High-Level Political Statement
to Commemorate Forty Years of the Establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

We, the African ministers for the environment, and high-level representatives, together with the representatives of international organizations, partners and other stakeholders at the Special High-Level Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment entitled "AMCEN@40" under the theme "Four Decades of Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future" to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Welcoming and appreciating the participation of ministers, representatives of international organisations, partners and stakeholders in this special high-level session,

Recalling resolution 1/1 on environmental cooperation in Africa adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment in December 1985,

Honouring the pioneering spirit that led to the establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1985 and acknowledging the tenacity and testament of all those who have believed in and advanced the mission of the Conference,

Celebrating four decades of the historic legacy of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment as a unique platform of collective achievements, addressing significant environmental issues, advocating for environmental stewardship, championing policies and actions, facilitating dialogues to foster regional cooperation and solidarity, raising Africa's collective voice on the global stage, influencing national, regional and global environmental negotiations and policies, enhancing capacities, and ensuring that socio-economic development aligns with ecological integrity— a journey characterised by both successes and challenges,

Recognising the mounting environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme events, environmental degradation, biodiversity and ecosystems loss, deforestation, desertification, pollution, poverty, and other crises that are undermining our ability to effectively respond to environmental challenges, threatening our economies, and the livelihoods of millions of people,

Reaffirming our collective and common objectives in enhancing and promoting sustainable environment management, and restoring degraded land and ecosystems, ensuring sound chemicals and waste management, as well as reducing pollution for the benefit of present and future generations, contributing to the socio-economic transformation of Africa,

Acknowledging that Africa stands at a critical juncture in our efforts to protect its natural capital, ranging from the diverse ecosystems, landscapes, air, rich biodiversity to its vast mineral wealth, freshwater, and marine resources,

IN UNITY, PURPOSE AND A SHARED VISION, we hereby state our renewed commitment to a resilient and sustainable future for our continent and the rest of the world, and in this regard,

1. Declare our intention to enter the next chapter of the legacy of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, serving as a beacon of our commitment to fostering an environmentally resilient, sustainable, and equitable Africa.
2. Pledge to collectively rise to the opportunities and challenges ahead, forging a path that honours our past while ensuring a better future for generations to come.
3. Commit to play a leading role in safeguarding our natural capital, prioritising sustainable management practices that balance economic development with environmental conservation, recognising the intrinsic values of the natural capital and its role in sustaining our socio- economies and cultural heritage.
4. Commit to address the mounting environmental challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, drought, biodiversity and ecosystems loss, deforestation, desertification, public health risks, land, air, and water pollution, poverty, and other threats that undermine our sustainable development goals and threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions.
5. Commit to foster inclusive policies that enhance resilience and ensure equitable access to environmental resources.
6. Call upon member States to expedite the ratification, domestication, and effective implementation of regional and global multilateral environmental agreements, including the Bamako Convention and the Maputo African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.
7. Commit to promoting green growth pathways that harness environmental action as a driver of decent jobs, green investments entrepreneurship, and socio-economic opportunities, particularly for Africa's youth and women, leveraging the capacities that we have built over the past four decades.
8. Call upon member states to embrace a "whole-of-government" and whole-of-society" approaches in addressing environmental challenges and to engage and empower communities, women and the youth to foster environmental stewardship and cultivate future leaders who prioritize sustainable practices.
9. Call upon governments and all stakeholders, including, non-governmental organizations, development partners and the private sector, at local, national, regional, and international levels to join us to enhance our collective capacity in our commitment to a sustainable Africa.
10. Reaffirm our dedication to the balanced and accelerated implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Africa Union's Agenda

2063, the Africa We Want as well as other regional and global environmental commitments and goals.

11. Pledge to build on the achievements and lessons of the past four decades and to chart a bold and transformative path forward for environmental sustainability in Africa, focused on implementation and investments actions, policy incentives, capacity and skills enhancement.

12. Commit to enhance the visibility of the work of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, through environmental action, awareness and investments. We also commit to employ digital technologies, including artificial intelligence to ensure that the African people are informed, empowered, and mobilised as active environmental stewards.

13. Commit to enhancing the institutional capacity of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, including increased, stable, and predictable financial resources to its Trust Fund as well as exploring innovative financing mechanisms, to support the effective coordination and monitoring of implementation of Africa's environmental priorities.

14. Extend our heartfelt gratitude to the African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Global Environment Facility, regional economic communities and all partners for the support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and exemplary leadership in prioritising environmental action, addressing environmental crises and advocating for a sustainable future for our beloved continent.

15. Express our appreciation for the contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme, serving as the Secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, over the past forty years and for the continued support in the future.