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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Tenth special session

Ministerial meeting

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 5 and 6 September 2024

Report of the ministerial meeting of the tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Introduction

1. The ministerial meeting of the tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was held at the Sofitel Abidjan Hôtel Ivoire, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 5 and 6 September 2024, under the theme “Accelerating Africa’s ambition to reduce land degradation, desertification and drought”.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of member States of the Conference, other States, African regional and subregional organizations, United Nations entities, the secretariats of various environmental conventions, partners and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. The opening of the ministerial meeting was chaired by the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, Seyoum Mekonen Hailu, State Minister of Planning and Development in charge of Environment, Climate Change, Population and Development, Ethiopia.

I. Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. on Thursday, 5 September 2024 by the President of the Conference.
5. Opening statements were delivered by Jacques Assahore Konan, Minister of the Environment, Sustainable Development and the Ecological Transition, Côte d'Ivoire; Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Kevin Kariuki, Vice-President for Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth, African Development Bank Group; Osama Ibrahim Faqeeha, Deputy Minister for the Environment, Saudi Arabia; Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union; and the President of the Conference.
6. Further statements were delivered by Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention); David Ngigi Munene, Regional Facilitator of UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa; and Jabril Ibrahim Abdulle, Chair of the African Group in Nairobi. Subsequently, ministerial statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Kenya, Morocco, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi, the Comoros and Namibia.

7. The keynote address was delivered by Robert Beugré Mambé, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, following introductory remarks by Jean-Marc Yacé, Mayor of Cocody; Ms. Andersen; the President of the Conference; and Mr. Assahore Konan.

II. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

8. The representatives adopted the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS.X/1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group.
4. Ministerial dialogues on land degradation, desertification and drought.
5. Consideration of upcoming international environmental conferences.
6. Venue and dates of the twentieth ordinary session.
7. Consideration of the draft declaration and key messages.
8. Adoption of the report of the ministerial meeting.
9. Other matters.
10. Closure of the session.

9. The representatives agreed to follow the programme of work set out in annex II to the annotated provisional agenda (AMCEN/SS.X/1/Add.1).

III. Consideration of the report of the meeting of the expert group

10. The Chair of the expert group meeting, Mensur Dessie, Director of Multilateral Environmental Agreements Negotiation of the Ministry of Planning and Development of Ethiopia, reported on the work and outcomes of the expert group meeting.

11. The representatives took note of the report.

IV. Ministerial dialogues on land degradation, desertification and drought

12. Four ministerial dialogues were held under the theme “Accelerating Africa’s ambition to reduce land degradation, desertification and drought”. For each dialogue, a panel of keynote speakers made statements, followed by questions from the floor. The President of the Conference moderated the first three dialogues, and Abou Bamba, coordinator of the Abidjan Legacy Programme, moderated the fourth dialogue.

A. Finance and partnerships to combat land degradation, desertification and drought

13. The first dialogue, on finance and partnerships to combat land degradation, desertification and drought, was introduced by Anthony Nyong, Director for Climate Change and Green Growth of the African Development Bank Group. The panel of speakers comprised Paula Cristina Francisco Coelho, State Secretary for Climate Action and Sustainable Development, Angola; Sithembiso Nyoni, Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Zimbabwe; Mr. Stiell; and Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility.

B. Optimizing benefits for natural capital in Africa

14. The second dialogue, on optimizing benefits for natural capital in Africa, was introduced by Charles Sebuakeera, Regional Science-Policy Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa. The panel of speakers comprised Ms. Sacko; Ms. Mumba; and Philippe Poinot, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Côte d'Ivoire.

C. Africa's preparedness for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification

15. The panel of speakers for the third dialogue, on Africa's preparedness for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, comprised Rachid Firadi, Director of Cooperation, Partnership and Communication of the Ministry of Energy, Transportation and Sustainable Development, Morocco; Aden Bare Duale, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya; Pierre Hélé, Minister of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Cameroon; Mandla Tshawuka, Minister of Agriculture, Eswatini; Mr. Faqeeha; and Mr. Thiaw.

D. Addressing marine and coastal challenges under the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region

16. The panel of speakers for the fourth dialogue, on addressing marine and coastal challenges under the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention), comprised Mr. Assahore Konan; Mima Yema Mimi Sobba-Stephens, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Sierra Leone; Dion George, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa; and Jessye Lapenn, Senior Coordinator for Atlantic Cooperation, United States of America.

17. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Cameroon, the Gambia and Angola.

V. Consideration of upcoming international environmental conferences

A. Preparations for the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

18. Ousseynou Kassé, Executive Director of the National Biosafety Authority, Senegal, on behalf of the Chair of the African group of negotiators on biodiversity, outlined the preparations for the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November 2024.

B. Preparations for the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

19. Mr. Duale, Chair of the African group of negotiators on climate change, provided an overview of the preparations for the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Baku, from 11 to 22 November 2024.

C. Preparations for the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

20. Lydia Essuah, Chair of the African group of negotiators on plastic pollution, provided a briefing on the preparations for the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, to be held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 25 November to 1 December 2024.

21. Further statements were delivered, in the order of presentation, by the representatives of Kenya, Egypt, Algeria, Angola and Senegal.

D. Preparations for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification

22. Kennedy Ondimu, Science and Technology Correspondent for the Convention to Combat Desertification, on behalf of the Chair of the African group of negotiators on combating

desertification, provided an overview of the preparations for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held in Riyadh, from 2 to 13 December 2024.

VI. Venue and dates of the twentieth ordinary session

23. Following a discussion, the ministers agreed that consultations within the North Africa subregion would continue on the issue of the venue of the twentieth ordinary session, with a view to the subregion reaching a decision during the consultative meeting of the Conference to be held in the margins of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the absence of a decision, the session would be convened in Nairobi, the seat of the secretariat, in accordance with rule 6 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

VII. Consideration of the draft declaration and key messages

24. The ministers adopted the Abidjan Declaration on raising Africa's ambition to reduce desertification, land degradation and drought. The declaration is set out in document AMCEN/SS.X/4.

25. The ministers adopted the following decisions: decision SS.X/1, on opportunities to raise ambition to combat desertification and land degradation and enhance drought resilience in Africa; decision SS.X/2, an omnibus decision on advancing Africa's common positions at conferences of parties and meetings; and decision SS.X/3, on climate change. The decisions are set out in the addendum to the present report (AMCEN/SS.X/9/Add.1).

26. The Conference took note of the key messages from the twelfth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 30 August to 2 September 2024. The key messages are set out in the addendum to the present report (AMCEN/SS.X/9/Add.1).

VIII. Adoption of the report of the ministerial meeting

27. A representative of the secretariat introduced the draft report of the ministerial meeting. The ministers agreed to entrust the finalization of the report to the secretariat.

IX. Other matters

28. The representative of Angola made a proposal regarding the theme of the twentieth ordinary session.

29. The representative of Zimbabwe provided a briefing on the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, to be held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 23 to 31 July 2025.

30. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire provided a briefing on the declaration on strengthening the role of parliaments in the implementation of international and national climate change commitments in Africa, which was adopted by the African Network of Parliamentarians on Climate Change at its session held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 1 to 3 September 2024.

X. Closure of the session

31. Closing statements were delivered by Rose Mwebaza, Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa; Ms. Sacko; Mr. Assahore Konan; and the President of the Conference.

32. The tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment was declared closed at 6.15 p.m. on Friday, 6 September 2024.
