



AMCEN



AU



Concept Note on 1st Africa Environment Partnership Platform (AEPP)

Date: 20-21 September, 2018
Venue: UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Africa has a wealth of natural resources, including minerals, land, biological diversity, wildlife, forests, fisheries and water. The region offers significant potential for human, social and economic development with a large heritage of biodiversity which forms the continent's the region's natural wealth on which it's social and economic systems are based. These resources are also of global importance for the world's climate and for the development of socio-economic activities.

Despite these important assets, Africa faces a host of environmental problems ranging from climate change, air pollution, to deforestation, land degradation, and desertification, biodiversity loss as well as chemical and waste management. These environmental challenges, which have both direct and indirect impacts on the environmental and socio-economic systems of countries, are caused mainly by among others high demographic growth, weak policies and institutional structures at regional and national levels.

To address these environmental challenges, the NEPAD Environment Action Plan, was designed as a policy framework to facilitate the implementation of targeted actions. The overall objective of the Action Plan is to complement the relevant African processes, including the work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), with a view to improving environmental conditions in Africa in order to contribute to the achievement of economic growth and poverty eradication in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063. Furthermore, to facilitate the implementation of the Environment Action Plan and the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit, the African Union mandated the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) to conduct a substantive analysis of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) Summit and develop a roadmap for the effective implementation of the outcomes in Africa.

The establishment of Africa Environment Partnership Platform (AEPP) stems from the decision of the 12th Ordinary Session of AMCEN, which took place in Arusha, Tanzania in September 2012, where the Ministers discussed the rationale for creating a mechanism. At this AMCEN meeting the African Environment Ministers adopted a decision to review the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and establish an African Environment Partnership Platform (AEPP) to ***“coordinate, mobilize resources, foster knowledge and align support for the implementation of the Environment Action Plan”*** (AMCEN, 2012)¹. The platform was officially launched at COP 22 in Morocco during the UN Climate Change Conference in November 2016.

¹http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Amcen_Events/13th_Session/Docs/14th%20Session/CompilationDec/K1282897Advnce.pdf

In view of this, the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) in conjunction with the NEPAD Agency, the African Union Commission and other institutions is organizing the **1st Africa Environment Partnership Platform** meeting from 20-21 September, 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.1 THEME

The theme for the Conference is **“50 years of Environmental Governance and Sustainability in Africa”**. The rationale for the theme is reviewing environmental management in Africa since the period when most African countries gained independence and also the adoption of the “African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (also known as Algiers Convention) in 1968. The theme is also forward looking at issues related to environmental sustainability in line with global goals on the Sustainable Development Agenda and processes (SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Africa’s Agenda 2063).

1.2 JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALE FOR THE PLATFORM

Most African states are parties to many of the international environmental conventions. African countries have ratified the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm Convention) and the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (Rotterdam Convention). African countries have ratified the Ramsar Convention, CITES, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

There has been significant efforts and progress at continental, regional and national levels to address the multi-faceted challenges of sustainable environmental management in Africa with AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Union Commission (AUC), NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, Regional Institutions, UN Agencies, Civil Society Groups and Development Partners amongst others at the forefront.

Clearly, there is no shortage of interventions in the field of environmental management in Africa, however, the challenge often, is the lack of coordination and partnership between the various players at regional, sub-regional and national levels. Also the continent lacks a platform that brings together all major players and actors in the environment sphere to deliberate and engage on developing opportunities and addressing environmental challenges. AMCEN, established in 1985, is the main policy forum that provides the region with an opportunity to address its common environmental problems. This forum is however, primarily a ministerial one supported by a technical/expert group. AMCEN therefore called for the creation of a partnership platform that will:

- Create an avenue for all actors involved in Africa’s environmental sector to deliberate and discuss key issues related to the sector and its contribution to the overall development of the continent.

- Advocate for the prerequisite political support needed to place environmental issues as an integral component of socio-economic discourse in Africa.
- Provide a platform for African countries to report on progress towards a coordinated action at implementing MEAs and African environmental priorities including those on biodiversity, climate change and desertification.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE INAUGURAL PLATFORM MEETING

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the coming into force of the Paris Agreement provide a unique opportunity for Africa to strategically address its environment and sustainable development goals as contained in the Africa Agenda 2063 and other development priorities of the continent. Therefore, the goal of the inaugural meeting of the platform is to promote sustainable environment management through enhanced partnership, coordination and harmonization of activities on environment and pooling of resources at various levels.

The meeting will also create a unique and innovative opportunity for countries and stakeholders on the environment to report on progress in the implementation of the Regional Flagship Programmes and make further recommendations on strategies to support these as well as to assess the efficacy of Africa's implementation of key Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements.

Other issues that the AEPP should consider include: Integrating environmental conservation and socio-economic development; conservation and sustainable use of renewable resources; empowering people and strengthening national Institutions especially protection of and contributions from traditional knowledge; and Innovation, Technological transfer and use.

2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To enhance coordination of environmental management among stakeholders at all levels on the continent. It will create an avenue for constructive dialogue, especially amongst Africans, institutions and partners by building a coalition of partners to support Africa's environment
- To strengthen linkages between Africa's environment and key productive socio-economic sectors such as trade, infrastructure and the extractive industry. The platform will also link closely with key continental Initiatives under the Regional Flagship Programmes such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) amongst others in order to build synergies.
- To engage governments and partners to prioritise environment in their development strategies
- To enhance knowledge sharing and capacity development initiatives on the environment. The Platform will provide the space for sharing best practices with the view of documenting state-of-the art practices and developing frameworks for sharing and replicating best practices.
- To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of environmental priority programmes/projects at regional and continental levels.

2.2 FORMAT AND OUTLINE OF THE AEPP

The Event will take the form of high profile panel sessions and highly interactive moderated plenary discussions as well as parallel sessions that will engage a number of pertinent issues in Africa's environmental sector. The topic for the high level segment which will be made up of

Ministers of Environment from Africa, Heads of Inter-governmental organizations, Business leaders, Academia, Civil Society and partners will discuss the topic “**Africa’s environmental resources as an asset for inclusive growth and transformation**”. The subthemes for the AEPP will focus on:

- Environment Crime and Corruption;
- Status of Implementation of Multi-Lateral Environment Agreements in Africa;
- Innovations and Emerging issues within the Environmental Sector with focus on youth and entrepreneurship;
- Africa’s Ecological Futures

3.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECOGNITION FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

The AEPP will be preceded by an awards/ recognition ceremony to honour and recognize countries, institutions and individuals who have played key roles and contributed significantly towards the management of the continent’s environmental assets.

4.0 EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

The African Environmental Partnership Platform is an open event for representatives of Governments, Regional Economic Communities, Environmental Organizations, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academics, Specialized Agencies and Development Partners amongst many others.

5.0 EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF THE AEPP

The AEPP will adopt a statement and produce a comprehensive report containing recommendations and key messages on the abovementioned sub-theme topics. This will be used to inform policy makers, civil society and general public on the recommended approach to environmental management on the African Continent, and more importantly to support an enhanced and coordinated engagement of all stakeholders in Africa.

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