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**African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Twentieth Session**

Ministerial Segment
Nairobi, Kenya 16 and 17 July
2025

Decision AMCEN/20/Dec.11 on the Drought Protocol under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

We, African Ministers of the Environment,

Having met in Nairobi on 16 and 17 July 2025 at the twentieth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.926(XXXVIII) on the report of the Committee of the African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change that requested the Africa Union Commission and other Pan-African institutions to provide financial and technical support to the African Group of Negotiators on Desertification in developing a common position leading up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa to be held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2026,

Congratulating South Africa on assuming the G20 presidency for 2025 and taking note of the priorities and proposed deliverables, especially on environment and climate sustainability,

Recognising the escalating impacts of drought on livelihoods, biodiversity, and ecological stability across Africa, and reaffirming the importance of restoration as a strategic response,

Recalling the outcomes of the tenth special session of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Abidjan from 4 to 6 September 2024. under the theme “raising Africa’s ambition to reduce land degradation, desertification, and drought”,

Recalling decision AMCEN SS.X/1 on opportunities to raise ambition to combat desertification and land degradation and enhance drought resilience in Africa, which reaffirmed our commitment to the implementation of the Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa and the Strategic Framework for Drought Risk Management, Enhancing Resilience in Africa.

Reaffirming our resolve to call for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee on a

legally binding protocol on drought under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, with a mandate and terms of reference, to complete within two years a legally binding protocol on drought for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth session,

Appreciating the African Group of Negotiators on Combating Desertification for effectively representing Africa, at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 2 to 13 December 2024,

Noting that at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, despite strong efforts by the African Group, divergent political positions, particularly from some regions, delayed progress on establishment of an intergovernmental process towards a legally binding protocol on drought, deferred to the seventeenth session of the Conference,

Considering Decision 14/COP16 of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification requesting the Executive Secretary to consult with Panama to prepare for the twenty-third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, including the conclusion of a legally binding agreement on drought at the international level,

Also considering Decision 34/COP16, paragraph II, of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification requesting the Executive Secretary to consult with of Panama requesting the Executive Secretary to engage with Mongolia to facilitate preparations for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties, including the elements and the establishment of a legally binding agreement at an international level.

Highlighting the pivotal role of the African Group of Negotiators on Combating Desertification in defending and promoting the interests of the African Member States, in a unified voice, in international negotiations related to desertification, land degradation, and drought,

Taking into consideration the recommendation by the African Group of Negotiators on Combating Desertification under the Convention on Combating Desertification for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to endorse the nomination of a champion supported by co-champions for the drought Protocol to advocate, promote political buy-in by all member States for a legally binding protocol on drought management ahead of discussions at the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties,

Noting the prominent and strategic role of South Africa, in its capacity as the current G20 presidency and member of the BRICS,

Decide:

1. To urge member States to prioritise, harmonise and implement national and regional action plans and policies to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and ensure that these plans and policies are aligned with national development objectives and integrate climate resilience considerations related to agriculture, forestry, health, air quality and water management.
2. To support the development or the strengthening of regionally coordinated restoration frameworks that prioritise drought-prone landscapes, integrating indigenous knowledge systems and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches.
3. To support efforts in mobilisation of resources to upscale restoration efforts under the Great Green Wall and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), with emphasis on drought-adaptive and climate-resilient interventions.

4. To encourage alignment of ecosystem restoration and land degradation neutrality targets with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework commitments by restoring at least 30 % of degraded lands in drought-affected and desertified regions by 2030.
5. To establish a continental monitoring mechanism to track restoration and rehabilitation progress and promote knowledge exchange on drought interventions and resilience strategies.
6. To request the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in collaboration with other partners, to operationalise the continental monitoring mechanism and report to the Conference at its next session.
7. To nominate South Africa as Africa's champion, leading up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, supported by co-champions on the Drought Protocol.
8. To encourage member States, at the highest possible political levels, to disseminate key political messages at every available forum, including at the United Nations General Assembly, to promote support for a legally binding protocol on drought management ahead and including at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification.
9. To request the African Union Commission and other Pan-African institutions to continue supporting the African Group of Negotiators on Combating Desertification, and other relevant experts in developing a common position in the lead up to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, by financially and technically supporting the organisation of the Africa preparatory meetings in 2026 and providing capacity building and knowledge sharing in collaboration with the other Rio Conventions.
10. To request that South Africa report at all subsequent sessions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment until the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, on the progress made on the implementation of this decision.