

The 2025 Regional Consultative Meeting of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Major Groups & Stakeholders, Africa Ahead of the 20th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)

Concept Note

Dates TBD upon Confirmation by AMCEN Bureau

Venue: Nairobi (World Agroforestry Center, CIFOR-ICRAF and UN Office at Nairobi)

2025 RCM Africa Dates: Thursday, July 10 – Sunday July 13

AMCEN Dates: Monday 14 – Friday 18 July

Theme: Four Decades of Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future

Background

The establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) following a conference held by African environment ministers in 1985 remains a landmark, trajectory-altering decision, 40 years later. The AMCEN has been playing a significant role in shaping the direction of environmental protection advocacy in the Continent and working to bring together African states to speak with a common voice on emerging and persistent environmental issues. It is now time to take stock of the AMCEN and its impact on the Continent's transformative agenda. Fundamental questions that must be answered include to what extent the AMCEN has influenced the approach to ensure that the basic human needs of the peoples of Africa have been met adequately and sustainably; the extent to which the Conference has influenced the realization of socioeconomic development across all levels of the Continent; and the extent to which the Conference has contributed towards ensuring that agricultural practices and activities secure food security needs within the Continent, as enshrined in its mandate.

Over the years, the tradition of the AMCEN session has involved the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa to contribute to agenda items of the AMCEN and to introduce new perspectives on emergent and pressing environmental and developmental issues of the Continent while providing experiential input into the AMCEN process. During the 18th and the 19th ordinary sessions of the AMCEN and the 10th Special session, it has become clear that running a 2-day RCM is hardly enough to substantively cover the pertinent areas of the agenda. Further, the interest of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has been growing over the years as demonstrated in the numbers and diversity of about 70 participants from three sub-regions of the Continent only in 2022 during the 18th Ordinary Session to about 158 participants from all five sub-regions of Africa in 2024 during the 10th special session of the AMCEN.

Accordingly, the Regional Facilitators, in consultation with UNEP MGS, Africa constituents, found it prudent to extend the RCM to a 3-day meeting. Consistent with the theme of the 20th Ordinary Session of the AMCEN, "Four Decades of Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future," it is impossible to imagine the future of Africa without the direct involvement of the African youth. Thus, noting the significance of Africa's youth and their

significance in the sustainable transformation agenda of the Continent, the 2025 RCM Africa will comprise of a day dedicated to the youth to draw their perspectives, reflect on the past, and “imagine” their future into the broad RCM agenda and infuse it with the AMCEN agenda.

Accordingly, the 2025 RCM Africa, among other matters, will hold discussions and issue positions around the following agenda items:

1. AMCENat40: the implementation of the AMCEN decisions since 1985 and AMCEN Priorities for the period 2025 to 2027
2. Preparations for the fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
3. Preparations for the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5.2)
4. Preparations for the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention
5. Preparations for the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
6. Preparations for the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
7. Preparations for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
8. Preparations for the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.

This will allow and enable the consolidation and amplification of the African youth voices on critical issues of the Continent at this very auspicious occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the AMCEN.

Objective

The objective is to host a 4-day hybrid RCM with a target participation of at least 120 civil society actors representing at least 50 organizations from the five sub-regions of Africa from Thursday, July 10 to Sunday, July 13, 2025 with the first day being dedicated to the Youth. The 2025 RCM shall seek to:

1. Hold 4-day consultations in hybrid mode (in-person and virtual) to reflect on the last 40 years of the AMCEN and develop a common position for the Civil Society Organizations in Africa.
2. Develop a summary meeting report for presentation during the opening segment of the expert segment of the 20th Ordinary Session of the AMCEN.
3. Develop a joint long statement expressing the position of the UNEP MGS, Africa and other African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for publishing on the UNEP website.
4. Develop a summary statement for presentation of the summary statement to be delivered to the Ministers of Environment at the opening of the high-level ministerial segment of the AMCEN.
5. Develop a Youth of Africa statement.

Further, the 2025 RCM, Africa will also offer civic and non-state perspectives on the other substantive matters that are pertinent to the Continent including the need to invest and utilize early warning and assessments to address the environmental challenges on the Continent, the nexus around the triple planetary environmental crisis (biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution) and food in/security, poverty, land loss and degradation, health, and sustainable development, and the importance of leveraging on the sustainable digital technologies while tapping in to the skills and human capital resources to foster sustainable transformation in Africa.

Delivery mode

The 2025 RCM Africa will comprise panel, workshop, and roundtable discussions with plenary convergence for consolidation of the final long statement.

Other Outcomes

1. Preparations for the Seventh Session of the UN Environment Assembly and related processes
2. Positions and preparations towards the UNFCCC COP30, the Twentieth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and other thematic areas of biodiversity, desertification and pollution
3. Other substantive decisions related to governing and strengthening the engagement of the UNEP MGS, Africa