



Eighth African Union Summit - Briefing Note

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EIGHTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The eighth African Union (AU) Summit takes place at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22-30 January 2007. The Summit consists of Ordinary Sessions of: the Permanent Representatives Committee, from 22-23 January; the Executive Council, from 25-26 January; and the AU Assembly, from 29-30 January. The main themes of the Summit are “Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development” and “Climate Change in Africa.”

This briefing note places the main themes of the Summit in context by providing a history of institutions, processes and decisions related to science and technology (S&T), climate change and sustainable development in Africa, with a particular focus on AU-related processes. After a brief introduction to the AU, key decisions of relevance from previous AU Summits are summarized. This is followed by an outline of other AU events and programmes that relate to S&T and sustainable development. The final section of the briefing note summarizes recent international developments in the area of climate change.

IISD Reporting Services African Regional Coverage Project has established a website dedicated to coverage of the Summit: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/aauss/>. A briefing note on the outcomes of the Summit will be available at this site shortly after the conclusion of the Summit.

THE AFRICAN UNION

AFRICAN UNION

The AU is the principal organization for the promotion of socioeconomic integration across the continent. It includes 53 African countries as member states, while Morocco has special status. The Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) called for its establishment in the Sirte Declaration on 9 September 1999, as a means to accelerate integration, so that Africa could play a significant role in the global economy, and to address shared social, economic and political problems. Its objectives include: achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa; promoting and defending common African positions on issues; encouraging international cooperation; establishing enabling conditions for the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations; promoting sustainable development and integration of African economies; and advancing the continent’s development through research in all fields, particularly S&T.

The principal organs of the AU include the: Assembly; Executive Council; Commission; Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC); Peace and Security Council; Pan-African Parliament; Economic, Social and Cultural Council; Court of Justice; Financial Institutions; and Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), which include the Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment.

ASSEMBLY: The AU Assembly is composed of the Heads of State and Government of AU member states or their accredited representatives. The Assembly acts as the supreme organ of the AU and is mandated to: determine the common policies of the Union; consider and take decisions on reports and recommendations from other AU bodies; consider requests for membership of the AU; establish any organ of the Union; monitor the implementation of AU policies and decisions as well ensure compliance by all member states; adopt the AU budget; give directives to the Executive Council on the management of conflicts, war and other emergency situations and the restoration of peace; appoint and terminate the appointment of judges of the Court of Justice; and appoint the Chairperson of the Commission, his or her deputies and Commissioners, and determine their functions and terms of office.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The Executive Council of Ministers of the AU is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or other ministers or authorities designated by member states. The Executive Council meets at least twice a year in ordinary session. It can also meet in an extraordinary session at the request of any member state and upon approval by two-thirds of all member states. The Executive Council is mandated to coordinate and take decisions on policies in areas of common interest to the member states, including: foreign trade; energy,

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industry and mineral resources; food, agricultural and animal resources, livestock production and forestry; water resources and irrigation; environmental protection, humanitarian action and disaster response and relief; transport and communications; insurance; education, culture, health and human resources development; S&T; nationality, residency and immigration matters; and social security.

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE: The PRC consists of permanent representatives from all AU member states. It is responsible for preparing the work of the Executive Council and for acting on the Council's instructions.

KEY DECISIONS TAKEN AT AU SUMMITS

Key decisions from previous AU Summits that relate to the themes of the eighth AU Summit are summarized below.

FIRST AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The first AU Summit, which was convened under the theme of "Peace, Development and Prosperity: the African Century," took place from 28 June to 10 July 2002, in Durban, South Africa. The Summit included the first Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly and the Executive Council.

ASSEMBLY: The first Ordinary Session of the Assembly, which took place from 9-10 July 2002, adopted seven decisions and two declarations. This included the Durban Declaration in Tribute to the Organization of African Unity and on the Launching of the AU, in which Heads of State and Government reiterated, *inter alia*, their commitment to the establishment of the AU. The Assembly also rededicated itself to meeting the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as a programme of the AU, and adopted a resolution on proclaiming a capacity building decade in Africa (ASS/AU/Dec.5 (I)).

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: At its first Ordinary Session, which was also held from 9-10 July 2002, the Executive Council adopted a regulation (EC/AU/AEC/Regl. (I)) in which priority actions were outlined regarding, *inter alia*: trade and investment; telecommunications; industry; health; labor and poverty alleviation; population; and environment. Regarding environmental matters, the regulation addressed: implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) in countries seriously affected by drought and/or desertification; revision of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention); and African Environment Day.

CCD: In the regulation, the Executive Council affirmed that the CCD constitutes an innovative and vital instrument for realizing the objectives of sustainable development as contained in Agenda 21, and the objectives of poverty elimination as spelt out in the Millennium Declaration. The Council affirmed that desertification is one of the main causes of poverty, highlighting the correlation between soil degradation and poverty in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-tropical regions, especially in Africa. The Council further recognized that NEPAD underscores desertification control as a major component of the environment and sustainable development programme in Africa.

Algiers Convention: In the regulation, the Executive Council endorsed the revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and requested the AU Assembly to adopt the revised Convention. It also urged member states to ratify the revised Convention after its adoption by the Heads of State and Government, so as to bring it into force at the earliest possible time.

African Environment Day: In the regulation, the Executive Council endorsed Libya's proposal regarding the institutionalization of an African Environment Day and its celebration on 3 March each year.

SECOND AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The second AU Summit took place from 4-12 July 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique. The Summit consisted of the third Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the fifth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the eighth Ordinary Session of the PRC.

ASSEMBLY: The second Ordinary Session of the Assembly, which took place from 10-12 July 2003, involved the adoption of 26 decisions (Assembly/AU/Dec.6-31 (II)) and four declarations (Assembly/AU/Decl.4-11 (II)).

Decision on the Revised Algiers Convention (Assembly/AU/Dec.9 (II)): In the decision, the Assembly approved the revised Algiers Convention and called upon all member states to sign and ratify it. The Assembly also urged the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), relevant UN agencies, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and other relevant international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to collaborate with the AU Commission and member states to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

Decision on NEPAD Environment Initiative (Assembly/AU/Dec.10 (II)): In the decision, the Assembly expressed concern about the rapid degradation of the African environment as a result of adverse global changes, and endorsed NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative. The Assembly also invited the African Ministerial Conference on Environment and the NEPAD Secretariat in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the development banks including the African Development Bank, and UNEP to play a leading role in mobilizing additional financial resources for the implementation of the NEPAD Action Plan and associated projects.

Decision on Promoting the Development of Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec.29 (II)): In the decision, the Assembly expressed concern that rapid urbanization is leading to the urbanization of poverty on the African continent with attendant problems, including unemployment, food insecurity, and life in unplanned neighborhoods without basic services and the high risk this implies to their health and safety. The Assembly also expressed its determination to reap the potential benefits of cities and towns as centers of economic growth and places of opportunity and prosperity for all African people in the course of economic development and structural transformation.

Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa (Assembly/AU/Decl.7 (II)): In the declaration, the Assembly resolved to revitalize the agricultural sector with emphasis on human capacity development and the removal of constraints to agricultural production and marketing, including soil fertility, poor water management, inadequate infrastructure, pests and diseases. The Assembly also resolved to implement NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and flagship projects and evolving Action Plans for agricultural development, at the national, regional and continental levels, and committed to allocating at least 10% of national budgetary resources for their implementation within five years. The Assembly further resolved to establish regional food reserve systems, including food stocks, linked to Africa's own production, and the development of policies and strategies under the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to fight hunger and poverty in Africa.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council took place from 4-8 July 2003, and involved the adoption of 55 decisions (EX/CL/Dec.20-74 (III)).

Decision on Biosafety (EX/CL/Dec.26 (III)): The Executive Council adopted a decision on the report of the Interim Chairperson on Africa-Wide Capacity Building in Biosafety, which stressed that member states should build the necessary human and institutional capacity to deal with biosafety issues within the framework of implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Cartagena Protocol). The Executive Council urged member states to use the African Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology for drafting national legal instruments on biosafety while taking into account differing national circumstances, so as to create a harmonized Africa-wide system for regulating the movement of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on the continent. The Executive Council also requested the Chair of the AU Commission to convene a meeting of experts and civil society organizations to develop proposals for an African Common Position on Biosafety for adoption by the AU.

Decision on the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (EX/CL/Dec.54 (III)): In the decision, the Executive Council expressed concern over the increasing rate of drought and famine in Africa, noting it is likely to increase further unless necessary mitigation measures are taken on time. It also expressed concern over the deteriorating financial situation of the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa, and appealed to member states and regional and international humanitarian and donor agencies to provide financial support for sustaining the Fund.

SECOND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ASSEMBLY

At the second Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly, which took place from 27-28 February 2004, in Sirte, Libya, delegates adopted the Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Water in Africa (Ex/Assembly/AU/Decl.1 (II)). In this declaration, Heads of State and Government agreed to: promote the strengthening and establishment of centers of

excellence and/or networks on crops, animals, forestry, fisheries, range management, water management, desertification, drought, floods and environmental management; promote the strengthening of related tertiary and research institutions at continental and regional levels to carry out research in biotechnology, conservation of agricultural biodiversity, biosafety, food storage, and water harvesting; strengthen and establish regional genetic resource banks for agriculture and livestock and provide for the registration of intellectual property rights; and develop human resource potential in Africa through education, training, skills development and the exchange of expertise.

THIRD AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The third AU Summit took place from 25 June to 8 July 2004, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Summit included the third Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the fifth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the eighth Ordinary Session of the PRC.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: At its fifth Ordinary Session, which was held from 30 June to 3 July 2004, the Executive Council adopted 72 decisions (EX.CL/Dec.93-164 (V)).

Decision on the first African Ministers Conference on Science and Technology (EX.CL/Dec.117 (V)): In the decision, the Executive Council: reaffirmed the fundamental role of S&T in the continent's development strategies; endorsed the Declaration of the First Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology, and its priorities, commitments and governance structure, on the understanding that it would function under the AU under an interim arrangement, pending the operationalization of the STCs; and requested the AU Commission Chair to take all necessary measures to incorporate the NEPAD Science and Technology Programme into the AU Strategic Plan and Work Programme for S&T.

THIRD EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ASSEMBLY

At the third Extraordinary session of the AU Assembly, which took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 8-9 September 2004, delegates adopted a Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU 3 (III)). In this declaration, the Assembly agreed, *inter alia*, to promote effective and speedy implementation of actions and programmes agreed upon in the NEPAD framework, and to maximize their impact on continental efforts at poverty reduction and productive employment creation, particularly in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, environmental conservation, cultural industries, transportation, fisheries, forestry, information and communication technology, trade and tourism.

The Assembly also adopted a Plan of Action for Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation (EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/4 (III) Rev.4), which identified as one of 11 key priority areas the promotion of the agricultural sector and rural development, sustainable management of the environment for food security, and development of support infrastructure. The Plan of Action also set out strategies for addressing the key priority areas. For the above key priority area, these strategies included: diversification of agriculture production in general and particularly, food and cash



crops, and encouraging environmental protection, rehabilitation and access to land; conserving and channeling water with a view to expanding irrigated areas for crop and animal husbandry; and preventing soil erosion by terracing afforestation and discouraging deforestation.

FOURTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The fourth AU Summit took place from 24-31 January 2005, in Abuja, Nigeria. The Summit consisted of the fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the sixth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the ninth Ordinary Session of the PRC.

ASSEMBLY: At its fourth Ordinary Session, which was held from 30-31 January 2005, the Assembly adopted 18 decisions (Assembly/AU/Dec.55-72 (IV)) and two declarations (Assembly/AU/Decl.1-2 (IV)).

Decision on the Status of Food Security in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec.59 (IV)): In this decision, the Assembly noted with grave concern the serious economic and social impacts of the 2004 desert locust invasion of the Northern, Western and Eastern regions of Africa. It also requested the AU Commission and member states to take all necessary measures to implement previous AU Summit declarations and their relevant plans of action.

Decision on Allocation of 10% of National Budgetary Resources to Agriculture and Rural Development over the next Five Years (Assembly/AU/Dec.61 (IV)): In the decision, the Assembly requested the Commission Chair, in collaboration with member states and the NEPAD Secretariat, to define the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10% allocation adopted in the Maputo Declaration.

FIFTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The fifth AU Summit took place from 28 June to 5 July 2005, in Sirte, Libya. The Summit consisted of the fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the seventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the tenth Ordinary Session of the PRC.

ASSEMBLY: The fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, which was held from 4-5 July 2005, led to the adoption of 18 decisions (Assembly/AU/Dec.73-90 (V)), three declarations (Assembly/AU/Decl.1-3 (V)) and a resolution (Assembly/AU/Resolution.1 (V)).

Decision on Imported Seeds (Assembly/AU/Dec.86 (V)): In this decision on the danger of imported seeds on the African continent, the Assembly: underscored the need to deal with the challenging conditions for agricultural development and food production in Africa in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on reducing poverty and hunger; called for using Africa's material and human potential to establish a sophisticated seed industry that will help achieve sustainable agricultural development and food security in Africa; and urged member states to establish genetic resource banks for identifying and preserving indigenous plant genetic resources and for preventing the deterioration of continental plant biodiversity.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: At its seventh Ordinary Session, which took place from 28 June to 2 July 2005, the Executive Council adopted 44 decisions (EX.CL/Dec.192-235 (VII)).

Decision on the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water (EX.CL/Dec.194 (VII)): In the decision, the Executive Council requested the Commission to integrate implementation of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water with the CAADP. It also requested the Commission to submit an integrated implementation plan to the relevant sectoral ministers for their consideration and then to present that plan to the Executive Council at its July 2006 Ordinary Session.

Decision on the Report of the First Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (EX.CL/Dec. 200 (VII)): In the decision, the Executive Council took note of the Report and Declaration of the first African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), and its enhanced Framework of Implementation of Sustainable Urban Development in Africa. It also recognized the role of AMCHUD in promoting sustainable urban development in Africa, improving urban governance, upgrading slums, eradicating poverty and promoting the role of cities as engines of socioeconomic transformation.

Decision on the Offer of Egypt to Host the Headquarters of the African Council of Scientific Research and Technology (EX/CL/Dec.216 (VII)): In the decision, the Executive Council stressed the need for promoting scientific research and technology as a means of achieving the continent's development plans and aspirations. It took note of the recommendation of the first African Congress for Scientific Research, Technology and Drug Industry on establishing an African Council of Scientific Research and Technology, and recalled that the main objective of this Council is promoting scientific research related to the needs of the continent and establishing a database for scientific institutes and research centers. The Council also requested the Commission Chair to study the matter, taking into account existing structures, and to submit a report to the July 2006 Ordinary Session of the Executive Council.

SIXTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The sixth AU Summit took place in Khartoum, Sudan, from 16-24 January 2006. The Summit consisted of the sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the eighth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the eleventh Ordinary Session of the PRC.

ASSEMBLY: At its sixth Ordinary Session, which was held from 23-24 January 2006, the Assembly adopted 20 decisions (Assembly/AU/Dec.91-110 (VI)) and three resolutions (Assembly/AU/Decl.1-3 (VI)).

Decision on the Drought Situation in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Sub-region (Assembly/AU/Dec.97 (VI)): In this decision, the Assembly noted with serious concern the drought situation affecting countries in the Horn and Eastern African region, most particularly Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. It underlined the need to sensitize the international community to the impending crisis situation before its further escalation, which would result in the huge loss of lives and displacement of peoples, and called upon the international community to render maximum support and assistance to the affected countries with a view to saving human lives and minimizing the effect of the drought on peoples' livelihoods.

Decision on the Establishment of an African Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Assembly/AU/Dec.110 (VI)): In the decision, the Assembly noted the proposal for the establishment of an African Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and requested the AU Commission to consider the issue further.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The eighth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council took place from 16-21 January 2006, and involved the adoption of 42 decisions (EX.CL/Dec.236-277 (VIII)).

Decision on the Revised African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2005- 2015 (EX.CL/Dec.248 (VIII)): In the decision, the Executive Council endorsed the revised ARNS 2005-2015, recognized the seriousness of food insecurity and nutrition deficiency in Africa and the efforts of member states towards alleviating them, and acknowledged the role of nutrition in socioeconomic development and the achievement of the MDGs in Africa. The Executive Council also urged member states to take all necessary measures to allocate adequate resources to alleviate the major causes of food and nutrition crises in Africa, and requested them to utilize the ARNS as a blueprint for drafting their own National Plans of Action for Nutrition.

Decision on the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the African Regional Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction (EX.CL/Dec.250 (VIII)): In the decision, the Executive Council took note of the Report of the AU Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and approved the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Executive Council also urged all member states and the RECs to implement the Programme of Action, and requested the Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat to facilitate and coordinate implementation of the Programme of Action.

Decision on the Report on the Conference of Ministers of Science and Technology (EX/CL/Dec.254 (VII)): In the decision, the Executive Council endorsed Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA), which had been adopted by the Conference, and also endorsed their call to member states to raise their national S&T budgets to 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Executive Council also endorsed the establishment of a high-level Working Group of representatives from the AU, NEPAD and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to prepare a comprehensive programme for the establishment and funding of centers of excellence in Africa for implementing the CPA.

SEVENTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The seventh AU Summit took place in Banjul, the Gambia, from 25 June to 2 July 2006. The Summit, which met under the theme, "Rationalization of RECs and Regional Integration," consisted of the seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the ninth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the twelfth Ordinary Session of the PRC.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The ninth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, which was held from 25-29 June 2006, resulted in the adoption of 32 decisions (EX.CL/Dec.278-314 (IX)) and one declaration (EX.CL/Decl.1 (IX)).

Decision on the First AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Communication and Information Technology (EX.CL/Dec.291 (IX)): In this decision, the Executive Council endorsed the Implementation Framework of the Declaration on Communication and Information Technology in Africa and the Guidelines for Monitoring and Reporting on the declaration. The Executive Council also called on member states to implement the commitments made in the declaration, in particular the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy. The Council further endorsed the recommendation that the Conference be held regularly and that its institutionalization be carried out in line with the process of establishing the STCs.

Decision on the First Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Electrical Energy (EX.CL/Dec.293 (IX)): In this decision, the Executive Council welcomed the Conference's adoption of a comprehensive Action Plan on revival of the electricity sub-sector in Africa, and endorsed the Conference Declaration. The Executive Council also appealed to member states to honor their commitments to give the energy sector enough priority in their development policies, with particular regard to poverty reduction strategies.

Decision on the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture (EX.CL/Dec.297 (IX)): In this decision, the Executive Council endorsed the decisions adopted by the Conference and acknowledged the concerns of the Ministers of Agriculture regarding the prevailing high level of food and nutrition insecurity in many parts of the continent. The Executive Council also noted the development of an Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System (AETS) for the 10% budgetary allocation to agriculture, recommended the adoption of the AETS as the basis for annual data collection on allocations for agriculture by member states, and called upon member states to speed up the implementation of the Maputo Declaration on the 10% budget allocation for agriculture.

AU EVENTS

This section summarizes other key AU events related to S&T, climate change and sustainable development.

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT:

The eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) took place from 22-26 May 2006, in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo. The official session was preceded by an expert group segment, which considered progress in implementing past decisions of AMCEN, AMCEN's 2004-2006 programme of work and NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative.

The expert group segment was followed by a high-level segment, during which African Environment Ministers, in addition to delegates from major inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, engaged in a policy dialogue to discuss pressing issues affecting the continent. Several major environmental governance and finance issues were debated, most notably the prospects for the establishment of an African Environmental Facility for financing environmental activities in Africa.



The meeting resulted in the adoption of the Brazzaville Declaration on Environment for Development, which seeks to further AMCEN's goal of halting environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development in Africa. Ministers also adopted 11 decisions, including decisions on:

- implementation of NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative;
- institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of implementing this Initiative;
- implementation of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemical and hazardous waste management issues;
- the Africa Environment Outlook and the Africa Environment Information Network;
- integration of environmental dimensions into disaster risk reduction programmes in the context of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building;
- the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative;
- resource mobilization for implementing environmental projects and programmes at country, sub-regional and regional levels; and
- the African Environment Facility.

A full report of the AMCEN meeting can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/amcen11/>

EXTRAORDINARY CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

AMCOST held an Extraordinary Conference in Cairo, Egypt, from 20-24 November 2006, with a view to preparing inputs for the eighth AU Summit. The Conference consisted of an experts meeting and a ministerial meeting. The Conference outcomes included a meeting report and adoption of the Cairo Declaration (EXT/AU/EXP/ST/13 (II)), which contained ministerial commitments on future work in relation to S&T and recommendations for consideration at the eighth AU Summit. These recommendations included, that the AU Summit:

- declare 2007 as the launching year of building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation (STI) in Africa;
- promote Africa's research and development and develop innovation strategies for wealth creation and economic development by allocating at least 1% of GDP by 2010 as agreed in EX.CL/Dec.254 (VIII);
- approve the establishment of a Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization; and
- support South-South cooperation in STI and enhance its role in international partnerships.

In the declaration, Ministers also committed to:

- work together to develop a 20-year African Biotechnology Strategy with specific regional technology goals, and to develop and harmonize national and regional regulations that promote the application and safe use of modern biotechnology;
- maximize the effective use of African scientists in the Diaspora and facilitate the relocation of science-based small and medium-sized enterprises of the Diaspora for the development of the continent;

- encourage effective knowledge management and the better use of IP;
- encourage effective technology transfer, as well as South-South and North-South cooperation in S&T;
- improve the design, and develop a legal instrument, for the establishment of the African Science and Innovation "Fund" as an intergovernmental mechanism to mobilize technical and financial resources for the implementation of the CPA; and
- use common guidelines for identifying and establishing networks of centers of excellence in S&T.

A full report of the Extraordinary Conference can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/amcost/>.

NEPAD FOOD SECURITY SUMMIT: The Summit on Food Security in Africa, organized by the Nigerian Government, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the AU and NEPAD, took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 4-7 December 2006. This Summit took as its main theme "Food Security: an Engine for Growth and Poverty Alleviation in Africa."

The Summit concluded with the adoption of a declaration and resolution by the attending Heads of State and Government. The declaration recommended measures for promoting and protecting strategic commodities at the continental level, such as rice, maize, legumes, cotton, oil palm, beef, dairy, poultry and fisheries products, and at the sub-regional level, such as cassava, sorghum and millet. It also recommended increasing intra-African trade.

The resolution endorsed the commitment to:

- expand markets, with particular attention to Africa's own demand and inter-African trade in staple foods;
- mobilize resources for implementing priority food and nutrition security interventions, focusing on selected strategic commodities;
- ensure systematic integration of nutrition considerations into agricultural and food security interventions;
- identify African successes and support sharing of positive experiences; and
- establish a system for selecting and prioritizing key Commission and CAADP-related commitments.

The Green Wall Sahara Programme was officially launched at the end of the Summit. The objectives of the Green Wall, which has as its theme "Converting Desert to Green Land and Wealth," are to: slow the advance of the Sahara Desert; enhance environmental sustainability; control land degradation; promote integrated natural resources management; conserve biological diversity; contribute to poverty reduction; and create jobs. Activities will include the planting of 300 million trees covering 3 million hectares of land stretching from Mauritania to Djibouti.

AU PROGRAMMES

Below, three AU programmes that relate to the themes of the eighth AU Summit are explained in further detail.

AFRICA'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONSOLIDATED PLAN OF ACTION

At its second meeting, AMCOST adopted Africa's Science and Technology CPA, which articulates the continent's commitment to developing and applying S&T. The overall goals of the CPA are to enable Africa to harness and apply science, technology and

related innovations to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, and to ensure that Africa contributes to the global pool of scientific knowledge and technological innovations. The CPA outlines five flagship research and development programmes to be implemented between 2006 and 2010: biodiversity, biotechnology and indigenous knowledge; energy, water and desertification; material sciences, manufacturing, laser and post-harvest technologies; mathematical sciences; and information, communication and space science technologies. The programmes and projects outlined in the CPA focus on:

- improving infrastructure and facilities for research and development and promoting the shared use of such facilities;
- creating institutional and policy arrangements that enable African countries to mobilize and share their resources for conducting science and generating technological innovations;
- strengthening the continent's human skills base by increasing the number of scientists, technicians and engineers;
- improving the quality and intensity of regional cooperation;
- building a strong political and civil society constituency for S&T in Africa;
- improving the quality of STI policies of African countries through processes that promote the sharing of experiences;
- strengthening the capacity of regional economic bodies to mainstream S&T into their sectoral programmes and projects;
- promoting the application of S&T to achieve specific MDGs; and
- promoting innovative ways of financing S&T in Africa.

NEPAD ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

The NEPAD framework document called for the development and adoption of an environment initiative - a coherent action plan and strategy - to address the region's environmental challenges, while at the same time combating poverty and promoting social and economic development. The "Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD, covering the first decade of the twenty-first century," is a response to those challenges. The development and subsequent adoption of the Action Plan by the AU Assembly at its second Ordinary Session was guided by AMCEN.

The overall objectives of the Action Plan are to complement relevant African processes, including the work programme of the revitalized AMCEN, with a view to improving environmental conditions in Africa in order to contribute to the achievement of economic growth and poverty eradication. It also seeks to build Africa's capacity to implement regional and international environmental agreements and to effectively address African environmental challenges in the overall context of implementing NEPAD.

The Action Plan is organized in clusters of programmatic and project activities to be implemented over an initial period of ten years covering the following priority sectors and cross-cutting issues: combating land degradation, drought and desertification; wetlands; invasive species; marine and coastal resources; cross-border conservation of natural resources; climate change; and cross-cutting issues.

More information on the formation and structures of NEPAD itself can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/vol03/arc0301e.html>.

HIGH-LEVEL AFRICAN PANEL ON MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY

The AU Executive Council, at its third Ordinary Session, called for a common African position on modern biotechnology. At its first meeting, the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) requested the NEPAD Secretariat to build regional consensus and strategies to address concerns related to new technologies, including biotechnology, and to facilitate Africa's participation in international fora on biotechnology issues. In response, the AU Commission Chair appointed the 14-member High-level African Panel on Modern Biotechnology (APB) in 2005.

The APB provides the AU, NEPAD and African governments with independent strategic advice on developments in modern biotechnology and the agricultural, health, trade and environmental implications of the adoption or non-adoption of modern biotechnology. The APB also considers, *inter alia*: whether and what aspects of the development and regulation of modern biotechnology should be harmonized into a regional and continental regulatory regime; biotechnology development and management; strategic ways of building Africa's capacity for regionally-oriented regulation and management of modern biotechnology; and ways of improving cooperation on modern biotechnology with other regions, including on implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Principles on Risk Analysis of Food Derived from Modern Biotechnology.

In July 2006, the APB released a draft report, entitled "Freedom to Innovate: Biotechnology and Africa's Development," with a view to the future adoption of a common African position on biotechnology and regional cooperation to address modern biotechnology. This report was endorsed by AMCOST at its Extraordinary Conference in November 2006.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Recent international events that have addressed the AU Summit theme of "Climate change in Africa" are summarized briefly here.

THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AFRICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ADAPTATION

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) African Regional Workshop on Adaptation was held in Accra, Ghana, from 21-23 September 2006. The workshop aimed to highlight African concerns related to climate change adaptation and vulnerability reduction, with a view to identifying specific adaptation needs to be considered under the UNFCCC.

The workshop was structured around four sessions: impact and vulnerability assessments; adaptation planning and implementation; regional collaboration; and outcomes and ways forward.

More information on the workshop can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/vol02/arc0201e.html>.



TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

From 6-17 November 2006, a series of climate change meetings took place at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya. The “UN Climate Change Conference – Nairobi 2006” included the twelfth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 12) and the second Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 2).

COP 12 reviewed the implementation of commitments and various other provisions of the UNFCCC relating to such matters as the financial mechanism, national communications, technology transfer, capacity building, and the adverse effects of climate change on developing and least developed countries (LDCs) and of response measures and the special needs of LDCs.

At COP/MOP 2, parties took up issues relating to the Protocol’s flexible mechanisms, particularly the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation. Delegates also discussed parties’ compliance with the Protocol, as well as capacity building and a number of financial, administrative and other matters.

The first amendment to the Protocol was also adopted, allowing Belarus to take on emissions reduction commitments under Annex B to the Protocol. Additionally, a major focus of both COP/MOP 2 and COP 12 was on long-term action on climate change and on developing a framework for action once the Kyoto Protocol’s “first commitment period” finishes in 2012. These meetings resulted in the adoption of ten COP decisions and 11 COP/MOP decisions.

More information on these meetings can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop12/>.

UN PARTNERSHIP TO ASSIST AFRICA ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND BETTER CDM ACCESS:

During the Climate Change Conference, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP announced a global initiative in response to requests from leaders in developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, for assistance in coping with the present and future effects of climate change. The initiative seeks to provide assistance to reduce the vulnerability of poor countries and communities in the face of climate change, and to “climate proof” their economies in a range of areas, from infrastructure development to agriculture and health. The partnership also responds to the need to build the capacity of countries to participate in emerging carbon finance funds, such as the CDM. The partnership constitutes UNDP’s and UNEP’s contribution to the Nairobi Framework for directing specific assistance to increasing sub-Saharan Africa’s access to the CDM.

CLIMDEV AFRICA

In December 2006, the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) and its partners released a report and implementation strategy called “Climate Information for Development Needs: An Action Plan for Africa” (ClimDev Africa). This initiative, which has been provided with start-up funding by the UK’s Department for International Development, has been formally endorsed by the AU Commission and the UN Economic Commission for

Africa. The ten-year programme will address climate observing needs and the development of improved climate services, climate risk management and decision-making. Its implementation will support the longer-term objectives of programme partners by contributing to sustainable development and achievement of the MDGs in Africa.

LIST OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2007 Summit	African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government
Algiers Convention	African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
AETS	Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System
AMCOST	African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology
AMCHUD	African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development
APB	(African) High-level Panel on Modern Biotechnology
ARNS	Revised African Regional Nutrition Strategy
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
Cartagena Protocol	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity
CCD	(UN) Convention to Combat Desertification
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPA	(Africa’s Science and Technology) Consolidated Plan of Action
FAO	(UN) Food and Agricultural Organization
GCOS	Global Climate Observing System
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMOs	Genetically modified organisms
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PRC	(AU) Permanent Representatives Committee
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
S&T	Science and technology
STCs	Specialized Technical Committees
STI	Science, technology and innovation
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization