



African Committee on Sustainable Development Bulletin

A report of the fifth meeting of the African Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)

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FIFTH MEETING OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 22-25 OCTOBER 2007

The fifth meeting of the African Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-5), which will include the African Regional Implementation Meeting for the sixteenth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16), will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22-25 October 2007. Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the meeting will take place under the theme of "Transforming African Agriculture and Rural Economy for Sustainable Development."

Delegates are expected to address the programmed activities of the ECA's Food Security and Sustainable Development Division, and the mandate of the ECA Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development. In the context of the African Regional Implementation Meeting for CSD-16, delegates will also review the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as they relate to the CSD-16 themes of Africa, agriculture and rural development, land, and drought and desertification. The meeting is expected to conclude with the adoption of an African Statement for CSD-16.

This bulletin places ACSD-5 in the broader context of sustainable development initiatives in Africa. It provides an overview of the ECA and the Committee itself, provides a brief summary of ACSD and Regional Implementation meetings, and outlines other key meetings and outcomes that relate to the themes of CSD-16. Coverage of ACSD-5 by IISD Reporting Services African Regional Coverage Project is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/afrika/acsd/>

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Established in 1958, the ECA is one of five regional commissions under the administrative direction of the UN Economic and Social Council. It is mandated to support the economic and social development of its 53 member states, foster regional integration and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. One of the most important tasks of the ECA is to ensure improved cooperation and coordination between UN agencies and African continental organizations for the effective implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The ECA was instrumental in the establishment of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and subregional economic groupings, and in articulating major plans of action for Africa's economic and social development. The ECA also provides member states with technical assistance in many fields and fosters the development of civil society groups, including non-government organizations (NGOs), professional associations and intellectual networks.

The ECA's work is organized around six substantive programme divisions: Development Policy and Management; Economic and Social Policy; Gender and Development; Information for Development; Sustainable Development; and Trade and Regional Integration. Its five subregional offices offer subregional perspectives on the ECA's work programme, as well as outreach support.

ECA AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 1996, the ECA's Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning adopted Resolution No. 826 (XXXII) establishing the Committee on Sustainable Development and the Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology as subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Ministers. In 2002, these committees were merged into one, now also called the Committee on Sustainable Development (the Committee or ACSD).

The Committee addresses critical and emerging issues concerning sustainable development in Africa. It is a forum of experts that provides advice to the ECA in relation to food

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security, population, environment and human settlements. It provides a platform for advocacy and assesses follow-up activities by African governments in response to regional and global plans of action. The Committee also provides policy and technical guidance to the ECA's subprogramme on food security and sustainable development and its Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD).

At its third session, which took place from 7-10 October 2003, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Committee approved amendments to its own mandate such that it now, *inter alia*:

- undertakes periodic reviews of the implementation of global programmes of action such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), Agenda 21, the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development, the Habitat Agenda and the World Food Summit;
- considers and makes recommendations on a multidisciplinary approach to implementing these programmes of action;
- promotes the formulation of policies and measures for environmental protection, food security, improved human settlements, the integration of population variables into development planning, and cooperation among African countries in the areas of natural resources management and the application of science and technology;
- provides a forum for exchanging information and sharing experiences; and
- advises the ECA on the formulation of programmes and activities to support member states in integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development into national development policies and strategies.

At this meeting, the Committee also considered its relationship with the UN CSD, and concluded that it would serve as Africa's regional forum of experts dealing with the CSD's various fields of activity. The Committee also agreed that it would serve as the regional advisory arm of the CSD on cross-sectoral activities in Africa as well as on proposed activities and follow-up actions for the implementation of international programmes.

ECA FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The overall objective of the FSSDD is to strengthen the capacity of member states to design institutional arrangements and implement national measures that reinforce the links between food security, population, environment and human settlements, and to build the capacity of African countries to utilize science and technology to attain sustainable development. Other objectives of the FSSDD include promoting the importance of integrating the three pillars of sustainable development into national development planning and poverty reduction programmes, and improving the stewardship of the natural resource base and the environment by strengthening the capacity of member states to undertake the sustainable exploitation, management and effective utilization of important natural resources, such as minerals, energy and water.

The FSSDD's programme of work for 2008-09 (UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/61/6.rev1) includes the following activities: fostering structural agricultural transformation, including the African green revolution; promoting diversification in commodity-dependent economies in Africa through adding value to natural resources and

agricultural products; and strengthening capacity for collecting data on sustainable development indicators and for monitoring and assessing progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and NEPAD's sustainable development commitments. This resolution on the FSSDD's 2008-09 programme of work further noted that the FSSDD's strategy includes: research, policy analysis and advocacy; gender mainstreaming; institution building and training; knowledge networking, information sharing and disseminating best practices; and providing technical assistance, including advisory services, to member states and their institutions. In carrying out these activities, the FSSDD works with other UN organizations, the African Union (AU) Commission, the AfDB, regional intergovernmental organizations, regional economic communities (RECs), institutions of higher learning, and research, private sector and civil society organizations.

IISD Reporting Services African Regional Coverage Project is preparing a separate briefing note on the CSD process and related Regional Implementation Meetings. For more information, go to: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETINGS

FIRST MEETING OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The first meeting of the Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-1) was held in Addis Ababa from 25-29 January 1999, under the theme "Ensuring Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa: the Population, Agriculture and Environment Nexus." Delegates addressed a range of issues, including: a special event on the five year review of the International Conference on Population and development; methods and tools for analyzing and managing the nexus of population, environmental development and agriculture; interlinkages between population, agriculture, and environment; a review and appraisal of the implementation in Africa of global plans of action such as Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda; the Cape Town Declaration on an African Process for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment; a report on the activities of the FSSDD during the period 1996-98, and the FSSDD work programme for 1999.

At the request of some delegates, the meeting also included a special session on the Committee itself, with delegates discussing, among other matters, its mandate, objectives, terms of reference, institutional arrangements, modalities of work, and its relationships with other committees and bodies.

SECOND MEETING OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACSD-2 was also held in Addis Ababa from 26-29 November 2001. Delegates convened under the theme "Agricultural Intensification: Feeding Ourselves and Sustaining Africa's Land Resources in the New Millennium." At the meeting, delegates considered issues pertaining to agricultural intensification as a strategy for food security and sustainable development in Africa, and made a series of related policy recommendations for use by African policy makers and their development cooperation counterparts. The Committee also reviewed progress in the implementation of agricultural

intensification strategies, recommended further actions based on the experiences of member states and provided guidance to the work of the ECA in relation to food security and sustainable development.

THIRD MEETING OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACSD-3 was held in Addis Ababa from 7-10 October 2003, under the theme "Making Technology Work for the Poor." Delegates discussed emerging and critical issues impacting on the sustainable development of member states with an emphasis on the role of science and technology, agriculture and land policy, mining, energy and water resources development in eradicating poverty on the continent. Delegates also addressed related recommendations for use by policy makers, together with measures to facilitate and accelerate sustainable development. Finally, the meeting approved amendments to the Committee's mandate, endorsed the 2004-05 work programme of the ECA's Sustainable Development Division and adopted recommendations on food security and sustainable development, water resources, science and technology, and energy.

PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIP ON WATER AND FIRST REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING FOR AFRICA

The Pan-African Conference on Implementation and Partnership on Water (PANAFCON) was held in Addis Ababa from 8-12 December 2003. This meeting incorporated the first Regional Implementation Meeting for the CSD, with parallel sessions dedicated to the review of Africa's regional implementation of Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda and the JPOI in preparation for CSD-12, which was held in April 2004 in New York, United States.

PANAFCON made proposals for concrete actions on: meeting basic needs; water, sanitation and human settlements; water for food security; protecting ecosystems and livelihoods; managing risks: water and climate; financing water infrastructure; integrated water resources management and shared water resources; valuing and allocating water; ensuring water wisdom; and the governance of water.

Ministers attending the conference agreed to establish national task forces on water and sanitation, and to prepare national plans with service delivery targets to achieve water and sanitation goals by 2015. They also signed a joint declaration with the European Commission on the implementation of the African-European Union Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation. The ministers also launched several initiatives, including: the African Water Facility, with targeted funding of over US\$600 million for medium-term projects on water and sanitation; the African Water Journal, to disseminate knowledge on water-related issues; Phase II of the Water for African Cities Programme; the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative; and the G8 Action Plan on Water for Africa.

FOURTH MEETING OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACSD-4 was held in Addis Ababa from 24-28 October 2005, under the theme "Managing Land-Based Resources for Sustainable Development." As part of this meeting, the second Regional Implementation Meeting for Africa took place from 26-28 October, at which delegates adopted the African Regional Statement to CSD-14.

The meeting addressed a range of issues, specifically, policy recommendations for managing land-based resources for sustainable development, the ECA's Sustainable Development Report on Africa, emerging issues on science and technology for sustainable development, the ECA's Programme for Promoting Biotechnology for Sustainable Development in Africa, a report on follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the WSSD, the Regional Implementation Review for CSD-14 on energy, climate change, industrial development and atmosphere, and the SDD's 2006-07 work programme.

KEY MEETINGS AND OUTCOMES RELATED TO THE THEMES OF THE CSD-16 CYCLE

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The eleventh Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN-11) took place from 22-26 May 2006, in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. The ministerial session was preceded by an expert group segment, which considered progress in implementing past AMCEN decisions, AMCEN's 2004-06 programme of work and NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative. During the high-level segment, ministers of the environment from across Africa and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in a policy dialogue including on environmental governance and finance, most notably the prospect for establishing an African Environment Facility.

Ministers adopted the Brazzaville Declaration on Environment for Development, which seeks to advance AMCEN's goal of halting environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development in Africa. Ministers also adopted 11 decisions on: the implementation of NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative; institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of implementing this initiative; the AMCEN Constitution and Trust Fund; implementation of a strategic approach to international chemicals management and other chemicals 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 (Bali Strategic Plan); the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative; resource mobilization for implementing environmental projects and programmes at country, subregional and regional levels; and the African Environment Facility.

AFRICA FERTILIZER SUMMIT

The AU Africa Fertilizer Summit was held from 9-13 June 2006, in Abuja, Nigeria. This meeting brought together African heads of state and government, ministers, international donor organizations, senior policy makers, and private sector and civil society organizations. Participants discussed Africa's food challenges and fertilizer crisis, and mapped out regional and national strategies for development plans and financing mechanisms in the agricultural sector. The Summit, which had as its ultimate goal the triggering of an "African Green Revolution," concluded with the adoption of the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution. In this declaration, ministers and heads of state resolve that AU

member states should accelerate the timely access of farmers to fertilizers, that is, an increase in the use of fertilizer from the current average of eight kilograms per hectare to an average of at least 50 kilograms per hectare by 2015. They also agreed on several short-term goals, including that:

- member states and the RECs take appropriate measures at national and regional levels to reduce the cost of fertilizer procurement by mid-2007, especially through the harmonization of policies and regulations to ensure duty- and tax-free movement across regions;
- African governments take concrete measures, by mid-2007, to improve farmers' access to fertilizers; and
- AU member states take concrete measures, by 2007, to address the fertilizer needs of farmers, especially women, and to develop and strengthen the capacity of youth, farmers' associations, civil society organizations and the private sector to address fertilizer needs.

EXTRAORDINARY CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) held an Extraordinary Conference in Cairo, Egypt, from 20-24 November 2006. Organized by the AU Commission and hosted by the Government of Egypt, the conference opened with an experts meeting from 20-22 November, which was followed by a ministerial meeting from 23-24 November.

Delegates considered proposals and reports on African science and technology issues, including: a proposal to establish an African Presidents' Committee for Science and Technology; the draft report of the High-level Panel on Modern Biotechnology; the African Strategy on Biosafety; a proposal for the African Strategy for Technology Transfer and Acquisition of Domestic Technological Capabilities; the report of the conferences of the Diaspora and of African NGOs on the popularization of science and technology; a proposal for the formation of the Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization; the report of the first AU Congress of Scientists and Policy Makers; options for the African Science and Innovation Facility; and criteria and guidelines for establishing African networks of centers of excellence in science and technology. The ministers adopted a report summarizing their discussions, and the Cairo Declaration, containing ministerial commitments on future work in relation to science and technology, along with recommendations for consideration at the eighth AU Summit, held in January 2007 in Addis Ababa.

In conjunction with the Extraordinary AMCOST Conference, an Inter-Ministerial Dialogue on Building an African Network of Centers of Excellence in Water Sciences and Technology was held jointly by the Bureaus of AMCOST and the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) on 22 November. The dialogue was attended by ministers and senior government representatives, together with representatives from NEPAD's Office of Science and Technology and the AU Commission. The dialogue considered issues relating to criteria and guidelines, financial mechanisms and governance of the network of centers of excellence, before ministers adopted a declaration approving the establishment of the network and its guidelines as a "living document," and requesting the AMCOW Secretariat and the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology to work further on governance and financing.

THIRD CONFERENCE OF AU MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE

The third Conference of AU Ministers of Agriculture took place in Libreville, Gabon, from 27 November – 1 December 2006. In fulfillment of an earlier decision (EX.CL/Dec. 26 (III)), the conference elaborated an African Common Position on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Agriculture, with recommendations and an action plan that notes that: smallholder farmers constitute a majority of African farmers; there is low use of modern biotechnology in Africa; new technologies should solve African problems, have comparative advantage, be grounded in an African perspective, build on and complement local technologies, focus on indigenous crops, and conserve and protect indigenous genetic resources; and African governments and the RECs should allocate adequate resources for the African Common Position and action plan.

The recommendations encourage: research into local resources; concerted action to conserve genetic resources; protected areas or GMO-free zones that include policies to respect community rights to such zones; agricultural policies that complement plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and national-level inventories of genetic resources to protect plant biodiversity and local lifestyles. Other recommendations concern research and development, capacity building, the harmonization of related REC initiatives, food aid, trade and international treaties, international collaboration and partnerships, and information sharing and public awareness.

The action plan calls on the AU to create a task force to advance the African agenda on genetic engineering and biosafety and to foster collaboration and synergy between the AU Commission Departments of Rural Economy and Agriculture, and Science and Technology.

FIRST AFRICA-SOUTH AMERICA SUMMIT

Heads of state and government from Africa and South America met for the first Africa-South America Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, on 30 November 2006, when they adopted the Abuja Declaration, the Abuja Action Plan, and the Abuja Resolution on the Africa-South America Cooperative Forum. Key elements of the Abuja Declaration that relate to sustainable development are set out below.

AGRICULTURE, AGRIBUSINESS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: In the declaration, the regions: affirm the need to develop their countries' capabilities in agriculture and livestock production; agree that South America should participate actively in the promotion of the social and economic development of Africa's rural workers and vast agricultural and livestock resources; and agree to support the revitalization of agriculture to boost social and economic development and achieve nutritional and food security in Africa through the NEPAD Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). The two regions further agree to work closely in the World Trade Organization negotiations regarding the elimination of trade distorting subsidies and to ensure greater and effective market access of their agricultural products.

In the action plan, the regions agree to: foster the revitalization of agriculture, particularly for smallholder farmers, so as to boost economic development and attain food and nutritional security; promote technical cooperation in biotechnology and other initiatives that add value to agricultural products; support the implementation of regional and

international food safety standards; and cooperate in research to combat diseases that affect agricultural and livestock production.

COMBATING HUNGER AND POVERTY: The regions agree to: share experiences and exchange information on the best models to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote sustainable development; implement existing initiatives and adopt new strategies; and give special consideration to the need to understand each others' realities and coordinate positions at international fora.

The action plan includes agreements to: facilitate the creation of small and medium-size enterprises; exchange information on successful experiences to combat hunger and poverty; and support the implementation of institutions entrusted with food and nutrition issues.

ENERGY AND SOLID MINERALS: The declaration includes agreements to give priority to the establishment of interregional partnerships and the promotion of investment in Africa by South America, in order to harness fossil fuels and renewable energy resources. It mandates the Africa Energy Commission and the South American Community of Nations to elaborate an energy strategy to promote sustainable development that respects sovereignty over natural resource regulation and management, and to consider the establishment of a joint energy commission.

The action plan addresses: information exchange on technology transfer; consideration of a common energy strategy; experience sharing and capacity building to explore energy resource and efficient energy marketing systems; and cooperation in alternative energy development and the use of renewable energy and hybrid energy technologies.

ENVIRONMENT: In the declaration, the regions agree to: ensure that the efficient management of natural resources is one of the pillars of cooperation; pay special attention to the conservation and sustainable use of the environment, in accordance with relevant international instruments; promote measures against the dumping of hazardous and toxic waste; and share experiences and promote technical cooperation in new and renewable energy, combating desertification, global warming, ozone layer depletion and pollution.

The action plan includes agreement to: forge and develop common positions on environmental issues, and initiatives to implement relevant international conventions; encourage the ratification and implementation of international environment and sustainable development conventions; and promote the sustainable use of marine resources.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES: The declaration notes agreement on the need to protect and benefit from traditional knowledge, and to address the issue of granting intellectual property rights to biological resources and/or associated traditional knowledge.

In the action plan, the regions agree to: implement joint initiatives to enhance capacities in science and technology, including the creation of scientific and technological data banks, and establish mechanisms to protect traditional knowledge by appropriate regimes.

WATER RESOURCES: The declaration specifies agreements to promote citizens' rights to access clean and safe water and sanitation, and to exchange information aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The action plan includes agreement to effect funding mechanisms on water resource management projects to boost agriculture and industrial development, and to share experience and best practices on water resource management.

ABUJA SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

The Summit on Food Security in Africa, jointly organized by the Nigerian Government, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the AU and NEPAD, took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 4-7 December 2006, under the theme, "Food Security: an Engine for Growth and Poverty Alleviation in Africa." Delegates to the summit adopted a declaration and resolution. The declaration recommends measures to promote and protect strategic commodities at the continental level and subregional levels, and to increase intra-African trade. The resolution endorses a commitment to: expand markets, paying 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 the sharing of positive experiences; and establish a system for selecting and prioritizing key summit commitments of the AU Commission and the CAADP.

EIGHTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The eighth AU Summit of Heads of State and Government took place in Addis Ababa from 22-30 January 2007. The summit included 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 summit themes were "Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development" and "Climate Change in Africa." The Executive Council adopted 33 decisions, while the Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorsed almost all decisions and declarations from the ninth and tenth Ordinary Sessions of the Executive Council, and agreed to six declarations and 31 decisions. Several of these decisions are discussed below.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: In this decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.134 (VIII)), the Assembly takes note of the report of the Commission on Climate Change and Development in Africa; expresses concern about the vulnerability of Africa's socioeconomic and productive systems to climate change and variability and to the continent's low mitigation and response capacities; endorses and commends the development of the report "Climate Information for Development Needs: An Action Plan for Africa – Report and Implementation Strategy"; urges member states and the RECs, in collaboration with the private sector, civil society and development partners, to integrate climate change considerations into development strategies and programmes at national and regional levels; calls upon Africa's cooperation partners to support AU member states and the RECs to effectively integrate adaptation and mitigation measures into their development plans and to implement them; and requests the AU Commission, the ECA and the AfDB to develop and implement the action plan, and to report on progress biannually to the Assembly.

SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA: In this decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.135 (VIII)), the Assembly, *inter alia*: welcomes and endorses the Abuja Declaration on Food

Security; adopts the recommendations of the Conference of African Agriculture Ministers, held in Libreville, Gabon, concerning revitalization of African interregional trade in agricultural commodities and infrastructure for water control; reaffirms its commitment to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture; expresses determination to reduce Africa's annual expenditure on agricultural imports of US\$20 billion; emphasizes the need to accelerate implementation of the CAADP by focusing efforts and resources on selected areas that could yield quick and sustainable results at national, regional and continental levels; and endorses the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme as a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa and requests the AU Commission to establish the necessary institutional arrangements to coordinate the effective implementation of the this programme at the national, regional and continental levels.

The Assembly urges member states to increase intra-African trade by promoting and protecting specific strategic commodities for Africa and to take urgent measures to accelerate the development of strategic commodities by fast tracking the implementation of trade arrangements adopted in the RECs through lowering tariff barriers and eliminating non-tariff barriers, both technical and non-technical, by 2010. Further, it: encourages member states to promote public sector investment in agriculture-related infrastructure, particularly regarding water, irrigation, electricity and roads, through public-private partnerships; calls on Africa-based development banks and financial institutions to improve access to soft loans, small loans and grants; and calls upon member states to initiate implementation of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy and the NEPAD African Nutrition Initiative by 2008.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREEN WALL FOR THE SAHARA INITIATIVE: By way of this decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.137 (VIII)), the Assembly endorses the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative; calls upon the AU Commission to fast track implementation of the initiative through developing a master plan in collaboration with concerned member states, the RECs, the private sector, civil society and NGOs; calls upon member states and the RECs to put in place the necessary institutional arrangements at national, subregional and regional levels to guide the programme implementation process; mandates the AU Commission to facilitate and coordinate implementation of the initiative by member states and the RECs; and calls upon development partners to support affected member states, the RECs and the AU Commission to ensure effective implementation of the initiative.

DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: One of the six declarations agreed to by the Assembly concerned climate change and development in Africa (Assembly/AU/Decl.4 (VIII)). In this declaration, the Assembly commits to:

- continue urging those that have not done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol;
- build capacity and strengthen the effective participation of African countries in negotiations over the future of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol;
- provide funds to promote and strengthen the application of science and technology to climate data collection, analysis, generation of early warning information and timely communication;

- integrate climate change strategies into national and subregional development policies, programmes and activities;
- undertake targeted awareness raising among policy makers and civil society so as to ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account in all sustainable development initiatives;
- urgently call for the streamlining of Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding mechanisms to include the vulnerability index in the GEF Resource Allocation Framework formula;
- foster and strengthen cooperation between national meteorological and hydrological services, regional climate centers, the RECs and other institutions regarding climate variability and climate change;
- strengthen current African regional and subregional climate centers of excellence to address climate change and variability prediction;
- develop and/or strengthen research and development in climate change in Africa, particularly in renewable energy, forestry and agriculture, so as to increase the continent's resilience and adaptation to climate change;
- encourage the transfer of relevant climate friendly technologies within and among developing countries;
- demand that developed countries undertake and meet their mitigation commitments, including implementing the "polluter pays" and "common but differentiated responsibilities" principles, instituting deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring better trade terms on emissions entitlement; and
- request the AU Commission to consult with AMCEN about establishing mechanisms for following up on implementation of this declaration.

ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: Another declaration concerned science, technology and scientific research for development (Assembly/AU/Decl.5 (VIII)). The Assembly commits to:

- encourage more African youth to take up studies in science, technology and engineering;
- promote and support research and innovation activities, together with the requisite human and institutional capacities;
- ensure scrupulous application of scientific ethics in Africa aimed at preserving the continent's environment and national resources and preventing harmful practices;
- ensure the enhanced role and revitalization of African institutions of higher education and scientific research as loci of science, technology and engineering education and development;
- promote and enhance regional, South-South and North-South cooperation in science and technology; and
- increase funding for national, regional and continental programmes for science and technology, and support the establishment of national and regional centers of excellence in science and technology.

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AND THE GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

The twenty-fourth session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-24/GMEF) took place

from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. At this meeting, the Governing Council adopted decision 24/8 concerning support to Africa for environmental management and protection.

In this decision, the Governing Council emphasizes that UNEP should take a lead role in enhancing support for the continent's environmental and natural resource management efforts and spearhead international cooperation with relevant UN and other institutions to effectively tackle the complex task of ensuring environmental sustainability, in particular through NEPAD and the Bali Strategic Plan. The decision calls on African governments to take primary action and responsibility for the sustainable development of their countries and invites all governments to support UNEP's Partnership for the Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA). The Governing Council further requests the UNEP Executive Director to continue to:

- support the implementation of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD;
- establish working relationships with the proposed specialized technical committees of the AU, particularly the technical committee responsible for the environment, in order to facilitate the integration of environmental issues into the work of the institutional dispensation of the AU and NEPAD;
- work closely with partners, especially the RECs, the AfDB and other UN organizations, to support African countries in implementing the UN Declaration on NEPAD; and
- strengthen the UNEP Regional Office for Africa in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan.

The decision further invites the UNEP Executive Director to work closely with a range of continental partners to implement policy oriented assessments of the environment undertaken by the AU Commission and the RECs upon request and subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources.

FORTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The fortieth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was held from 2-3 April 2007, in Addis Ababa. Delegates adopted a ministerial statement urging governments to scale up public sector investments in infrastructure, agriculture, health and education, which it said provide a foundation for private sector-led growth to meet the MDGs. Ministers committed to align comprehensive national development strategies and medium-term expenditure frameworks with the MDGs and other internationally agreed goals by the end of 2007, increase domestic spending on the MDGs, and ensure that debt relief and natural resource and other revenue sources are channeled toward meeting the MDGs.

The ministers further resolved to launch the African Green Revolution by the end of 2008 by: ensuring the access of smallholder farmers to fertilizer, improved seeds and targeted subsidies as necessary; investing in water management; strengthening agricultural extension services; expanding rural infrastructure, especially roads and energy services; and promoting regional cooperation in intra-African trade and investment in agriculture. Ministers also reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the CAADP and to allocating 10% per cent of national budgets to agriculture, as per the Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, agreed to at the second AU Summit, held in Maputo, Mozambique, from 4-12 July 2003.

Regarding climate change and development, the ministers requested the ECA in collaboration with the AU Commission, AfDB and other international institutions to develop and implement the Climate Information for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme and to report on progress at each of its subsequent conferences. The ministers also requested governments to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation measures into their national development strategies with support from other actors, including the RECs.

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

An AMCEN Special Session on the GEF Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Sub-Saharan Africa took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 24-25 April 2007. The meeting resulted in a declaration in which ministers committed to advance the SLM agenda at local, national and regional levels. They also agreed to:

- request the GEF Council to approve the SIP for SLM in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- call on donors and development partners to join Sub-Saharan Africa in scaling up SLM;
- urge donors and development partners to align and harmonize their activities to build and share knowledge and develop investment to support African countries, the RECs, NEPAD and the AU in their efforts to scale up SLM in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- call for a concerted approach to deal simultaneously with the UNFCCC national adaptation programmes of action and the action programmes of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), to be funded from the GEF;
- in relation to the above, call for a decision at the next Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC to locate the Adaptation Fund within the GEF so as to ensure continuity in programmes dealing with both land degradation and adaptation; and
- call upon the GEF to simplify its procedures in order to facilitate speedy implementation of the SIP.

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON LAND INDICATORS

The AU-ECA-AfDB consortium, in partnership with UN-HABITAT, organized an Expert Group Meeting on Land Indicators, from 3-4 May 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. A total of 52 participants, including experts in land policy, land administration and indicator development, explored the issue of land indicators by way of a "Concept Paper on Land Policy Indicators in Africa." They reached consensus on a mechanism to develop benchmarks and indicators that involves: a coordinated process of review of the concept paper based on inputs from the meeting itself; moderated "e-discussions" to engage a wider audience; and pilot field studies on land policy indicators in selected countries.

SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

The seventh Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament took place from 7-18 May 2007, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The session dedicated some of its work to the issues of desertification, toxic waste and climate change, and adopted the report of the Pan-African Parliamentary Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, which is summarized below.

COMMITTEE ON RURAL ECONOMY, AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:

This report concerned a desertification workshop held by the Committee from 2-4 April 2007, in Algiers, Algeria. The report recommends that: an appropriate budgetary item be included in national budgets for actions to fight against desertification and poverty; national organs and coordinating action programmes to combat desertification be strengthened; and decentralization measures be improved to guarantee their efficiency at the local level. The report further urges African countries to engage better in the research and monitoring of desertification and to seek to improve communication between scientists and political decision makers in order to promote the results of scientific research.

At the regional level, the Committee recommends establishing synergies between African scientific research institutions, focusing on environmental protection and combating desertification, and implementing the Sirtre Declaration in relation to the creation and networking of centers of excellence on the environment. It also calls for strengthened regional cooperation through the establishment of an African Environment Protection Observatory and support for regional initiatives.

At the global level, the Committee recommends improved cooperation in the implementation of the UNCCD by providing adequate and predictable financial resources, notably via the GEF. It calls for increased investments that target rural populations, enhanced international cooperation in scientific research and technology transfer in clean and renewable energy, and the use of "space tools" for decision making on desertification and climate change initiatives.

SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER

The sixth Ordinary Session of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW-6) took place from 30-31 May 2007, in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. Ministers, their representatives and other experts focused on strengthening regional and international cooperation and solidarity to address the African water and sanitation crisis and to advance attainment of the water-related targets of the MDGs and the WSSD.

At the close of the meeting, ministers adopted a report summarizing their discussions and the Brazzaville Declaration containing ministerial decisions on future work. Key issues addressed in these decisions include governance, institutional and operational matters, financial issues and means of implementation, and partnerships and other initiatives.

NINTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The ninth AU Summit took place from 1-3 July in Accra, Ghana. The Summit consisted of the: ninth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly; eleventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council; and fourteenth Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Council. The Assembly, attended by African heads of state and government or their representatives, discussed the creation of a union government for Africa, referred to as the "Grand Debate." This resulted in the adoption of two decisions, together with the Accra Declaration, not summarised here.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The eleventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council took place from 28-29 June, and involved the adoption of 30 decisions which were forwarded to the AU Assembly. Several key decisions relating to sustainable development are summarised below.

Management of Africa's Natural Resources: In this decision (EX.CL/Dec.368 (XI)), the Council affirms its strong commitment to Africa's ownership of its natural resources and efficient and prudent management of these resources for the achievement of sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on the local adding of value. The Executive Council also requests the AU Commission, in collaboration with the ECA and AfDB, to organize a meeting of AU ministers responsible for natural resources to consider major issues in the exploitation and management of Africa's natural resources as a catalyst for development, and to submit a report to the twelfth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, scheduled for January 2008.

Position of Executive Secretary for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification: In decision EX.CL/Dec.369 (XI), the Executive Council recognizes the importance of the UNCCD for the livelihoods of millions of Africans affected by drought and desertification and recalls the singular importance of this Convention for Africa's development. The Council further recommends that the UN Secretary-General appoint another African to the head the UNCCD Secretariat.

Assessing Africa's Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals: In this decision (EX.CL/Dec.356 (XI)), the Executive Council calls on all member states to continue their efforts toward the attainment of the MDGs by 2015 and calls on the Commission, in collaboration with the ECA, AfDB and the RECs, to continue monitoring implementation of the MDGs.

HIGH-LEVEL BIOFUELS SEMINAR

The first High-level Biofuels Seminar in Africa, held in Addis Ababa from 30 July – 1 August 2007, was jointly organized by the AU Commission, the Government of Brazil and the UN Industrial Development Organization, and was based on the theme of "Sustainable Biofuels Development in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges". It was attended by 250 participants representing AU member states, the RECs, UN agencies, the scientific community, the private sector and NGOs. Ministers adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration on Sustainable Biofuels Development in Africa and an Action Plan for Biofuels Development in Africa.

DECLARATION: The Addis Ababa Declaration notes that biofuels development is an important priority for Africa and calls for, *inter alia*:

- developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks, linked to overall development policies, that promote equity, participation, local consumption and energy security;
- integrating biofuels in broad energy-related frameworks;
- taking the lead on biofuels research and development aspects relevant to Africa;
- harmonizing national biofuels policies and standards through the RECs;
- increasing stakeholder capacity;
- participating in global sustainability discussions and preparing guiding principles on biofuels to enable Africa to compete internationally;
- engaging public financing institutions to support biofuels development;
- engaging development partners to enable North-South and South-South cooperation;
- minimizing the risks for small-scale producers in captive markets;

- formalizing the organization of similar high-level seminars at continental and regional levels; and
- establishing a forum to promote access to information relating to best practices, technology transfer and investments.

African ministers further commit to implement the identified priority actions on biofuels and to request the AU to present the declaration to upcoming ministerial conferences on sectors relevant to biofuels.

ACTION PLAN: The declaration also contains an Action Plan for Biofuels Development in Africa, which covers a ten-year period. The action plan follows an ecoregional approach and identifies the development of ethanol, biodiesel, biogas, biomass gasification and cogeneration as priority sectors. The plan also contains a number of cross-cutting programme areas, including policy and institutional frameworks, financing mechanisms, resource assessments, capacity building and technical expertise, and proposes outputs and indicators for monitoring progress in these areas. The priority areas identified in the action plan include: a focus on proven options relating to existing agro-industries; regular resource assessments; and the establishment of a regional biofuels network.

REGIONAL CONSULTATION WORKSHOP ON LAND POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Regional Consultation Workshop on Land Policy in Southern Africa, held from 29-31 August 2007, in Windhoek, Namibia, brought together 120 land stakeholders from civil society, governments, NGOs, development partners and international organizations to discuss the specificities of land tenure, distribution, utilization and security processes in Southern Africa. The workshop is the first of five subregional assessments planned by the AU Commission, the ECA and the AfDB to facilitate land policy reform in Africa and to design a framework to secure land rights, enhance productivity and secure livelihoods on the continent.

Participants identified a range of important issues, including: unequal distribution of land; tenure security; historical colonial legacies; sustainable management of natural resources; dualism in property security; sustainable management of the environment; gender bias; the impact of HIV/AIDS; and the management of land in post conflict reconstruction. They also discussed absentee landlords, elites acquiring large land holdings, inheritance and land rights for vulnerable groups, and linking land issues with other aspects of the economy. They underscored that such land issues have strongly influenced economic development in the subregion. These outcomes, along with those from future workshops planned for Eastern, Northern, Western and Central Africa, will feed into the draft land policy framework and guidelines for consideration and possible adoption at a future AU Summit.

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNCCD

The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the UNCCD convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007. In addition to the work of the COP, UNCCD parties attended the sixth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 6) and the eighth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 8). The COP approved 29 decisions, including five decisions on the CRIC's agenda and eight decisions on the CST's agenda. Key decisions included: one on

a ten-year strategic plan for implementation of the Convention; a CRIC decision to ask the UNCCD Secretariat, in consultation with the Global Mechanism, to revise the format of national reports; and a CST decision to convene future sessions in a conference-style format. Delegates did not reach agreement on the UNCCD's programme and budget.

THIRD ALIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The third General Assembly of the African Partnership for Livestock Development, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Growth (ALive) took place from 19-20 September 2007, in Addis Ababa. ALive is a partnership between various actors involved in livestock development in Sub-Saharan Africa, including regional, international and civil society organizations, donors, and research and training institutes.

The Assembly approved the implementation of guidelines, a toolkit and databases for use by stakeholders, and adopted recommendations on the four strategic areas of the partnership, specifically: enhanced stakeholder participation; collaboration between donors and partners; institutional strength and natural resources protection; improved knowledge, strategy and programme formulation; the promotion of regional collaboration and integration; knowledge sharing and dissemination; subregional training and capacity building; and the integration of results into the ongoing and forthcoming operational programmes of ALive's partners.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSD	African Committee on Sustainable Development
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMCOST	African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology
AMCOW	African Ministerial Council on Water
AU	African Union
CAADP	NEPAD Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
ECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
FSSDD	Food Security and Sustainable Development Division
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PANAFCON	Pan-African Conference on Implementation and Partnership on Water
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SIP	Strategic Investment Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development