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AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
Eighth session  
Abuja, 3-6 April 2000

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING  
HELD ON 3 AND 4 APRIL 2000

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Expert Group Meeting of the eighth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 3 and 4 April 2000.
2. It was attended by experts from AMCEN member States, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations agencies, secretariats of various environmental conventions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The list of participants appears in annex III.
3. The opening session was chaired by Mr. Jameson Vilakati of Swaziland on behalf of the President of AMCEN.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

### Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened on 3 April 2000 by Mr. Hassan Adamu, the Minister of Environment of Nigeria. After welcoming the participants, he outlined the factors which had led to the establishment of AMCEN in 1985. The meeting of experts and the subsequent ministerial session faced an enormous task in revitalizing the AMCEN machinery and refocusing its objectives and commitments. Drawing on the papers prepared by the secretariat, the meeting should initiate urgent policy change to address growing environmental deterioration in the region, and to enhance the ability of African countries to defend their interests in international environmental negotiations, especially in such new and complex areas as biological diversity and climate change.
5. An introductory address was made by Mr. Bakary Kante, Acting Director, Regional Office for Africa of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Klaus Topfer, he expressed appreciation to the Federal Government and people of Nigeria for hosting the eighth session of AMCEN. He observed that the presence of representatives of the private sector was symbolic of the process formalized at the Earth Summit in 1992 - the integration of political, economic, social and ecological concerns in the quest for sustainable development. Noting that AMCEN had made considerable achievements, he however regretted the fact that it had not yet realized its full potential as a regional environmental body capable of providing policy guidance, direction and coordination.
6. He remarked that unsustainable exploitation and degradation of forests, soils, wildlife, freshwater and other natural resources threatened to undermine the region's development prospects by perpetuating poverty. That in turn led to environmental degradation, which constituted a loss of wealth. UNEP regarded AMCEN as a major source of inspiration for the development and implementation of its programmes in Africa. In conclusion, he emphasized that for the successful implementation of programmes, the issue of availability of resources should be fully addressed, adding that UNEP was committed to cooperation with AMCEN in its efforts.

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Agenda item 2: Organizational matters(a) Election of the Bureau

7. Speaking on behalf of the outgoing President, Ms. Nadia Makram-Ebeid, the expert from Egypt, Mr. Abdel Gelil, said that in pursuance of the decision taken at the AMCEN Bureau meeting held in Cairo in January 2000, the Bureau would in future comprise the President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur elected from the five subregions of Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, southern Africa and West Africa. The following countries were elected to serve on the Bureau of AMCEN for the period 2000-2001:

OFFICE	SUBREGION	COUNTRY
President	West Africa	Nigeria
Vice-President	Southern Africa	South Africa
Vice-President	North Africa	Morocco
Vice-President	Eastern Africa	Uganda
Rapporteur	Central Africa	Cameroon

(b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

8. The experts adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat:

## 1. Opening of the meeting.

Statements by:

- (a) Minister of Environment, Federal Ministry of Environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- (b) Mr. Bakary Kante, Acting Director, Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Environment Programme.

## 2. Organizational matters:

- (a) Election of the Bureau;
- (b) Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.

## 3. AMCEN's role in sustaining Africa's future;

- (a) Brief presentations by:
  - (i) Convention secretariats;
  - (ii) Environmental Law Institute;
  - (iii) UNIDO Director-General;

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(iii) Global Environment Facility.

- (b) Proposals for policy and institutional change;
- (c) Proposals for a medium-term programme (2000-2004);
- (d) Suggested actions.

4. Review of the Abuja Agreement on AMCEN.

5. Consideration and adoption of the report of the meeting.

6. Closing of the meeting.

9. It was agreed to consider all the agenda items in plenary.

Agenda item 3: AMCEN's role in sustaining Africa's future

- (a) Brief presentations by representatives of Convention secretariats and other agencies

10. A representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity gave a presentation on how African countries could enhance their participation in activities organized under the Convention and its Protocol on Biosafety. It was in the interest of African countries to become parties to the Protocol for at least three reasons. First, it would allow them to impose restrictions on imports of living organisms modified through modern biotechnology on the basis of suspected risks or socio-economic considerations without fear of trade sanctions. Second, it contained provision for assistance and access to relevant technology and know-how. Third, it provided for international cooperation in cases of emergency.

11. Of particular relevance to Africa were activities under the Convention in the areas of marine and coastal biodiversity, inland waters and forests, which AMCEN could integrate into its medium-term programme. It should be remembered that funds could be available under the Global Environment Facility for biodiversity-related projects.

12. In a major innovation, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had adopted an ecosystem approach as the primary framework for implementation, and it was crucial that AMCEN should reflect that approach in its programme. A further step that African countries should take was to hold regional and subregional meetings and workshops to prepare for participation in meetings under the Convention and build capacity for negotiations, project funding, the review of legislation, and so on.

13. A representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification pointed out that desertification was not confined within the affected countries, but had worldwide ramifications as a problem of sustainable development centred around poverty and human well-being. In response to that scourge, the Convention, which had now been ratified by 163 countries, was a significant achievement that offered a tool to help reduce the vulnerability of affected populations. It combined a commitment by

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affected countries to prepare and implement action programmes to combat desertification with an obligation on the part of developed countries to support their efforts. Specific areas in which Africa had made significant strides included the drawing up of national action programmes, the establishment of national focal points, the creation of frameworks at the subregional level for action to address transboundary issues, and the conclusion of a regional action programme to deal with issues of continent-wide scope, under which a Regional Coordinating Unit was already operational. Finally, he stressed the need for AMCEN to support the development of synergies between the three "Rio generation" conventions and pointed out that the next Conference of the Parties would be held in Australia in September-October 2000.

14. A representative of the Environmental Law Institute spoke on developing an African voice on emerging international environmental norms relating to access to information, public participation, and access to justice.

15. Those procedural principles had started with general declarations and, more recently, had been incorporated into the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The 1998 Aarhus Convention (developed under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) and the 2000 Inter-American Strategy on Public Participation (developed under the Organization for American States) included detailed provisions for ensuring access to information, participation, and justice.

16. The speaker added that Africa still had the opportunity while those norms were taking shape to highlight its experiences for the rest of the world and to ensure that the emerging norms took African countries into account and were relevant to Africa.

17. African nations could develop a common voice by incorporating participatory principles into domestic laws and institutions; acceding to an existing environmental governance convention; developing African or subregional declarations or conventions; or participating in the development of a global convention. Additionally, conventions such as the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources might be revisited to incorporate environmental governance principles, for example by means of a protocol. Ultimately, a combination of those activities would be important to protect the African environment.

18. A representative of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change highlighted the issues of major relevance to Africa at the forthcoming sixth Conference of the Parties - the need to design a Clean Development Mechanism from which African countries could draw maximum benefit; a clearly defined process for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies; active participation in regional and international climate observation programmes; and development of national and regional capabilities to understand climate issues, prepare national communications, incorporate climate change issues into development plans and participate fully in Clean Development Mechanism projects and climate observation.

19. Success at the Conference of the Parties was vital if the targets set in

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the Kyoto Protocol were to be met, international cooperation to address climate change was to continue, and early action by the developed countries was to be stimulated to make progress towards the Kyoto Protocol targets.

20. A representative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) described GEF's role as a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and the World Bank in providing new and additional grant and concessionary funding to meet agreed incremental costs of activities to achieve global environmental objectives in the field of biological diversity, climate change, international waters, protection of the ozone layer and, in certain circumstances, land degradation. Its activities were divided between operational programmes, enabling activities and short-term response measures. The representative enumerated various UNEP/GEF projects under the operational programmes in biodiversity, climate change and international waters, as well as enabling activities in Africa. A Land and Water Initiative for Africa was also being pursued. UNEP and GEF were fully committed to enhancing support to Africa, one of UNEP's five priorities, and the revitalization of AMCEN would make a major contribution to the promotion of sustainable development in Africa.

21. A representative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) remarked that ECA had been following with interest the important initiatives of UNEP to strengthen the role of UNEP in dealing with current and emerging environmental problems. ECA recognized that environmental problems were multidimensional and complex. Noting that the natural resource base and ecological integrity of Africa were fast deteriorating, she emphasized that the most pressing problem was the high rate of loss of vegetation cover.

22. Land degradation and soil loss threatened the livelihood of millions of people and future food security, with implications for water resources and the conservation of biological diversity. There was therefore an urgent need to define ways of combating and reversing the accelerating trend of soil degradation. ECA, in response to the imminent threat to food security and sustainable development, had established a Food Security and Sustainable Development Division whose mission was to ensure food security and sustainable development in ECA member States. That would be achieved through, inter alia, the planning and implementation of a programme to make policy makers aware of the urgency of food, population and environmental concerns in development planning.

23. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) noted that FAO and UNEP had collaborated over a long period of time in many areas such as forestry resources management, deforestation and land degradation as well as criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in dry areas. The Inter-agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) had been established in the context of that collaboration.

24. The machinery for cooperation in Africa included the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, the highest-level forestry forum in Africa, which was currently strengthening collaboration with subregional organizations working

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in forestry and related fields such as the African Timber Organization and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). In addition, the Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas planned to develop an inter-sessional network to be added to the networks on forestry research and forest genetic resources which FAO had helped to set up.

25. A representative of the Africa Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) outlined the functions of the new WHO Division of Healthy Environments in Sustainable Development. She noted that the creation of the division had been based on the principle that improvement of the physical, economic and social environment could considerably improve health. The division's task consisted of developing and promoting activities in the African region aimed at assisting countries in identifying and combating environmental conditions that had harmful effects on human health.

26. One of the main functions of the division was to help countries improve the organization and management of national environmental health services and put health in the sustainable development perspective. Another was the development of a framework for data collection and analysis, long-term planning of health development and the circulation of strategic information likely to influence the prospects of improvement of people's health in the region.

27. A representative of the League of Arab States pointed out that 10 members of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) were also members of AMCEN and experienced the same environmental problems such as land degradation and pollution. The Council was looking forward to cooperation and coordination with AMCEN, particularly in the run-up to the second Earth Summit. CAMRE had scheduled a special session in February 2001 in order to prepare a position paper for the Summit.

(b) Proposals for policy and institutional change and proposals for a medium-term programme (2000-2004)

28. A representative of the secretariat presented an informal document entitled "Proposals for policy and institutional change". The document, which covered four years - 2000-2004 - had been prepared in pursuance of the recommendations made by the AMCEN Bureau in Cairo in January 2000. Its objective was to prepare Africa to face the prevailing environmental challenges. It addressed key issues and areas of concern, the basis of and proposals for policy change, key components of the institutional and organizational changes, resource mobilization and the new structure of AMCEN which would feature the Conference, the Bureau, an Inter-sessional Committee, the secretariat and an Inter-agency Technical Committee.

29. A further document entitled "Proposals for a medium-term programme (2000 - 2004)" was also introduced by a representative of the secretariat.

30. In the ensuing discussion, a number of experts expressed the view that given the importance of the document on policy proposals for the future of AMCEN, it should have included a programme of work and a budget to support the proposed activities. In response, a representative of the secretariat said that a programme and budget would be prepared upon approval of the

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document by the experts. Some experts felt that the document addressed too few areas of concern; it should, for example, have covered agriculture, tourism and biological diversity, which were very important to African economies. It was explained that the rationale behind the document was to focus on a number of key environmental issues that could be discussed by the experts. The document did not aim at addressing all conceivable environmental threats and actions, as it covered a relatively short period.

31. A few experts felt that the transfer of technology should have been highlighted in the paper, but a representative of the secretariat pointed out that the acquisition of negotiating skills had been given prominence. Responding to an expert who felt that the paper attached too much importance to climate change at the expense of other environmental issues such as biological diversity, the representative of the secretariat remarked that climate change was already the most crucial environmental issue in Africa as it affected other areas such as agriculture and biological diversity. Supporting that view, one expert observed that some African countries were already experiencing the consequences of climate change.

32. One expert expressed the view that countries should be made aware of how to make maximum use of existing funding mechanisms to enable them to fund all their medium-term programmes. Another expert observed that funding was probably not the biggest problem facing African countries; many countries were unable to implement environmental programmes as a result of insecurity arising from internal and external conflicts. A representative of the secretariat assured the experts that UNEP was committed to taking up the issue of security.

33. Referring to the provisions aimed at securing Africa's position at the 2002 Earth Summit, one expert suggested that AMCEN should recommend that, resources permitting, a stock-taking exercise should be undertaken before embarking on the preparation of the document to be submitted to the special session of the General Assembly. In response, a representative of the secretariat noted that UNEP, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the Organization of African Unity had already embarked on a strategy under which organizations in each subregion would meet to draw up an evaluation document and that a regional conference would be held to merge those evaluation documents into a regional synthesis.

34. With regard to the issue of access to information, it was recommended that developed countries should assist African countries in the development of and access to information systems.

35. A few experts expressed concern that the indicators for assessing progress were inadequate. Responding to that concern, a representative of the secretariat conceded that the indicators were not comprehensive but said that UNEP hoped to come up with a comprehensive environmental outlook on Africa within four years.

36. With regard to the relationship between the subregional organizations and the Inter-sessional Committee, a representative of the secretariat explained that the subregional organizations would be represented on the Technical Committee which would link up with the Inter-sessional Committee.

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The Inter-sessional Committee would comprise 10 countries - the 5 elected Bureau member countries and another 5 countries, one from each subregion. There was therefore a clear relationship between the Inter-sessional Committee and the subregional bodies.

37. A number of experts expressed concern that the dumping of used cars in some African countries was causing substantial atmospheric pollution in cities and towns. The countries concerned faced a dilemma because if they banned the import of used cars, the mobility of their people would be compromised. They were therefore constrained to continue authorizing the import of such vehicles knowing full well that they constituted a serious environmental threat.

38. One expert said that the paper on "Proposals for a medium-term programme" should be made more succinct by shortening the background section and eliminating inconsistencies. The programme element on freshwater resources should contain a stipulation that only the environmental aspects of freshwater management would be dealt with. Among instruments in the section on environmental information, assessment, early warning and environmental security, a reference to the Commission on Sustainable Development should be added, while two more actions should be included: work to consistently monitor changes in the environment in order to provide early warning signals, and to develop collectively appropriate responses and instruments for environmental disaster management.

39. The programme element on managing land and combating desertification in Africa should be modified so that it would cover the current situation and challenges of land degradation in general, challenges related to desertification and to water erosion, and flood and coastal zone management. Lastly, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) should be mentioned under "Instruments" in the field of trade and the environment.

40. The experts recognized that the adverse impacts of climate change posed serious threats to the development of African countries, making it necessary for Africa to play a key and active role at the forthcoming sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention. African countries that were parties to the Convention were urged to take the necessary steps to ratify or accede to the Kyoto Protocol. Ratification by the annex I parties, who were responsible for the largest share of historical and current emissions of greenhouse gases, was even more important in order to facilitate its early entry into force.

41. It was also recommended that common positions should be developed regarding the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, development of the agreed mechanisms, including the Clean Development Mechanism and Activities Implemented Jointly, the transfer of technology and capacity-building.

42. UNEP was called on to assist African countries in convening a regional meeting of scientific, technical and legal experts and policy makers to prepare position documents on key issues on the agenda of the forthcoming Conference of the Parties.

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43. International financial institutions, the African Development Bank and donor countries were invited to support African countries in their capacity-building efforts to address the dangers posed by the adverse effects of climate change.

44. Further to the presentation concerning the Convention on Biological Diversity, it was pointed out that as biodiversity was a cross-cutting issue, article 14 of the Convention should be referred to in programme element I in annex I of the "Proposals for policy and institutional change", while the decisions of its Conference of Parties should be cited under "Instruments" and the need to incorporate the assessment of impacts of socio-economic development on biodiversity should be included among "Actions". It was also suggested that in the programme element on "Managing land and combating desertification in Africa", the challenges should include the application of the ecosystem approach, as well as human and institutional capacities for implementation of the programme of work under the Convention. Participation by AMCEN in the implementation of that part of the programme which dealt with traditional knowledge was also suggested. A reference to the process being pursued by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests should be added under "Instruments" in the programme element on "Managing biological diversity".

45. At the end of the discussion on this item, the Expert Group adopted the proposals for policy and institutional change and the medium-term programme as proposed by the secretariat and amended during the discussions.

(c) Suggested actions

46. A representative of the secretariat introduced an informal paper entitled "Suggested decisions". The outcome of the discussion of the paper by the Expert Group, consisting of decisions proposed to the ministers for adoption, may be found in annex II to this report.

Election of the members of the Inter-sessional Committee

47. Further to its decision to adopt new institutional arrangements for AMCEN, including the establishment of an Inter-sessional Committee, the Expert Group elected members of the Committee for the period 2000-2001.

48. The results of the election were as follows:

Central Africa	Congo
Eastern Africa	United Republic of Tanzania
North Africa	Tunisia
Southern Africa	Malawi
West Africa	Ghana

Consideration of a draft ministerial declaration

49. A small drafting group composed of representatives of the five countries elected to serve on the Inter-sessional Committee was entrusted with the task of drawing up a ministerial declaration for presentation to the ministerial session. The draft declaration was introduced to the Expert Group by the coordinator of the drafting group and subsequently amended by

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various experts. The draft declaration as approved by the Expert Group for presentation to the ministerial session of the Conference appears in annex III to this report.

Consideration and adoption of the report of the meeting

50. The Group of Experts considered a draft report prepared by the secretariat (UNEP/AMCEN/8/L.1) and, after making various amendments, adopted it on 4 April 2000.

Closure of the meeting

51. The Chairman of the Expert Group declared the meeting closed at 10.10 p.m. on 4 April 2000.

Annex I

DRAFT

ABUJA DECLARATION ON AMCEN 2000

We, Ministers responsible for the environment in our respective countries,

Having met in Abuja during the AMCEN, on 5 and 6 April 2000,

Noting recent state-of-the-environment reports, such as the Global Environment Outlook report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the escalating and emerging environmental problems in our continent,

Concerned that Africa is the only continent in which poverty is expected to rise during the twenty-first century,

Also concerned about the increasing number of emerging and crisis situations in Africa as a result of global environmental changes with adverse social, cultural and economic effects,

Recalling the efforts which have been made since the inception of AMCEN in 1985,

Recognizing the role played by regional, subregional and national bodies in promoting sustainable development in Africa,

Bearing in mind the fact that success in achieving sustainable development will ultimately depend upon good policies, effective leadership, involved citizens, accurate information and informed national decision-making,

Hereby declare:

To commit ourselves to the implementation of the renewed AMCEN policy and programmes;

To keep under constant review policy actions that will enable us to address environmental challenges, especially new and emerging issues;

To build capacities in order to deal effectively with major environmental concerns;

To forge strategic partnerships with the public and private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the international community in preparing and implementing AMCEN policies and programmes;

To commit ourselves to coordinated implementation of environmental treaties in accordance with the environmental and developmental priorities of the continent;

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To ensure adequate preparation for and effective participation in relevant global environmental initiatives in order to address Africa's concerns; in this regard we make reference to the first Global Environment Forum to be held in Malmö, Sweden;

To cooperate with relevant regional and subregional bodies in the preparation of a common African position for the Earth Summit 2002 and in the implementation of its outcome;

To support the AMCEN secretariat in the mobilization of financial resources to ensure sustainable implementation of AMCEN programmes;

Also commit ourselves to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the eighth session of AMCEN.

Abuja, Nigeria, 6 April 2000

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Annex II

AMCEN's role in sustaining Africa's future

SUGGESTED DECISIONS

1. Main preamble

We, the African Ministers of Environment gathered in the city of Abuja, Nigeria, under the auspices of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the resolutions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment adopted in December 1985 and at other sessions of the Conference,

Aware of the evolution of global and regional environmental thinking and shifts in emphasis since the institutionalization of the Conference,

Recognizing the many initiatives taken by African countries in response to the changing environmental conditions,

Also Aware that accelerated growth is needed as a top priority in all our countries, but that economic growth is not sustainable without reducing the widespread poverty of our people and protecting the resource base needed for our future development, while improving the health, income and living conditions of the majority of our people is imperative for ensuring the political and social stability needed for economic and environmental sustainability,

Noting with concern the increase in the number of emergency and crisis situations in our countries as a result of global environmental changes with adverse effects on Africa, external factors being to a large degree the causes of these disasters, whereas the impacts on our region are increasing in adversity, frequency and scale,

Further aware of the important role of economic performance on the state of the environment and appreciative of the existence of African subregional and regional economic groupings, particularly the treaty establishing the African Economic Community,

Convinced that development which is not sustainable should no longer be called development,

2. Suggested decisions

Decision 1: Programme Priorities

Having examined the new proposals for policy and institutional change and the medium-term programme for 2000-2004 and noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the decisions of our seventh session with the very limited financial resources available,

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Recognizing the important role that the new organs of the AMCEN - the Bureau, Inter-sessional Committee and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, will play in promoting the implementation of the medium-term programme,

Decide:

- (a) To adopt:
  - (i) The proposals for policy and institutional change;
  - (ii) The proposals for a medium-term programme;
- (b) To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to meet and prepare a biennial programme budget to be submitted to the Inter-sessional Committee;
- (c) To urge member States of the Conference to integrate the actions agreed in the medium-term programme in their national programmes;
- (d) To urge African regional and subregional organizations to take into account the actions agreed in the medium-term programme in their regional and subregional programmes;
- (e) To invite the Executive Director of the UNEP to ensure that the actions agreed in the medium-term programme are fully integrated in the programmes and activities of the UNEP.

Decision 2: Global negotiations on the environment

Considering the importance of global negotiations and dialogue on the environment and the need for the Africa region to promote its environmental agenda in such negotiations and dialogue,

Recognizing the limited negotiating capacities in the Africa region as well as the difficulties encountered by representatives of the region in global environmental negotiations,

Recognizing also the need for the Africa region to approach global negotiation on the environment with clarity of purpose and common consensus, positions and perspectives,

Recognizing further the seriousness and magnitude of land degradation in the region resulting from desertification process,

Recognizing also the continuing loss of biological diversity,

Recognizing also that the adverse impacts of climate change pose serious threats to the development of African countries and that it is therefore necessary for Africa to play a key and active role at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled for November 2000,

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Decide:

- (a) To express appreciation to the Executive Director of the UNEP for organizing within the framework of the AMCEN various regional consultations on specific environmental issues prior to global negotiations, and to urge the UNEP to continue to support such consultations;
- (b) To develop common positions and perspectives within the framework of processes relating to global agreements, conventions and international dialogue on the environment;
- (c) To urge the President of the AMCEN to coordinate the positions of the African Group at all global environmental negotiations;
- (d) To urge all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in particular annex I parties, who are responsible for the largest share of historical and current emissions of greenhouse gases, to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in order to facilitate its early entry into force;
- (e) To invite international financial institutions, the African Development Bank and donor countries to support African countries in their efforts at capacity building to enhance the effective implementation of the conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification;
- (f) To work towards formulating common positions regarding the implementation of the Climate Change Convention's Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and the development of such mechanisms as the Clean Development Mechanism, Activities Implemented Jointly, transfers of technology and capacity-building;
- (g) To request the UNEP to assist African countries by convening a regional meeting of scientific/technical, policy and legal experts to prepare position documents on key issues on the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of the conventions on biological diversity, desertification and climate change.

Decision 3: Building strategic partnerships

Recognizing the important role that development partners, particularly in the UN system, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, women's groups and community-based organizations, the private sector and international donor countries can play in the implementation of the medium - term programme,

Recognizing also the need to maintain the five geographical subregions (Eastern, West, North, southern and Central Africa), and the important role that African regional and subregional organizations can play in the implementation of the medium-term programme,

Recognizing further the important role that line ministries can play at the

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national level in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;

Decide:

- (a) To build, through consultations and joint programming, partnerships with the UN system, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, women's groups and community-based organizations, the private sector, donor countries and multilateral donor organizations;
- (b) To organize consultation with heads of African regional and subregional organizations with a view to ensuring that the priorities of the AMCEN are integrated in their programmes;
- (c) To develop partnerships with the major African ministerial conferences in order to strengthen understanding of the priorities of the AMCEN and ensure their incorporation in national development plans.

Decision 4: New and emerging environmental matters

Recognizing the implications for the Africa region of the planned Earth Summit (2002),

Recognizing also the importance of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum which will be convened in Malmö, Sweden,

Aware of the serious and adverse impacts of natural disasters that are on the increase in the region,

Aware also of the serious and adverse impacts of civil conflicts on the environment as well as problems of refugees arising therefrom,

Decide:

- (a) To commend the UNEP for taking the necessary measures for convening the Global Ministerial Environment Forum which will bring together in Malmö, Sweden, from 29 to 31 May 2000, Environment Ministers from all over the world, and to applaud the Government of Sweden for hosting the Forum, considering that since the issues to be discussed at the forum are of crucial importance to Africa, it is important that Africa should be represented in full force in order to effectively bring to bear on the discussions Africa's perspectives on the agenda items;
- (b) To join hands with the OAU, the ECA, the ADB and the UNEP in carrying out necessary preparations for the development of a regional African common position in 2001 to be submitted to Earth Summit II (2002);
- (c) To establish a mechanism within the framework of the AMCEN which will serve as a vehicle for mobilizing actions for the purpose of comprehensive assessment of the impacts of disasters and civil conflicts on the environment, as well as environmental restoration measures.

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Decision 5: Financial Resources

Recognizing the importance of having predictable and regular financial resources for the implementation of the decisions of the Conference as well as the medium-term programme,

Recognizing also the need for contributions to the Trust Fund of the Conference,

Recognizing further the financial support that the UNEP continues to provide to the Conference as well as the contributions made by some of the member States of the Conference,

Recognizing also the need to look at the possibilities of other forms of resource assistance,

Expressing our appreciation to the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which have cumulatively contributed, in the last four years, \$ 835,700 to the Trust Fund established in 1985,

Expressing especially our thanks to Egypt for contributing \$ 689,800 of that amount,

Decide:

- (a) To express our appreciation to the UNEP for having borne the necessary costs for secretarial services, programme activities and personnel since the inception of the Conference in December 1985, and urge it to continue to do so;
- (b) To urge our countries to increase their current contributions to the Trust Fund to a total of \$ 3 million by December 2001 on the basis of the new system of contributions agreed upon at this session, and to emulate the commendable actions by the above-mentioned countries by making immediate initial contributions to the Trust Fund;
- (c) To request the secretariat to take the necessary measures to mobilize additional financial resources for the Conference on the basis of the proposal it presented at this eighth session of the Conference;
- (d) To mandate the UNEP to invoice member States of the Conference for their contributions to the Trust Fund in furtherance of this goal, on the basis of the good will enshrined in the decisions taken on the Trust Fund, as well as the pledges which have been made by member States at this session;
- (f) To request further the secretariat to submit a report on the use of the earned interest of the Trust Fund to the ninth session of the Conference;
- (e) To mandate the UNEP accordingly to utilize the interest earned in the Trust Fund as at 31 March 2000 for the implementation of the activities

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in the budgeted biennial programme prepared by the Inter-Agency  
Technical Committee.

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Annex IIIList of Participants

## COUNTRIES

## ALGERIA

Mr. Siyoucef Mohammed  
 Directeur Général  
 Ministère de Travaux Publics,  
 de l'Aménagement du Territoire,  
 de l'Environnement et de  
 l'Urbanisme  
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