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## Africa Environment Partnership Platform

First meeting

Nairobi, 20 and 21 September 2018

# Report of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform on the work of its first meeting<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

1. The first meeting of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform (AEPP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency was held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi on 20 and 21 September 2018.
2. The meeting was moderated on the morning of Thursday, 20 September by Ms. Estherine Fotabong, Director of Programmes, NEPAD Agency, and on the morning of Friday, 21 September by Mr. Peter Acquah (Ghana), former secretary of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

## II. Attendance

3. The list of meeting participants is available at <http://www.nepad.org/aepp>.

## III. Opening of the meeting

4. The Co-Moderator opened the meeting at 9.55 a.m. on Thursday, 20 September 2018.
5. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Rodrigue Abourou Othogo, Deputy Director General for Environment of Gabon, representing the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Mr. Jacques Denis Tsanga, Minister for Water and Forestry of Gabon; Ms. Joyce Msuya, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), representing Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UNEP; Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Director, Division of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission, representing Ms. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture; and Mr. Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Forestry, representing Mr. William Ruto, Vice-President of Kenya.
6. The meeting was declared officially open by Mr. Tobiko.

## IV. Organizational matters

### A. Approval of the agenda

7. The Africa Environment Partnership Platform approved the following agenda, on the basis of the provisional agenda set out in the meeting programme:
  1. Opening of the meeting.
  2. Organizational matters:
    - (a) Approval of the agenda;
    - (b) Organization of work.

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<sup>1</sup> English and French versions of the meeting programme, along with English versions of related documents, are available at <http://www.nepad.org/aepp/index.php/resources/forum-documents>.

3. Keynote presentation.
4. High-level panel discussions:
  - (a) Environment as an asset for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa and for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063;
  - (b) Policy choices and partnerships for African environmental governance systems and how they will affect the future.
5. Parallel sessions:
  - (a) Environmental crime and corruption in Africa;
  - (b) Status of implementation of multilateral environment agreements in Africa;
  - (c) Innovations and emerging issues within the environmental sector, with a focus on youth and entrepreneurship;
  - (d) Africa's ecological futures.
6. Summary reports.
7. Adoption of the official communiqué.
8. Closure of the meeting.

## **B. Organization of work**

8. Following the approval of the agenda, the Partnership Platform approved the structure of the meeting proposed by the Co-Moderator, on the basis of the proposal set out in the meeting programme. The keynote presentation on the theme of the meeting – 50 years of environmental governance and sustainability in Africa – would be delivered at the first plenary session, on the morning of Thursday 20 September; it would be followed, at the same plenary session, by two interactive high-level panel discussions on the theme; and two consecutive sets of two parallel breakout sessions, each on a specific sub-theme, would take place that afternoon.

## **V. Keynote presentation**

9. At the first plenary session, on the morning of Thursday 20 September, Mr. Mohamed Bakarr, Lead Environmental Specialist, Global Environment Facility, delivered the keynote presentation on the theme of the meeting, entitled “Reflections on the past and understanding the present to prepare for the future”.<sup>2</sup>

10. Comments were made by the representatives of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

11. A press conference was then held with members of the African media.

## **VI. High-level panel discussions**

12. At the first plenary session, two high-level panel discussions were held – the first on environment as an asset for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa and for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063, and the second on policy choices and partnerships for African environmental governance systems and how they would affect the future. Each discussion consisted of an introduction by a moderator, presentations by a panel of invited speakers, and an interactive discussion.

### **A. Environment as an asset for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa and for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063**

13. The first high-level panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Isabelle Masinde, Environmental Expert, National Environmental Complaints Committee, Kenya.

14. Presentations were made by Mr. Khaled Fahmy, former Minister of Environment of Egypt and former President of AMCEN; Mr. Bukar Tijani, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Ms. Barbara Thompson, Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs of South Africa, representing Ms. Edna

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<sup>2</sup> The text of the presentation is available at <http://www.nepad.org/aepp/index.php/resources/forum-documents/category/10-presentations>.

Molewa, Minister for Environmental Affairs of South Africa; Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Director for Global Sustainable Development, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission; and Ms. Juliette Biao Koudoukpo, Director, Africa Office, UNEP.

15. Comments were made by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and responded to by Mr. Fahmy.

## **B. Policy choices and partnerships for African environmental governance systems and how they will affect the future**

16. The second high-level panel discussion was moderated by Mr. George Wamukoya, Climate Change Advisor, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

17. Presentations were delivered by Mr. Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance; Mr. Erie Tamale, Head, Capacity Development Unit, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Mr. Michael Chege, Chairperson, National Governing Council of Kenya and NEPAD Kenya secretariat; Mr. Frederick Kumah, Regional Director for Africa, World Wide Fund for Nature; and Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador of Norway to Kenya.

18. Comments were made by the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance. Each panellist provided a response to the comments.

## **VII. Parallel breakout sessions**

19. On the afternoon of Thursday, 20 September, two consecutive pairs of parallel breakout sessions took place on the following themes: environmental crime and corruption in Africa; status of the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements in Africa; innovations and emerging issues within the environmental sector, with a focus on youth and entrepreneurship; and Africa's ecological futures.

20. Each session consisted of a lead presentation followed by further presentations by a panel of invited speakers on key issues to address to ensure the future success of Africa's environmental sector, and an interactive discussion.

### **A. Environmental crime and corruption in Africa**

21. The first parallel session, on environmental crime and corruption in Africa, was moderated by Mr. Kwame Ababio, Senior Programme Officer, Environmental Governance and Climate Change, NEPAD, and the lead presentation was delivered by Mr. Almani Dempha, Senior Policy Officer, African Union Commission.

22. Further presentations on key aspects of the subject under discussion were delivered by Mr. Ken Mwathe, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, BirdLife International; Ms. Frances Craigie, Chief Enforcement Officer, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa; and Mr. Augustin Njaminshi, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

23. Comments were made by the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Somalia, the African Biodiversity Forum and the African Forest Forum, as well as by Mr. Emmanuel Bensah, host of the *Africa in Focus* show on the SoundCloud streaming platform and moderator of the fourth parallel session; Ms. Olushola Olayide, Senior Policy Officer, African Union Commission, representing Ms. Sacko; and a member of the African media. The panellists responded to the comments.

### **B. Status of implementation of multilateral environmental agreements in Africa**

24. The second parallel session was moderated by Ms. Cecilia Njenga, Head, UNEP Office in South Africa, and the lead presentation was delivered by Mr. Robert Wabunoha, Regional Coordinator, Environmental Governance, UNEP.

25. Further presentations on key aspects of the subject under discussion were delivered by Mr. Raymond Ndomba Ngoye, Executive Secretary, Central African Forestry Commission; Mr. Mounkalia Goumandakoye, former director of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa; and Mr. Nathaniel Blama, Executive Director, Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia.

Comments were made by the representatives of the Niger, Tunisia, the African Forest Forum and the NEPAD Agency African Biosafety Network of Expertise. Responses were given by the panellists.

### **C. Innovations and emerging issues within the environmental sector, with a focus on youth and entrepreneurship**

26. The third parallel session was moderated by Mr. Emmanuel Bensah and the lead presentation was delivered by Mr. Peter Lukey, Chief Policy Advisor, Strategic Environmental Intelligence, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa.
27. Further presentations on key aspects of the subject under discussion were delivered by Mr. Johnson Nkem, UN Women; Mr. Al-Hamdou Dorsouma, Manager, Climate and Green Growth Division, African Development Bank; and Mr. Lukey.
28. Comments were made by the representatives of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, the NEPAD African Biosafety Network of Expertise, the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa, the African Development Bank, Ms. Olayide and a member of the African media, to which the panellists gave responses.

### **D. Africa's ecological futures**

29. The fourth parallel session, on Africa's ecological futures, was moderated by Mr. Saliem Fakir, Head, Policy and Futures Unit, World Wide Fund for Nature, who also delivered the lead presentation.
30. Further presentations on key aspects of the subject under discussion were delivered by Mr. Maxwell Gomera, Director, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, UNEP; Ms. Rose Mwebaza, Chief, Natural Resources Management, African Development Bank; and Mr. Peter Odhengo, Senior Policy Advisor on Climate Finance, National Treasury, Kenya.
31. Comments were made by the representatives of Botswana, South Africa, UNEP and the African Forest Forum. The panellists responded to the various comments.

## **VIII. Summary reports**

32. At the second plenary session, on the morning of Friday, 21 September, the Co-Moderator delivered an oral report summarizing the previous day's proceedings.
33. The moderators of the four parallel breakout sessions then reported on the discussions in those sessions.
34. Comments were made by the representatives of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Rwanda and, lastly, South Africa, to whom Ms. Njenga gave a response. Comments were also made by the representatives of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the East African Community.
35. The Partnership Platform then viewed a short film showing the highlights of an awards ceremony held on the eve of the present meeting to recognize the contribution of various countries, institutions and individuals to the management of Africa's environmental assets.

## **IX. Adoption of the official communiqué**

36. At the second plenary session, on the morning of Friday 21 September, the representative of Ethiopia presented a draft communiqué that had been prepared to mark the first meeting of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform.
37. Amendments were suggested by the representatives of Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Morocco, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda, as well as by the representatives of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Development Bank.
38. The Partnership Platform adopted by acclamation the official communiqué, as orally amended.

## **X. Closure of the meeting**

39. Closing remarks were made by Mr. Emmanuel Bayani Ngoyi, Director-General, National Anti-Pollution Centre, Ministry of Water and Forestry (Gabon), representing the President of AMCEN; Ms. Fotabong, also speaking on behalf of the African Union Commission; Ms. Njenga; and Mr. Richard Mwendadu, Director for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Kenya.
40. The meeting was declared closed at 1.45 p.m. on Friday, 21 September 2018.

## Annex

### Communiqué

*We, the participants in the first meeting of the Africa Environment Partnership Platform, all of whom have an active interest in environmental governance and sustainability and related areas, gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, on 20 and 21 September 2018,*

*Recalling* the decision of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) at its fourteenth session, which called for the creation of an *African Environment Partnership Platform* to “coordinate, mobilize resources, foster knowledge and align support for the implementation of the NEPAD Environment Action Plan”,

*Recalling* that the decision, which was contained in AMCEN’s *Africa’s* post-Rio+20 strategy for sustainable development, requested the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Agency and the African Union Commission, in close collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, regional economic communities and other relevant partners, to develop modalities for the operationalization of the African Environment Partnership Platform,

*Understanding* that attaining environmental sustainability in Africa will *be* accomplished within the context of multi-stakeholder engagements that foster inclusiveness and transformational socioeconomic development, and recognizing the importance of all stakeholders, especially vulnerable communities that depend on the rich environmental resources for basic livelihoods,

*Recalling* the official launch of the Africa Environment Partnership *Platform* on 17 November 2016, at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Marrakech, Morocco, where it was decided to convene the inaugural meeting of the Platform,

*Noting* that the first meeting of the Africa Environment Partnership *Platform* covered the following issues:

- Review of 50 years of environmental governance in Africa;
  - Environment as an asset for Africa’s socioeconomic transformation and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want;
  - Policy choices and partnerships on Africa’s environmental governance systems and partnerships and the way they will affect the future;
  - Environmental crime and corruption;
  - Status of implementation of multilateral environment agreements in Africa;
  - Innovations within the environment sector and emerging issues linked with the environment sector; and
  - Africa’s ecological futures;
1. *Commend* AMCEN for its vision in establishing the Platform to serve as a multi-stakeholder forum for engagement, advocacy, resource mobilization and partnership building for environmental sustainability in Africa;
  2. *Welcome* the Platform as an open platform for coordination, sharing and learning from each other and collectively examining environmental development, scaling up opportunities and appreciating the unique value the Platform will bring to efforts towards advancing environmental governance in Africa and mainstreaming the environment into other productive sectors;
  3. *Also welcome* the Platform as a mechanism for fostering coherence, alignment and harmonization for environmental sustainability and governance within and across various levels and constituencies, including governments, regional economic communities, multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society, research institutions and other non-state players;
  4. *Appreciate* the efforts of the organizing team, in particular the NEPAD Agency, the African Union Commission, AMCEN Secretariat, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance and the African Development Bank, to convene the first meeting of the Platform as an open, stakeholder-driven platform;
  5. *Recognize* the contributions of the various stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and development partners, implementing and supporting various environmental

initiatives and programmes across the African *continent* and contributing to the attainment of the environmental components of the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and various multilateral environmental agreements;

6. *Also recognize* the need for a consolidated knowledge base on innovative solutions for technologies, approaches, practices and initiatives in Africa;

7. *Decide to:*

(a) Convene meetings of the African Environment Partnership Platform biennially with a focus on facilitating country experiences, lessons and best practice in the efforts to accelerate sustainable environmental practices;

(b) Request development partners and multilateral institutions to continue to support the Platform as a vehicle for promoting the sharing of innovative solutions for environmental challenges in Africa, and for empowering member States and regional economic communities, innovators, the private sector, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and civil society to invest in and use innovative approaches to address environmental challenges;

(c) Promote the Platform as a knowledge-sharing mechanism for disseminating information, sharing experiences and lessons, and improving coordination with member States and regional institutions and processes relating to environmental management and sustainable development in Africa;

(d) Request the NEPAD Agency, the African Union Commission and the AMCEN secretariat, with technical and financial support from the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, development partners and others, to set up a comprehensive portal on environmental governance on the Platform;

(e) Request the NEPAD Agency, as the convener of the Platform, in collaboration with AMCEN, the African Union Commission and other partners' leading efforts, to support country approaches in the implementation of the national priority environmental projects and programmes, including strengthening the capacity to implement and monitor progress towards the attainment of the objectives of regional flagship programmes, the Environment Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063;

(f) Request the NEPAD Agency, the African Union Commission and AMCEN to promote capacity development and the financing of environmental projects at different levels, and to explore mechanisms for securing needed funds from both public sources (national and development partners) and private sources, including international environmental project financing;

(g) Request all stakeholders of the Platform to mainstream and scale up gender, women, youth and entrepreneurship considerations and actions into new and existing environmental activities across the continent;

(h) Request the establishment of an inclusive and transparent mechanism for all stakeholders of the Platform to track progress in the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements through strengthening an observatory on the agreements and to support implementation of environmental programmes and projects in Africa;

(i) Call upon all African countries to ratify the revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Maputo Convention);

(j) Recognize indigenous knowledge and customary governance systems as part of Africa's rich heritage in addressing environmental issues and urge the Platform to strongly advocate the use of these practices at all levels;

(k) Request the NEPAD Agency and the African Union Commission, in collaboration with other partners of the Platform task team, to design mechanisms for follow-up and strengthen collaboration on issues emanating from the first meeting of the Platform and the implementation of the recommendations.

**Adopted in Nairobi, Kenya, on 21 September 2018**