



AMCEN



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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Eighteenth session

Online, 13–16 September 2021

Information note for participants*

I. Background

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was established in 1985 and promotes regional cooperation between African Governments and stakeholders in addressing emerging environmental challenges. AMCEN meetings provide guidance for the development of key regional policies and initiatives on the environment and sustainable development. Through the work of AMCEN, there has been heightened policy responses and actions by Governments, civil society and the private sector to transform Africa's sustainable development pathways.
2. In view of the prevailing situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and based on consultations with the AMCEN Bureau, it was agreed that the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN should take place in a two-step approach. The first part of the session would take place in a virtual setting with a streamlined agenda to address urgent and procedural matters. Substantive matters that require in-depth negotiations will be deferred to a resumed in-person meeting of the session to be held in 2022, at a date to be agreed upon.
3. Pursuant to the above, the first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN will be held in September 2021. It will consist of a meeting of the expert group on 13 and 14 September 2021 and a ministerial segment on 16 September 2021. Logistical information is provided further below.
4. The eighteenth ordinary session will be held under the theme ***"Securing people's well-being and ensuring environmental sustainability in Africa"***. The theme calls for governments to align recovery measures with long-term objectives of strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, and integrating more ambitious policies to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and restore ecosystem services. The theme encourages countries to prioritize green and sustainable recovery plans that deliver mutual benefits for social, economic, and environmental resilience. It is worth noting that a central dimension of building back better is the need for a people-centred recovery which focuses on people's well-being through environmental actions that create jobs and improve livelihoods.
5. The eighth special session of AMCEN held on 4 December 2020, adopted the African Green Stimulus Programme as an African-led initiative to support the continent's recovery in a sustainable manner, to the devastating socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the special session, considerable progress has been made to prepare and implement the African Green Stimulus Programme. The first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN will enable ministers to provide strategic guidance towards the implementation of the Programme.
6. The first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN will also be an opportunity for ministers to provide urgent policy guidance for upcoming key global environmental events, including the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD COP15) to be held in October 2021, the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) scheduled to take place in November 2021 and the resumed session of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) to be held in 2022.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

7. The AMCEN session will help the continent to agree on a common position for the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. The Conference of the Parties will be finalizing the post-2020 biodiversity framework that is expected to play a significant role in building resilience and galvanizing international cooperation. The AMCEN session will help the region to strategize on how to effectively participate in the Conference of the Parties as well as provide political direction in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

8. The twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC is scheduled to take place from 1 to 12 November 2021, in Glasgow. At the eighth special session of AMCEN, key messages for Africa in preparation for the Conference of the Parties were adopted and the African Group of Negotiators on climate change have subsequently had further engagements. The first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN will provide an opportunity for ministers to be appraised on the preparations and key negotiation issues for the Conference of the Parties and agree on how the continent can effectively participate in the twenty-sixth session.

9. The first part of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.1) took place online from 22 to 23 February 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The resumed fifth session is expected to be held in-person from 28 February to 2 March 2022. The first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN will offer an opportunity for ministers to be updated on the key developments since the first part of UNEA-5 and address key matters relating to the resumed UNEA-5 session in 2022, including Africa's assumption of the Presidency of UNEA-6.

10. The first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN is expected to adopt outcomes including decisions and key policy messages reflecting the discussions under the various agenda items. The session will also provide guidance on the resumed eighteenth session (AMCEN 18.2) scheduled to take place in 2022, the AMCEN trust fund and other procedural matters.

II. Practical information

A. Confirmation of participation in the special session

11. All participants are strongly encouraged to confirm their participation to the AMCEN secretariat at: unenvironment-amcen@un.org, with copies to david.ombisi@un.org and julie.kaibe@un.org and provide their e-mail addresses in order to receive the link for joining the online meeting of the first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN.

B. Documents

12. The pre-session documents for the meeting will be sent to the AMCEN national focal points and other confirmed participants prior to the meeting. The documents will also be available on the AMCEN website: <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/eighteenth-session-african-ministerial-conference-environment>

C. Logistical information

13. The meeting will be conducted in English and French. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French will be provided via the KUDO interpretation platform. (Be sure to download the latest version. Technical support is available via support@kudoway.com.) The platform will be open for participants starting at 11.00a.m. (UCT + 3) on the meeting days.

14. The following recommendations are to facilitate successful participation in the meeting:

- (a) Use a headset (if possible, a noise-cancelling model to prevent the sound from the earpad from being picked up by the microphone). Headsets with earbuds are not recommended unless you are following the meeting from your phone.
- (b) Hold the microphone close to your mouth but avoid breathing into it.
- (c) Use the Chrome or Firefox browser, ensuring that you have downloaded the latest version.
- (d) Use a wired connection or, if that is not available, high-speed Wi-Fi.
- (e) Use a quiet room with adequate lighting.

D. Associated meeting

15. An online forum for major groups and stakeholders (civil society), organized by AMCEN, will take place prior to first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN. Its outcomes will feed into the discussions of the AMCEN session.

E. Secretariat contacts and further information

16. For more information about the first part of the eighteenth ordinary session of AMCEN, please contact the AMCEN secretariat at unenvironment-amcen@un.org, with copies to david.ombisi@un.org and julie.kaibe@un.org.
