

Decision 18/3: Biodiversity, Wildlife and Desertification

We the African ministers of the environment

Having met in Dakar on 15 and 16 September 2022 at the resumed eighteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the decision CL/761 (XXII) of the twenty-second session of the African Union Executive Council, establishing the African group of negotiators on biodiversity to articulate African perspectives, priorities, and common positions during all negotiations of the Open-Ended Working Group of the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and welcoming the progressive work achieved by the group,

Further recalling decision 17/2(3) of the Conference endorsing the establishment of a core group to facilitate coordination of the African group of negotiators in developing a common regional position to strengthen Africa's voice and the mandate for the African group of negotiators on biodiversity,

Recalling that based on this mandate, the Africa group of negotiators has effectively coordinated and participated in the negotiations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework during its four meetings, and has held internal consultation meetings in Gaborone (19-21 May 2022) and in Libreville (01-04 September 2022),

Welcome the progress made by the Africa group of negotiators to develop a common African position on key biodiversity issues and promote the views and needs of the continent in the on-going negotiations,

Taking cognizance of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic that delayed the negotiations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

Further taking cognizance of the conclusions of the first part of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, which took place virtually, 11 to 15 October 2021, under the presidency of China,

Realising the relevance of the key outcomes of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the fourth Open-Ended Working Group of the Convention on Biodiversity, and the fifteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to Africa,

Taking note of the outcome of the first African Protected Areas Congress that was held 18 to 23, July 2022 in Kigali,

Welcoming the convening of the second part of the fifteenth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the tenth Meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their utilization, to be jointly hosted by the governments of China and Canada in Montreal from 7-19 December 2022,

Aware that the second part of the Conference of Parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity will negotiate for adoption, a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will define the global strategy to securing the world's biodiversity and therefore contribute to the attainment of ecosystem and human well-being,

Recalling decision 17/1 of the Conference that requested the United Nations Environment Programme to develop a regional cooperation framework on biodiversity economy, and welcoming the progress made to develop the framework,

Recalling further resolution 4/16 of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands.

Decide:

1. To urge member states to provide the needed political leadership and direction for the adoption and implementation of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework and to raise visibility of biodiversity and its contribution to the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development and the Agenda 2063, the Africa we Want, including through the effective participation in the second part of the 15th Conference of

the Parties high-level segment scheduled on 15 to 17, December 2022, and to champion the position of Africa in the global biodiversity framework negotiations.

2. To reiterate that the global biodiversity framework, must include a solution for sharing the benefits arising from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, and further reiterate that this is a non-negotiable pre-condition for Africa supporting adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and in this regard support the African proposal that the best way to achieve this is to create a global multilateral benefit sharing mechanism under the Convention.
3. To support an ambitious target on protected areas within the context of Africa's priorities and the need for the continent to sustainably utilize its natural resources for its developmental agenda and that for Africa the ambitious target on protected areas should cover all ecosystems, that is, terrestrial, marine, coastal, inland waters and shall be supported by adequate means of implementation including financial resources, capacity building, technology development and transfer and respect the rights and priorities of indigenous peoples, local communities and women and youth.
4. To further reiterate the call on the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to recognise that financing and mobilisation of resources is highly indispensable for the effective achievement of the goals and targets to be set for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and thus requires adequate, additional and predictable financing and a strategy for resource mobilisation, supported by a strong mechanism for capacity development and technology transfer, and further call for the establishment of a dedicated global biodiversity fund, and the adoption of a global strategy for resource mobilization alongside the global biodiversity framework.
5. To support an ambitious target in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, on ecosystem restoration in line with the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration to protect and restore ecosystems for the benefit of nature and people.
6. To call on member states to continue providing support to the African group of negotiators for biodiversity to assure their readiness for second part of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, and to work with other nations at regional and global levels, through the African group of negotiators and bilaterally, to raise the level of consensus and cooperation needed to secure a robust post-2020 global biodiversity framework that takes into account interests of the Africa region.
7. To endorse the key policy messages contained in the annex to this decision.
8. To request the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, and other partners to continue supporting the development of the regional cooperation framework on biodiversity economy and report on the progress made during the next regular session of the Conference.
9. To invite partners, to support the development of the biodiversity economy cooperation framework through technical and financial assistance to enable effective participation of African governments and a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the consultative process.
10. To establish an African group of negotiators on wildlife to assist member States in developing common positions on matters related to the conservation, sustainable management and sustainable use of wild fauna and flora.
11. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with relevant partners, to support the process of developing the modalities for the proposed African group of negotiators on wildlife and to provide secretariat services to the group.
12. To call upon African member States to participate in the forthcoming nineteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
13. To urge member States to support implementation of the Abidjan Legacy Programme, to take urgent action to address drought, and to foster partnerships and collaborations such as the Global Alliance on Drought for Resilience in addressing land degradation, drought, and desertification in Africa.
14. To call upon regional economic commissions, in collaboration with partners, to continue supporting member States in mobilising resources to implement regional and national initiatives that support sustainable land

management and land degradation neutrality in Africa, including on issues related to gender, land tenure, and forced migration.

15. To request the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification, in collaboration with other UN agencies under the United Nations Sand and Dust Storms coalition, to accelerate the development and implementation of strategic programmes to support member States to address the issues of sand and dust storms as well as sand dunes.
16. To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, and other partners, to carry out awareness raising and policy advocacy campaigns view of catalysing action to address land degradation, drought and desertification in Africa in the framework of the pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
17. To intensify regional and international collaboration among landowners, the private sector and all other relevant actors in the conservation and sustainable management of Congo Basin peatlands.

Annex

Key policy messages on Africa's participation in the negotiation of the global biodiversity framework

1. Biodiversity and nature's contributions in Africa are economically, socially, and culturally important assets, essential in providing the continent's food, water, energy, health, and livelihoods, and assuring the foundation for sustainable development and achievement of the sustainable development goals. Therefore, the integration of Agenda 2063 goals and Sustainable Development Goals into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is crucial to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity that are necessary to secure human well-being and development outcomes in Africa.
2. However, the world is in a state of planetary emergency – the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate change require urgent and unified global action to prevent significant damage to national and global economic, social, and political stability.
3. Already, African communities face unprecedented pressure from extreme weather events, desertification, land degradation and deforestation that threaten the health and well-being of millions of people.
4. At the same time, the African continent stands at the forefront of the global conservation movement, safeguarding incomparable biodiversity and natural capital, and has a lot to lose if we do not take strong measures now to safeguard our biodiversity resources.
5. We are of the view that a holistic approach to the conservation and sustainable management of all land and water using participatory ecosystem-based approaches is crucial to ensure conservation, restoration, coherence, and sustainable use of biodiversity for the benefit of all towards an ecologically, socially, and economically just and sustainable world by 2050.
6. We reaffirm the importance of means of implementation as an integral part of the GBF and stress the need for adequate provision of financial resources, access to technology and capacity building, including the establishment of a dedicated biodiversity fund to support effective implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
7. We recognize the responsibility for all countries to act domestically to help close the financial gap, as per Article 20.1 of the Convention, and for developed countries to support developing countries to ensure implementation of the goals and targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in line with Article 20.4 of the Convention.
8. We note that mainstreaming is an essential tool for unlocking the necessary scale of investment in biodiversity in Africa therefore we need to increase our collective focus on mainstreaming and enhance the capacity available for making the case for biodiversity.
9. We also recognize that the realization of the new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework depends on actions taken on the ground and will require strong National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and coordinated National Biodiversity Finance Plans or similar mechanisms to plan and implement national actions for managing and supporting biodiversity.

10. We reaffirm that utilization of Africa's natural assets, including genetic and biological resources and related digital sequence information and traditional knowledge, must result in sufficient sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits to make sustainable use of biodiversity more attractive than unsustainable extraction, ensuring good conservation outcomes, and therefore the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework must contain a solution for sharing the benefits arising from utilisation of digital sequence information, which also can be one way to contribute to long-term resource mobilization.
11. We welcome the inclusion of a specific biosafety target under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and further acknowledge the relevance of the Protocol on Biosafety and its implementation plan and capacity-building action plan to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
12. We reaffirm that ecosystem restoration is very important to Africa, will work to raise the inclusion and profile of restoration in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and to mainstream land and ecosystem restoration in relevant sectoral policies, plans, programmes, and actions to achieve agreed ecosystem restoration commitments and targets, communicating the results and benefits to people.
13. We acknowledge role of indigenous people and local communities, women and youth in the use, management, and conservation of biodiversity in Africa, and that their inclusion in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is essential in achieving both sustainability objectives and advancing equal rights.
14. We recall the important role of technology development and transfer to support implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and urge that it includes updating technology needs assessments, provision of support for the implementation of the outcomes of technology needs assessments, identification of technologies that are ready for transfer and enhancement of enabling environments to address barriers and meet the specific needs and concerns of Africa, including the development aspirations contained in Agenda 2063.
15. We consider the following elements currently under negotiation in the global biodiversity framework as a package deal for Africa to adopt the framework:

a) On Protected Areas

Recalling para 4 of AMCEN 18.1/1 and noting the progress made by the African group of negotiators on biodiversity towards articulating a common African position on the proposal to protect thirty per cent of land and sea areas by 2030, we note the divergent views in respect to this target and consensus on the conditions that will be integrated on the target on protected areas to support an ambitious protected area target of 30% of the area of all ecosystems (terrestrial, marine, coastal, inland waters) by 2030, on the condition that that the following will be integrated in the target on protected areas:

- i) the target is clearly indicated as a global target,
- ii) the national priorities and capabilities of countries need to be taken into consideration in their contribution towards this target,
- iii) the qualitative elements of the target including effective and equitable management of protected areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures¹ are critical in adopting this target,
- iv) the Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures should be considered in the scope of protection for the target, but with caution, given there is still a lack of clarity regarding their diverse governance regimes and thus their effectiveness and long-term viability,
- v) Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, their land rights, and community livelihoods and well-being are to be respected in the implementation of the target,
- vi) Finances and resources for the implementation of this target will need to be commensurate with the level of ambition of the target,

b) On Ecosystem Restoration

¹ While all parties agree on the last condition, parties do not agree as to whether reference should be made to this condition in the target itself, or not

Reaffirm that ecosystem restoration is very important to Africa and support an ambitious target for restoration that addresses all ecosystem types. Africa shall work to raise the inclusion and profile of restoration in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework taking existing restoration strategies and initiatives into account in adopting the target, mainstreaming land and ecosystem restoration in relevant sectoral policies, plans, programmes and actions, including but not limited to reforestation and the combat against desertification to achieve agreed ecosystem restoration commitments and targets, communicating the results and benefits to people in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

c) On Ecological Connectivity

Reaffirm that ecological connectivity is critical for biodiversity spatial planning, establishing Protected Areas Networks, and the integrity of ecosystems, and thus stress that maintaining, restoring, or enhancing ecological connectivity using landscape and seascape approach is key to securing Africa's biodiversity.

d) On Digital Sequence Information

Emphasize the need of integrating digital sequence information in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to fit its purpose, considering the use of DSI as utilization of genetic and biological resources, and that digital sequence information benefit-sharing under a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism to be established under the Convention will contribute to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and long-term biodiversity resource mobilisation

e) On Synergies

Recognize that climate change and desertification are serious threats to biodiversity and therefore commit to take the measures necessary to strengthen biodiversity resilience to climate change, desertification, and land degradation through ecosystem-based approaches or/ and nature-based solutions in line with United Nations Environment Assembly definition².

f) On Resource Mobilisation

- i. *Reiterate* the need for a balance in the global biodiversity framework by closing the current gap in financing biodiversity through the provision of new and adequate additional resources from developed countries to developing countries dedicated to biodiversity in compliance with the obligations of article 20 para 2 of the Convention;
- ii. *Reemphasize* the previous decision of the Conference calling for the establishment of a dedicated global biodiversity fund, and therefore call on COP 15.2 to establish this fund and to adopt alongside the global biodiversity framework a Strategy for Resource Mobilization;
- iii. *Recognize* the differentiated responsibility for all countries in relation to provision of finance for biodiversity as highlighted in Article 20 of the Convention, calls for a target aimed at mobilizing 1% of global GDP to help close the financial gap for biodiversity;
- iv. *Note* the recent increase of funding for biodiversity by GEF 8 replenishment but realise that the allocated amount is highly insufficient in contribution to closing the current financing gap and thus call for a complete structural and procedural transformation of GEF to diversify its sources and increase the robustness and efficiency of the GEF and other Multilateral and bilateral financial mechanisms to support developing countries for the effective implementation of global biodiversity framework.

g) On Capacity Building Technical and Scientific Cooperation and Technology Transfer:

- i. *Recall* the Convention Preamble Paragraph 16 which acknowledges that special provision is required to meet the needs of developing countries, including the provision of appropriate access to relevant technologies, and new and additional financial resources;
- ii. *Reaffirm* that capacity building and development is necessary to achieve the goals of the Convention and facilitate the implementation of the global biodiversity framework, thus call on COP 15.2 to adopt alongside the global biodiversity framework a capacity building mechanism which includes a strategy and

² Insert UNEA 5 definition

an action plan taking into account the needs of developing countries, the important role of women, girls and youth and the interests of indigenous people and local communities;

- iii. *Recognize* that technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer are fundamental to the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and global biodiversity framework, but that efforts in this regard have so far been inadequate, and to call for renewed and enhanced efforts in this regard, including through the designation or establishment of global and regional Centers of Excellence.

h) On integration of biodiversity in economic development sectors

- i. Emphasize the importance of integrating biodiversity into economic development sectors for the mobilization of financial resources and the implementation of activities for the restoration, protection, and conservation of biological diversity;
- ii. *Recognizing* the importance of discussions and deliberations in building consensus in the negotiation process of the global biodiversity framework
- iii. *Commit* to continue providing support to the African Group of Negotiators for biodiversity to assure their readiness for COP15.2, assist our national teams in their preparation, and to encourage online and in person discussions and exchanges of technical information among parties,
- iv. Engage ourselves in the political process needed to support adoption of an ambitious, balanced, and transformative Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, working at the national level to promote awareness and uptake of the future agreement, and fostering a whole of -government approach to its implementation,
- v. *Continue* to work with other nations at regional and global levels, through the African group of negotiators and bilaterally, to raise the level of consensus and cooperation needed to secure a robust Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that takes into account interests of the Africa region,
- vi. *Further recognizing* the important role of stakeholders in this process and call on NGOs, IPLCs, private sector, media, and all other stakeholders to effectively participate for an inclusive process in developing the post 2020 global biodiversity framework, and to further provide support in widely communicating the common position of Africa and promoting awareness on the future agreement, to secure the engagement of all in support of Africa's efforts in the implementation of the global biodiversity framework including at community levels.

i) Land, drought, and desertification

- i. Welcome the outcomes of COP 15 of the UNCCD which established the IWG on drought to evaluate all options including, inter alia, global policy framework and policy instrument to effectively manage drought under the Convention including supporting a shift from reactive to proactive drought management.
- ii. Noting that land degradation, desertification and drought are priority in Africa, we support the establishment of the global alliance on drought resilience to be launched at COP-27 in Sharma al Sheikh, Egypt.