note with appreciation of the incorporation into the Bali Strategic Plan of the inputs from AMCEN and the recognition of African regional environmental strategies and priorities, in particular the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Also taking note of the promotion of South-South cooperation in facilitating technology support and capacity-building in the Bali Strategic Plan and welcoming the steps taken by the United Nations Environment Programme to initiate South-South consultations in Jakarta, Indonesia,

Welcoming the envisaged support to regional ministerial environmental forums to enable them to play a role in the implementation and review of the Bali Strategic Plan and in the identification of emerging needs and priorities to be considered by the Governing Council and taken into account by the United Nations Environment Programme,

Further welcoming the encouragement in the Bali Strategic Plan to regional ministerial environmental bodies, their subsidiary bodies and other relevant entities to consider the Plan, make policy recommendations and identify priorities on a regular basis, and further recommend strategic approaches to the implementation of the respective components of the Plan in their regions,

Also welcoming the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme for collaboration in the joint implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan at the country level in line with the outcomes on international environmental governance,

Expressing our appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme for initiating a pilot project for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in six African countries, and noting the broadening of the review of the environmental aspects of water in four of those countries,

Decide:

- (a) To request Governments, through the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, to expedite the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in Africa by reviewing and setting regional technology support and capacity-building priority needs at the next regular session of the Conference and making recommendations regarding policy and strategic approaches for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (b) To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to provide additional support to the six countries involved in the pilot project for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in Africa and to replicate the project in other countries in the Africa region, taking into consideration the lessons learned in the pilot project and regional, subregional and national environmental initiatives, priorities and needs; and to enhance the incorporation into these projects of an in-depth review of the environmental aspects of water, as initiated in four of the six pilot project countries;
- (c) Also to request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and the heads of other United Nations bodies in a position to do so, to provide support and coordination for the realization of South-South cooperation in technology support and capacity-building, especially among and between African countries by, among other things, strengthening the capacity of national, subregional and regional institutions to act as centres of excellence for the further implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan at the regional, subregional and country levels;
- (d) To encourage the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to expedite the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme for the swift and coordinated implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, and further enhance the active involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in environmental processes at the national level;
- (e) To request Governments to place priority on the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in their own countries, including by setting up relevant and adequate institutional coordination structures, and to seek means and innovative ways to mobilize domestic resources to complement international resources that may be mobilized through bilateral and multilateral partners;

(f) To request our bilateral and multilateral development partners to promote and use the Bali Strategic Plan, especially by transforming sectoral needs into national strategic priorities, as the enhanced mechanism for coordinating the coherent delivery of technology support and capacity-building assistance to strengthen the capacities of African countries to meet their development needs and priorities and internationally agreed goals.

Decision 9: Green Wall for the Sahara initiative

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Noting the report of the Commission of the African Union on the Green Wall for the Sahara initiative,

Commending President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Government of Nigeria for the initiative,

Commending further the Commission of the African Union for its efforts to facilitate consultations on the development of a programme of action for the implementation of the Green Wall for the Sahara initiative,

Encouraging the Commission of the African Union to continue its efforts for an early conclusion of the development of the programme of action,

Taking note of past experiences and current initiatives, including the Algerian Green Barrier and the Green Belt of North Africa projects, and activities currently being undertaken in the framework of implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,

Decide:

(a) To request the United Nations Environment Programme, other United Nations agencies and programmes, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the World Bank and other multilateral regional and bilateral development partners to cooperate with the Commission of the African Union and to report to the next regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on progress made in the facilitation of the implementation of the initiative;

(b) To call on the members of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to follow up at the national level the Commission's invitation to designate appropriate ministers and experts to the steering and technical committees of this initiative.

Decision 10: Resource mobilization for implementation of environmental projects and programmes at country, subregional and regional levels

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the Algiers Declaration for a Global Partnership on the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted on 16 December 2003 by African environment ministers at the first Partners' Conference, and the commitments made by African countries and development partners to implement the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling also the Dakar Declaration for Enhanced Partnership in the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted on 16 March 2005 by African environment ministers at the second Partners' Conference, which proposed the creation of an African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank, the use of 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,

Recalling further the resolution requesting the Conference and its partners to develop proposals for other resource mobilization and allocation mechanisms for the funding of priority projects and programmes of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Noting with satisfaction the outcome of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment consultative meeting on debt cancellation, held in Nairobi on 26 October 2005,

Expressing our appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme for sponsoring and providing technical support for the consultative meeting,

Decide:

(a) To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and heads of other relevant institutions to continue to provide technical support to African countries to develop capacity in sustainable financing for the implementation of cost-effective environmental projects and programmes at national, subregional and regional levels;

(b) To renew our commitment to make resources available for the implementation of priorities in the action plan of the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development at national, subregional and regional levels;

(c) To urge Africa's development partners, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and Governments to enhance their support for the implementation of the action plan at national, subregional and regional levels;

(d) To urge countries to put in place dialogue platforms between ministers of environment and ministers of economy or finance to ensure the integration and mainstreaming of environmental issues into national sustainable development programmes, including research and development and capacity-building;

(e) To urge the Global Environment Facility and other donors to support at significant levels the efforts and goals expressed by African countries and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in the context of the action plan for the environment initiative;

(f) To request the Council of the Global Environment Facility to continue to support the TerrAfrica initiative and its Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management as a key element for advancing further the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and to promote endeavours to broaden sustainable land management projects in sub-Saharan Africa;

(g) To request the Global Environment Facility to review the Resource Allocation Framework in line with concerns that have emerged in the consultative meetings organized by the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility with the African countries, including the integration of climate change vulnerability criteria into the calculation of its allocations.

Decision 11: African Environment Facility

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling decision 10 of the second Assembly of the African Union held in Maputo in July 2003, on the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling the Algiers Declaration for a Global Partnership on the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted on 16 December 2003 by African Environment ministers at the first Partners' Conference, and the commitments made by African countries and development partners to implement the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling also the Dakar Declaration for Enhanced Partnership in the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted on 16 March 2005 by African environment ministers at the second Partners' Conference, which proposed the creation of an African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank,

Taking note of the consultative meeting between the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the President of the African Development Bank on this matter, held in 2005,

Also taking note of the preliminary feasibility study on the establishment of the African Environment Facility,

Decide:

- (a) To pursue our commitment to establish the African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank and invite ministers of economy and finance to assume responsibility for the establishment of the Facility;
- (b) To communicate the present request to establish the African Environment Facility to the President of the African Development Bank and to invite him to submit it to the Board of Directors and possibly the Board of Governors of the Bank for their consideration and possible execution;
- (c) To request further the President of the African Development Bank to facilitate the swift establishment of the African Environment Facility;
- (d) To invite heads of State and Government of the African Union to extend their political support to the swift establishment of the African Environment Facility at the African Development Bank.

Resolution on the work of the Bureau

We, African Ministers of Environment,

Having met in Brazzaville on 25 and 26 May 2006, at the eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Aware that the Conference is facing challenges, including the need to create linkages with the African Union and other partners, which require continuous consultations and close monitoring,

Mindful of the need for the Bureau of the Conference to ensure continuity in the work of the Conference during intersessional periods,

Aware of article 15 of the Constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which provides for the membership of the Bureau,

Resolve:

- (a) To invite the outgoing President to participate in the meetings of the current Bureau of the Conference for one year after the expiry of his or her tenure, provided that he or she continues to serve as the minister of environment in his or her Government, so as to ensure continuity and advancement of the work of the Bureau;
- (b) To invite one member of the outgoing Bureau, who continues to serve as the minister of environment in his or her Government, to participate in the meetings of the current Bureau, in the event that the outgoing President no longer holds that portfolio.

Annex III

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