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Twentieth Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN-20): 14-18 July 2025

Africa is home to a vast natural heritage, with substantial reserves in minerals, arable land, water, forests, fossil fuels, and wildlife. This natural wealth, including an estimated 30% of the world’s mineral resources, is now key to the global energy transition needed to address rising global temperatures and climate change. These resources should be a great credit to the continent and its people, but a history of extractive colonialism has meant that, for decades, Africa has not been able to access or benefit from this incredible wealth.

To address this, African countries came together to coordinate their efforts towards one voice on the global environmental stage, establishing the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in 1985. At the twentieth ordinary session of AMCEN (AMCEN-20), delegates convened under the banner “Four Decades of Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future,” to take decisions that will further bolster their positions and safeguard the future of generations to come. They convened in a Technical Segment, a Ministerial Segment, and a High-Level Special Session.

During the two-day Ministerial Segment, delegates adopted decisions on, among other things:

- ocean governance in Africa;
- strengthening chemicals and waste governance;
- climate change;
- biodiversity; and
- a draft drought protocol.

They also took a decision on Africa’s priorities for 2025-2027 and adopted the Tripoli Declaration on Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future. In addition, delegates adopted decisions on Africa’s participation at various upcoming international environmental conferences related to wetlands, climate change, endangered species, and mercury.

During the two-day ministerial meeting, high-level delegates engaged in four policy dialogues on:

- sustainable and climate-resilient financing and budgeting as a pathway to addressing climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation in Africa;
- leveraging the G20 to address Africa’s environmental challenges;



Delegates pose for a group photo

- the role of sustainable digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), early warning systems (EWS) and assessments for environmental sustainability in Africa; and
- critical minerals and the energy transition in Africa.

AMCEN-20 also marked the 40th anniversary of the Conference. Delegates met in a high-level special session to mark this milestone, with many speakers lauding the work done over four decades to strengthen and harmonize Africa’s voice on the global stage. Calling for further efforts to harness the continent’s potential as a global leader in the green energy transition, some remarked that “although the road from Cairo to Nairobi has been remarkable for AMCEN, the best is yet to come!”

The meeting was hosted by Libya, and convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 14-18 July 2025. Over 400 delegates, from 53 countries, attended the meeting, representing governments, intergovernmental bodies, academia, and civil society.

In This Issue

Brief History	2
AMCEN-20 Report	2
AMCEN@40 Report	16
Upcoming Meetings	17
Glossary	18

On the margins of AMCEN-20, delegates attended the High-Level Launch of African Union's (AU) "Continental Circular Economy Action Plan," and marked ten years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement during an event titled, "Paris Agreement+10: A Decade of Climate Action and the Road Ahead."

Brief History

AMCEN was established in Cairo, Egypt, in 1985, following the adoption of the [Cairo Programme for African Cooperation](#). It aimed to strengthen cooperation between African governments on economic, technical, and scientific activities to halt the degradation of Africa's environment and satisfy the food and energy needs of the continent's population. For 40 years, AMCEN has facilitated the broadening of the political and public policy legitimacy of environmental concerns in Africa.

AMCEN's core mandates are to:

- champion environmental protection;
- promote sustainable development that meets basic human needs;
- advance social and economic progress at all levels; and
- support food security through sustainable agricultural practices.

AMCEN works on providing continent-wide leadership by promoting awareness and consensus on global and regional environmental issues, especially those relating to international conventions on climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, chemicals and waste, and pollution. The Conference also works to develop common positions to guide African representatives in negotiations for legally binding international environmental agreements, including those related to the Ocean and plastic pollution. AMCEN further works on:

- promoting African participation in international dialogue on global issues of crucial importance to the continent;
- monitoring and reviewing environmental programmes at the regional, sub-regional, and national levels;
- offering strategic policy guidance for sustainable environmental management;
- promoting the ratification by African countries of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) relevant to the region; and
- strengthening institutional, technical, and civil society capacity across the continent.

AMCEN plays a pivotal role in providing political guidance in the development of Africa's positions with respect to MEAs, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS Conventions), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Conference was instrumental in the adoption, in January 1991, of the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa. Furthermore, AMCEN successfully facilitated the revision of the 1968 Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention).

AMCEN comprises a bi-annual Ministerial Conference, a Bureau, and the AMCEN Trust Fund to support capacity building, research, and programme implementation. The UN

Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Africa serves as the AMCEN Secretariat. AMCEN partners with several key organizations in the region, including, but not limited to, the African Union (AU) and its Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD); the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Recent AMCEN Sessions

AMCEN-17: Ministers met in Durban, South Africa, from 14-15 November 2019, under the banner, "taking action for environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa." They launched the [Global Environment Outlook for Youth, Africa: A Wealth of Green Opportunities](#), and adopted the [Durban Declaration on Taking Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa](#). They reiterated their commitment to integrating climate actions into socioeconomic and environmental policies, plans, and programmes to secure the continent's development pathways.

AMCEN-18: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministerial segment of AMCEN-18 was held online on 16 September 2021. Convening under the theme "securing people's well-being and ensuring environmental sustainability in Africa," delegates adopted the ministerial outcome document, which included several key messages. Among many others, they expressed concern regarding the discriminatory and illogical COVID-19 restrictions and high visa processing costs imposed by the host country of UNFCCC COP 26 and accommodation challenges, which undermined the effective participation of African countries. They also continued calls for the establishment of a dedicated biodiversity fund; and established a coordination committee to oversee the operational aspects of the Africa Green Stimulus Programme to assist in COVID recovery and long-term development.

AMCEN-19: This session was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14-18 August 2023. During the ministerial segment, delegates adopted the [Addis Ababa Declaration on Seizing Opportunities and Enhancing Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa](#). Delegates also adopted decisions on, among others: the participation of Africa in the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; preparations by Africa for the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management; the engagement of Africa at the sixth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), which convened in early 2024; and climate change.

AMCEN-20 Report

On Wednesday, outgoing AMCEN-19 Vice-President, Jacques Assahoré Konan, Minister of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition, Côte d'Ivoire, opened the ministerial segment. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, recalled that at AMCEN's inception forty years ago, the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution were merely "clouds on the horizon," but now they are "at the center of the storm." Mrema urged meaningful cooperation and engagement between environment and finance ministers to improve policy coherence and achieve tangible improvements for people and the planet.



Outgoing AMCEN-19 Vice President, **Jacques Assahoré Konan**, Minister of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition, Côte d'Ivoire

Moses Vilakati, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AU, underscored that a healthy environment is “the bedrock upon which sustainable development, green growth, and shared prosperity are built.” He outlined several of the AU’s strategic frameworks and tools, including the Circular Economy Action Plan, Great Green Wall Initiative, and Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, highlighting opportunities therein for implementing common strategies through strengthened partnerships.

Ibrahim Thiaw, outgoing Executive Secretary, UNCCD, underlined the need to strengthen: environmental action by coordinating policy at the regional level; financing, especially in renewable energy resources and for a just ecological transformation; and language on land, security, and stability, underlining that “we cannot build peace on dead land.”

Fred Boltz, Global Environment Facility (GEF), described the Facility as a financial mechanism to support countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and cautioned against the fragmentation of environmental funding through the establishment of new funds to address different environment concerns.

Deborah Mlongo Barasa, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya, urged strengthening AMCEN’s capacity to turn decisions into tangible actions. She highlighted that AMCEN@40 should be remembered as the meeting where ministers recommitted to achieve positive impacts for Africa. She underlined that Africa is not “waiting to be rescued; we are rising to lead.”

Wycliffe Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary, Kenya, called for strengthening Nairobi’s role as the global environmental hub, and urged delegates to reach bold, actionable outcomes to shape a “sustainable and resilient Africa for generations to come.”

Later in the day, Kenya’s President William Ruto acknowledged the difficult responsibilities faced by environment ministers, noting the existential threat posed by climate change and the urgent need to secure climate and development financing for countries in the Global South.



William Ruto, President of Kenya

Organizational Matters

Adoption of the Agenda: On Wednesday, following an intervention by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) seeking clarification on the role and responsibilities of AMCEN Vice-Presidents, delegates adopted the agenda of the meeting ([UNEP/AMCEN/20/1](#)) and the organization of work contained in the annex.

Election of Officers: Delegates elected Ibrahim Munir, Minister of Environment, Libya, as President of AMCEN-20. The following members were elected to the AMCEN Bureau: Libya (President), for North Africa; DRC, for Central Africa; South Sudan, for East Africa; Namibia, for Southern Africa; and Ghana, for West Africa.

Konan encouraged ministers to continue their cooperation for a resilient, responsible, and united continent on environmental issues. Joining by video link, a representative for outgoing AMCEN-19 President Fitsum Assefa, Minister for Planning and Development, Ethiopia, stressed Africa’s role in tackling global environmental challenges, and called for strengthened collaboration to promote a unified African voice.

Consideration of the Report of the Meeting of the Expert Group

On Wednesday, AMCEN-20 President Munir introduced this agenda item. Mensur Dessie Nuri, Ethiopia, and Chair of the AMCEN Expert Group, presented on the work of the experts during the Technical Segment, held from 14-15 July. He highlighted agreement on five draft decisions related to: ocean governance in Africa; Africa’s participation at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Africa’s participation at the 15th meeting of the COP to the Ramsar Convention; biodiversity; and the draft protocol on drought.

He noted that seven draft decisions were yet to be agreed, including on: chemicals and waste management; Africa’s participation at COP 6 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury; Africa’s participation at UNEA-7; and recognizing the international crime of ecocide. He also noted that the draft Tripoli Declaration had also not been finalized. He announced that the Expert Group would continue work in parallel to AMCEN-20 to complete discussions on these draft decisions.

AMCEN President Munir suggested that delegates revisit this item later in the week. On Thursday evening, delegates concluded this matter and proceeded to adopt the decisions forwarded to the Ministerial Segment by the Technical Segment, reflected in subsequent sections of this report.

Outcomes of Africa's Engagement in Recent Key Global Meetings

On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced this item, reporting on Africa's engagement at CBD COP 16 in Cali, Colombia, in 2024, and its resumed session in Rome, Italy, in 2025. They noted key outcomes of the COP, including: adoption of the global resource mobilization strategy; and operationalization of the Cali Fund to facilitate the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI) on genetic resources.

On UNFCCC COP 29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024, they noted that the African Group of Negotiators had secured the inclusion of Africa's voice on the core issues of adaptation, mitigation, and finance.

In preparing for the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) on plastic pollution, they noted African negotiators had met in Nairobi to consolidate the continent's position, ahead of what might be the last session of the INC.

On UNCCD COP 16, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in December 2024, they noted that African negotiators had prioritized the establishment of a drought protocol, which is still under discussion.

On the 2025 BRS Convention COPs, they said African negotiators had met to reinforce Africa's role in addressing hazardous waste and pollution, in alignment with the Bamako Convention.

Delegates took note of the report on Africa's engagement in recent global meetings.

Africa's Common Positions and Participation in Upcoming International Environmental Meetings and Conferences

On Wednesday, ZIMBABWE, as host government, presented on preparations for Ramsar COP 15. They noted that the meeting will be held at *Mosi oa Tunya* – the Smoke that Thunders (Victoria Falls). They underlined that wetlands are a



A view of the room during Wednesday's proceedings

vital lifeline and underscored that COP 15 is a moment for Africa to assert its leadership in global environmental governance and to showcase the continent's successes in conserving its wetlands. They called on ministers to forge partnerships to ensure wetlands continue to be pillars to combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

Jo Puri, Director, Policy and Programme Division, UNEP, provided an update on UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029 and Programme of Work 2026-2027, which will be delivered at UNEA-7 in December 2025. She noted the extensive consultation process, alongside the substantive incorporation of feedback from the African region for both documents. Puri further outlined UNEP's financial portfolios, including with the GEF and Green Climate Fund (GCF), and highlighted transboundary initiatives, such as the [Great Green Wall Initiative](#) and [Congo Basin Integrated Programme](#).

On Thursday, the UNEP Secretariat described preparations for UNEA-7, which will be preceded by the meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR). They noted the organization of: an MEA Day; a high-level segment featuring three leadership dialogues; and side events, which will run throughout the two-week meeting. They highlighted guidelines for the submission of draft resolutions and noted all drafts should be submitted by 29 September 2025 and be accompanied by a note verbale.

Progress on the Implementation of AMCEN Decisions

On Wednesday, the Secretariat reported on progress in implementing AMCEN decisions taken from 2022-2024 (UNEP/AMCEN/20/2). Regarding decisions adopted by AMCEN-18, they outlined, among others:

- work on sustainable soils governance, including a study informing on the development of a model law;
 - the launch of a multi-stakeholder partnership to eliminate open waste burning at UNFCCC COP 27;
 - UNEP-supported work on integrating the environmental dimensions of antimicrobial resistance into African national strategies, policies, and planning frameworks; and
 - the operationalization of the African Group of Negotiators on Wildlife, with common positions developed for the upcoming CITES and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) COPs.
- For decisions taken at AMCEN-19 and the 10th special session, they reported on, among other things:
- the second meeting of the African Forum of Environmental Protection Agencies, held in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2024, alongside the launch of a digital platform for monitoring, analysis, and environmental data-sharing;
 - the development of an action plan on capacity building and environmental safeguards to guide implementation of the resolution on advancing a multilateral approach that promotes circularity across critical mineral value chains;
 - UNEP support to 43 countries in revising their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF); and
 - continued engagement with UNEA and development of several UNEA resolutions, including on air-quality management.

AMCEN Priorities for the Period 2025 to 2027

On Wednesday, the Secretariat provided an update on upcoming priorities for AMCEN in the period 2025 to 2027 (UNEP/AMCEN/20/4), underlining three core pillars: climate action; biodiversity loss, desertification, and drought; and pollution and health. They noted that other cross-cutting enablers for African development and environmental goals include an accelerated digital transformation, strengthened environmental governance, and closer collaboration with, and involvement of, finance, economic development, and environmental sectors.

Ministerial Policy Dialogues

On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, delegates engaged in four policy dialogues, all moderated by Keishamaza Rukikaire, Global Head of News and Media, UNEP.

Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Financing and Budgeting as a Pathway to Addressing Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Environmental Degradation in Africa:

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Mrema underlined that finance and environment are cross-cutting issues, requiring interministerial cooperation for mutual success. She noted that climate change impacts are affecting Africa's productive output, calling for inter-ministerial dialogues on these issues. Mrema highlighted the need to find innovative ways to increase resources to address climate change and environmental degradation.

Leila Benali, Minister of Environment, Morocco, noted that the continent is the most constrained in attracting climate financing, despite historically contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions. She called for: a reimagined global financial architecture; financing systems and budgeting frameworks aligned with the SDGs; strengthened governance and risk frameworks; and creating space for non-traditional funding streams, including green bonds. Benali also pointed to the [African Task Force on Green and Sustainable Finance](#) to assist countries in developing and implementing their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and accelerating access to finance, among others.

Cosmas Milton Ochieng, UNECA, noted that Africa has the potential to be a global leader in climate action and green finance, including in the issuance of green, blue, and sustainability bonds. He explained that Africa's share of the green bond market is less than 1% but explained that the continent will require over USD

600 billion a year in climate financing. On UNECA's work to bridge this gap, he said the Commission had helped negotiate lower capital costs, and pointed to the Sustainable Debt Coalition, a partnership with Egypt, to address sustainable debt management on the continent.

Kevin Kariuki, Vice President for Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth, AfDB, stated that the continent will require USD 277 billion to implement the actions set out in countries' NDCs, but only attracts 2% of global renewable energy investments. He shared that the Bank has mobilized USD 29 billion for adaptation since 2016, and underscored the need for hundreds of billions of dollars to address loss and damage. Underlining that public finance is not enough, he pointed to the AfDB's [Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa](#), a USD 500 million fund to crowd in finance for renewable energy, and the [Alliance for Green Infrastructure in Africa](#), which will mobilize USD 10 billion in equity and debt.

Catherine Koffman, Regional Director for Africa, GCF, underlined that the Fund prioritizes investment in Africa, least developed countries (LDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS), noting approvals of USD 6 billion for projects in Africa. She highlighted continued support to developing countries to implement their NDCs and national adaptation plans (NAPs). Koffman said that the Fund's Readiness Programme provides a foundation for broader climate finance investments and reported that the Fund has approved over USD 250 million for readiness projects across the continent. She explained that readiness funding also helps to catalyze private financing as well as strengthen regional institutional capacities.

Fred Boltz, GEF, emphasized predictability, reliability, and complementarity as core considerations in the design of GEF support to countries, including for the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) country allocations. He underscored the importance of scaling, notably to scale up proven financial models beyond only focusing on innovative mechanisms, and highlighted the role of blended finance for countries to strategically leverage GEF investments, including their STAR allocations. Boltz further pointed to recently launched country platforms for climate finance in Africa, noting these aim to align investments for coherent, country-led development assistance.



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP



Fred Boltz, GEF

Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, UNFCCC Secretariat, outlined efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks for accessing and mobilizing climate financing, namely through:

- enhancing access through capacity building and readiness support;
- aligning policy and regulatory frameworks; and
- advocating for scaled-up and predictable finance.

She highlighted the role of readiness programmes in helping African countries develop climate resilience strategies and prepare bankable project proposals. On policy coherence, she pointed to efforts promoting climate-resilient budgeting and integrating climate finance into national budget cycles. Kinuthia-Njenga highlighted ongoing work to operationalize and capitalize the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage, underscoring the role of innovative mechanisms such as debt for climate swaps in achieving this.

In ensuing discussions, CÔTE D'IVOIRE stressed that the carbon credit market is a real opportunity for Africa, considering its abundant natural capital. They called on AMCEN to prioritize this mechanism going forward, proposing the development of an African roadmap on carbon credits, a ministerial-level working group to consider pilot projects and regulatory frameworks, and an annual continental forum to promote synergies and peer-to-peer dialogue and technical support for the African carbon credit market.

KENYA highlighted their national Financing Locally-led Climate Action Programme, which enables impactful devolved climate finance projects for climate-vulnerable communities, noting its potential for replication in other countries. Lamenting African countries' limited fiscal space and perverse global financial flows due to indebtedness, they called for a fundamental shift away from debt-based instruments towards primary public grant financing for climate action, particularly on adaptation, and for adequate representation at the decision-making level in international financial institutions.

Recalling that the resource mobilization target of allocating 1% of GDP towards developing scientific and technical capabilities under the [Lagos Plan of Action](#) has never been realized, GHANA urged for "sincere investment and resource allocation towards developing research institutions." They underscored that accurate and trustworthy data is critical for

finding solutions to environmental crises, including by derisking investment in climate action by the private sector.

MALI lamented that while Africa is among those least responsible for the climate crisis, the continent's disproportionate vulnerability to climate impacts is exacerbated by weak institutional and technical capacities. They emphasized that mobilizing the G20 and other economic groupings to support sustainable development and environmental resilience in Africa is a strategic necessity for the planet's future, calling for, among others, transparency in the earmarking of climate finance.

Leveraging the G20 to Address Africa's Environmental Challenges: With South Africa at the helm of the G20 for the first time in an African country, panelists considered how to leverage this platform to advocate for solutions to the continent's pressing issues.

Bernice Swarts, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, highlighted that her country's G20 presidency has the potential to shape development pathways, and shared the country's priorities, including to address climate change, biodiversity and conservation, sustainable chemicals and waste management, and ocean conservation and management. She highlighted the work of the G20's Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group, and the importance of meaningful stakeholder engagement to ensure alignment and coordination across the continent.

Vilakati said the AU Agenda 2063 should be the guide for Africa's engagement with the G20. He underlined the need for a consensus on: resource mobilization for climate change adaptation and mitigation; water access and management; financing for biodiversity conservation and the promotion of nature-based solutions; sustainable chemicals and waste management, including combatting marine plastics; and circular economy initiatives for the continent. He also highlighted the need for well-structured implementation plans to attract investment, including for the African Framework on Chemicals and Waste.

UNCCD's Thiaw lauded South Africa and the AU for chairing the G20, recalling the history of slavery and colonialism between Africa and some of the G20 partners, including the US, the UK, and Europe. He lamented that there has not been a post-colonial review of land policy on the continent, including on unsustainable



Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana



Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD outgoing Executive Secretary

agricultural practices. He called for, among others, value addition in the agricultural and extractives sectors, and addressing drought. He underscored that although Africa is rich in resources, it will need to negotiate a just transition through a cohesive and comprehensive approach to energy, water, biodiversity, and land.

Focusing on climate finance, Anthony Nyong, AfDB, said that the Bank is part of the G20's Sustainable Finance Working Group, noting that this is a call for collaborative, harmonized action by all development banks and funds for African countries to access climate funds. He welcomed the G20's renewed focus on adaptation and resilience financing, thanks to the South African presidency. Nyong also stressed the importance of the private sector in climate financing, but lamented that Africa only attracts 14% of private climate finance due to perceived risk in investing in Africa, underscoring the need to deal with this risk and calling for local currency investments. He highlighted the need to prioritize the carbon market, pointing to the Bank's Africa Carbon Support Facility for a fairer playing field for Africans in global carbon markets.

Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, CBD, underlined the role of the G20 in making environmental sustainability a core issue, noting that for economies to thrive, nature must thrive as well. She called on the G20 to address the tension between economic development and nature degradation, particularly in Africa. Schomaker stressed that the GBF was the world's way of saying that we need to integrate nature into development policy, and that the G20 could leverage what was already agreed under the GBF.

Martin Krause, Climate Change Division, UNEP, lamented that the impacts of climate change in Africa will reduce worker productivity by up to 15% and underscored that Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projections point to a devastating 3.5°C temperature increase in African cities by 2050. He highlighted opportunities: for the uptake of low-energy technologies on the continent; and to scale up effective solutions in agriculture and housing. He called on the G20 to scale up these opportunities, including regarding cooling and cold chains.

In the ensuing discussion, MAURITIUS lamented that international climate financing has been a failure, called on donors to honor their climate finance commitments, and urged



Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, CBD

strengthening cooperation and solidarity on adaptation and scaling up concrete actions on loss and damage.

EGYPT stressed that Africa is paying the price for others' emissions, called for the G20 to focus on the triple planetary, and pointed to the importance of private sector engagement in the agricultural sector through derisked capital investments.

MAURITANIA noted the risks due to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, stressing that the impacts of these will affect productive capacity and financial resource allocation. They underlined that, among other things, the GBF Fund was a "new beginning" for financing biodiversity recovery and conservation, pointing to recent disbursements.

The DRC stressed that the continent already has nature-based solutions and critical minerals for energy transformation but lacks the finances to adapt to climate change. They called for distinguishing between funding for development and funding for climate change; and underlined the need to institute the polluter pays principle to address environmental degradation by the extractives sector.

SENEGAL underlined that the G20 should focus on technology, highlighting AI for EWS, and funding for Africa to address the impacts of climate change. They called for the G20 to promote green investment on the continent, including for waste management, and to build capacity in environmental governance.

GUINEA called for strengthened South-South cooperation and for African solutions to Africa's problems and reiterated their commitment to meeting Agenda 2063.

The Role of Sustainable Digital Technologies, AI, and Early Warning and Assessments for Environmental Sustainability in Africa: During this session, panelists considered the challenges and opportunities presented by deploying digital technologies, AI, EWS, and assessments to address environmental challenges, including climate change.

Philip Thigo, Special Envoy on Technology, Kenya, emphasized the importance of full life-cycle assessments for AI systems, from the minerals sourced to understanding water and energy demands and considering potential carbon emissions and issues related to e-waste disposal.

Thigo stressed the need to consider social equity and inclusivity, as there is an "opportunity divide" alongside the digital divide. Underlining that AI is concentrated in the Global



Narsinghen Hambyraj, Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius



Ana Paula Chantre Luna de Carvalho, Minister of Environment, Angola

North, he explained that Africa hosts only 2% of global data centers. Thigo added that effective governance frameworks should enshrine the principles of accessibility, transparency, and accountability.

Ana Paula Chantre Luna de Carvalho, Minister of Environment, Angola, reported on national efforts to integrate digital technologies and AI into environmental policies and climate adaptation strategies. She underlined that Angola's sustainable development strategies are aligned with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, pointing to the prioritization of developing scientific, technological, information, and digital capacities to enable robust environmental monitoring and to subsequently deploy EWS.

Among the advantages of AI systems, de Carvalho highlighted data interoperability for multiple applications, and lamented that financing remains a challenge, particularly for institutional capacity building.

Daouda Ngom, Minister of Environment and Ecological Transition, Senegal, stressed the importance of data for monitoring climate change impacts, pollution, and deforestation. He pointed to the advantages of new technologies for increasing data availability and lowering costs, such as using drones or satellite imagery for forest surveys. Ngom also highlighted Senegal's EWS for fishermen whereby climatic data is shared to improve risk management, as well as the development of an analogous system for farmers on land.

He underscored the role of Senegal's ecological data observatory in supporting the work of the CBD in West Africa and that improved data collection systems strengthen capacities for building environmental resilience and engaging in regional cooperation efforts such as the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Jim Skea, Chair, IPCC, underlined the importance of EWS in managing floods and extreme weather events covered by Working Group II, noting that Working Group I addresses the disparities in data and information, especially in Africa. He pointed to the Panel's work on assessing the climate impacts of data centers including increasing energy demands. On AI use by the IPCC, Skea underlined that the technology can assist in the assessment process but acknowledged the ethics and potential bias of using AI in this way. He announced that for the upcoming assessment cycle, over 100 Africans had been selected as authors.

Following the Nexus Assessment approved in 2024, David Obura, Chair, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), stressed the need for integrated transitions and solutions to address the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food, and health, including the use of relevant technology. He highlighted the need: for ethical and responsible use of AI, pointing to the work of IPBES on a policy and code of conduct for assessing knowledges, including Indigenous knowledge; and to address issues related to data governance and intellectual property. Obura underscored the importance of considering bias in the application of AI, calling on governments to fill the gaps in context-specific data from Africa, underling that "AI cannot measure what it cannot see."

Mingda Liu, President, Society of Entrepreneurs and Ecology, announced a commitment of USD 1 million to support UNEP's Early Warning for the Environment (EW4E) initiative, noting that it will assist in air pollution monitoring in East Africa, starting in Kenya. He underlined the importance of EWS using local data, and of supporting communities with simple and smart solutions to address weather extremes and their impacts. He called for EW4E to lead to more cooperation between China and Africa, underscoring that early action can protect our planet.

Sally Radwan, Chief Digital Officer, UNEP, emphasized that digital public goods are a critical opportunity for Africa, due to their ability to support scalability and cross-border collaboration. Noting that data issues are multifold, spanning availability, quality, interoperability, affordability, and governance, she highlighted several ongoing efforts at UNEP to tackle these, including the development of a global environmental data strategy and updating the World Environment Situation Room.

Radwan underscored that AI is particularly useful when deployed at scale, as its "power lies in complex scenarios across geographical and domain boundaries." She noted that the current landscape of AI projects in Africa is highly fragmented, and encouraged cross-continental cooperation, including through a UNEP knowledge exchange hub to scale implementable solutions and build human capacities required for AI.

Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP, highlighted the recently established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP), emphasizing that it is an opportunity for African countries to voice their priorities and concerns in guiding



Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP

the Panel's future work. She underlined the policy relevance of the ISP-CWP, highlighting that, as with IPCC and IPBES, it will serve to generate science, but can also be leveraged to develop effective and practical solutions addressing the intersection of environmental, social, and economic priorities and challenges.

In the ensuing discussion, MAURITIUS said their country: had deployed AI systems for climate smart agriculture and a real-time air-quality monitoring system; is building a real time model of the country to support disaster risk reduction and early warning; and is establishing a national digital transformation office. They underscored the importance of pan-African solidarity and collaboration on ethical AI deployment, underlined that digital technologies can transform lives, and welcomed learning from best practices from around the world.

GHANA urged Africa to focus on building AI infrastructure on the continent, lamenting the lack of investment in environmental data in most African countries. They called for investments for research and development, focusing on education to build the human resource base to effectively deploy digital technology and AI. They also called for dedicated funding for AI development and policy coherence to begin "walking the talk."

KENYA noted that digitization has transformed monitoring, review, and verification of environmental services, and urged partners to support capacity building of AI systems to promote local solutions. They noted that Kenya, with 90% renewable energy, is primed to be a hub for AI data centers.

TOGO called for financing for digital technologies, underlining the need for modern financing solutions through multilateral development banks (MDBs) and the private sector. They called for a common and harmonized approach to green bonds and to carbon markets.

ZIMBABWE underlined the opportunities for AI in managing climate change, biodiversity loss, and waste management, and sharing their country's use of Geographic Information System (GIS) data in biodiversity management. They also discussed national integration of innovation into the education system, calling on development partners and the private sector to invest in digital technologies and AI infrastructure, education, and training.

NAMIBIA called for, among other things, a pan-African investment in upskilling women and youth in digital technologies and AI, and the deployment of ethical AI.



Ali Mohamed, Special Envoy on Climate, Kenya



Leila Benali, Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, Morocco

Minerals Critical for the Energy Transition in Africa:

During this session, panelists considered how to mobilize Africa's mineral wealth. Morocco's Minister Benali underlined the need for a tailored environmental and social governance (ESG) framework considering the scale of the challenge at hand. She pointed to the estimated 42 critical minerals and metals required for the energy and digital transition, noting a sharp increase in production for several critical materials forecasted over the next six years. She highlighted a "for and by" Africa origination, transit, and certification (OTC) corridor launched by Morocco to finance the energy transition's extracting and processing needs while meeting environmental and social safeguards. Benali further emphasized that the OTC corridor provides opportunities for South-South cooperation as well as creating an enabling environment for mineral processing and certification to take place within Africa.

Aggarwal-Khan underlined that Africa is a key player in the minerals value chain, and pointed to common challenges such as value-addition, job creation, and deploying better standards across the value chain. She emphasized that harmonized standardization across countries and better disclosure and transparency mechanisms facilitate private sector engagement. Aggarwal-Khan also noted trends indicating interest from the private sector in responsibly sourced materials such as post-consumer minerals, which contribute to a circular economy.

She further outlined standardization and classification mechanisms, including the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management, and the AU's Pan-African Resource Reporting Code. She stressed these tools can enable governments to enact fiscal policies that increase the sustainability of their mining sectors.

Highlighting that Africa is home to 30% of the world's critical minerals, Deborah Mlongo Barasa, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya, underlined that this presents an opportunity for the continent as a leader in sustainable mineral supply chains. She called on AMCEN to play a role in ensuring that these minerals are sustainably managed while still enhancing local and national development plans, underlining the need for social safeguards standards, and support

for research in alternative minerals. She highlighted Kenya's initiatives to ensure sustainable mining practices and green mineral supply chains, including biodiversity offsetting initiatives, protected areas where mining is prohibited, and surveillance to detect illegal mining.

Jacques Assahoré Konan, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition, Côte d'Ivoire, shared the country's vision of making the extractive industry a driver for sustainable development. He pointed to: a national integrated policy for mining and energy resources, to ensure ecosystem preservation; an accelerated deployment of and investment in renewable energy resources; and the promotion of local integrated value chains for extractives. He called on the AU to be a key player in the global energy transition and in value addition in the global mineral value chain.

Ève Bazaiba Masudi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, DRC, underlined the high environmental, social, and human rights impacts of mineral extraction and exploitation methods in the DRC, and stressed delegates' responsibility to consider establishing ecocide as an international crime. She emphasized the importance of traceability throughout the minerals value chain, noting that implementing a process similar to the Kimberley Process (established to eliminate trade in "conflict diamonds") for the materials required for the energy transition could ensure its sustainability.

Masudi further underscored the need to enable Africa to develop itself, calling for capacity building to localize material processing. She noted that localization could facilitate African countries' accessibility to, and deployment of, the renewable energy technologies of the transition.

Peter Lavahun, High Commissioner of Sierra Leone to Kenya, outlined national efforts undertaken, building on lessons learned, to address the mining sector's social and environmental impacts. He noted that past challenges faced included environmental degradation, pollution, community displacement, and conflict. He further listed economic challenges, including limited fiscal terms and revenue generation, weak enforcement of royalty payments, and poor tax compliance in remote regions. Lavahun highlighted that Sierra Leone's Environmental Protection Agency and recently launched National Minerals Agency, as well as updated national legislation and regulations, work to improve transparency and enforce environmental safeguard compliance and monitoring activities by mining companies.

In the ensuing discussion, REPUBLIC OF CONGO lamented that Africa is rich in strategic resources but poor in economic returns. They affirmed the need to recognize ecocide as a crime, urging continental cooperation on this to discourage unsustainable extraction and destructive mining practices. They called for an African alliance for sustainable minerals, and underlined that the energy transition should be carried out with and for Africa.

TANZANIA drew attention to the launch of the country's sustainable development 2050 vision underpinned by environmental integrity and climate change resilience. They called attention to opportunities for green industrialization in Africa if well managed, stating that this could position Africa as a global leader in manufacturing and exporting clean energy technologies. They emphasized the need for regional mineral value chains,



Ève Bazaiba Masudi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, DRC

the negotiation of fairer contracts with international mining companies, and regional cooperation to prevent dumping.

SOUTH AFRICA underscored the importance of the platinum group metals in the global energy transition, and that this is deeply rooted in Africa's inalienable right to development. They reported that several G20 countries are striving to secure these minerals at the expense of African countries, underlining that Africa cannot be relegated to the position of global supplier. They highlighted the push by developed countries at UNEA for a new internationally legally-binding instrument to cover minerals and metals, with developing countries calling for this to encompass the entire life cycle of minerals which would ensure environmental and social protections.

BURUNDI underlined the importance of extractive industries respecting environmental protections and called for AMCEN to support listing ecocide as a crime. They called on the Conference to discuss sustainable ways to extract minerals located below forests.

NAMIBIA pointed to the country's green hydrogen projects, emphasizing that Africa must be more than a global supplier of raw materials. They stressed that over 600 million Africans lack electricity, underlining that critical minerals should be extracted first to benefit the continent. They called for a regional green mineral alliance to coordinate ethical sourcing and market access.



Jean Kegnolot, Republic of Congo

MALI stressed the opportunities and challenges in the extraction of critical minerals, outlining that several conditions must be met for the continent to do this successfully. They pointed to the need for: green financing; investments in research and training; addressing corruption within the extractives sector; a shared, sustainable vision for the management of the continent's mineral resources.

Moderator Rukikaire thanked delegates for their active engagement and closed the ministerial dialogues.

Consideration of the AMCEN-20 Draft Declaration, Decisions, and Key Messages

On Thursday, Robert Wabunoha, AMCEN Secretariat, announced that the Technical Segment had completed its work, agreeing on 11 decisions and the Tripoli Declaration. The Ministerial Segment then adopted the decisions, which are summarized below.

Omnibus Decision: The omnibus decision on integrated environmental governance and strategic cooperation in Africa (AMCEN/20/Dec.1) was adopted without amendment. The decision recognizes the need for solutions-oriented action on environmental sustainability and prosperity in Africa and contains six sub-decisions.

The sub-decision on **advancing sustainable soil health for nature and resilient food systems in Africa** addresses the need for an integrated regional approach to promote cross-sectoral sustainable soil management, including by developing a model law on soil governance. African environment ministers request UNEP, in collaboration with partners, to develop guidelines for a soil governance legal framework in Africa. They call on member states to prioritize sustainable soil management in national policies, legal systems, and development plans, in alignment with their NDCs, NAPs, and NBSAPs.

They further:

- request member states to enhance institutional coordination, including by fostering cross-ministerial and sectoral collaboration;
- encourage them to enhance public awareness and build technical expertise and capacity; and
- urge them to integrate soil health indicators into relevant national monitoring frameworks in alignment with global environmental commitments.

In the sub-decision on **strengthening the Rules of Procedure of AMCEN**, the ministers decide to maintain the existing Rules of Procedure and request the AMCEN Secretariat to consult with member states with a view to identify areas requiring revision by AMCEN-21.

The sub-decision on **enhancing collaboration between ministers responsible for environment and ministers responsible for finance or for planning and economic development** builds on the AMCEN-19 Addis Ababa Declaration's call for strengthened partnerships between AMCEN and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Planning, alongside joint action on climate finance, sustainable budgeting, and green investments. The ministers decide to convene a joint ministerial session of both AMCEN and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Planning in 2027, and to establish a formal collaboration mechanism by means of periodic joint meetings and working groups to integrate environmental priorities



(L-R): **Ibrahim Munir**, Minister of Environment, Libya, and AMCEN-20 President; **Robert Wabunoha**, AMCEN Secretariat, and **Allan Meso**, AMCEN Secretariat

into national budgets and align fiscal policies with climate and sustainable development objectives.

Among other things, it further requests UNECA to develop a common framework on sustainable budgeting for nature-based solutions in Africa and encourages member states to develop high-integrity carbon market mechanisms and support capacity building for carbon accounting and climate project funding.

The sub-decision on the **date and venue of AMCEN-21** states that the ministers will convene AMCEN-21 as a joint session with the 58th session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Planning, with the venue and date to be determined by both Conference Bureaus.

In the sub-decision on **synergies among MEAs**, ministers request the AMCEN Secretariat, with the AU Commission (AUC), to strengthen coordination among the different African Groups of Negotiators. They also request the AUC to develop a programme for enhanced capacity and governance on implementing MEAs, and decide to promote collaboration between member states and the private sector to support MEA implementation.

In the sub-decision on the **ISP-CWP**, ministers request UNEP to convene the first meeting of the ISP-CWP at UNEP headquarters, and that the ISP-CWP's Secretariat be based at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

Ocean Governance in Africa: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.2 on ocean governance in Africa, which was adopted without amendment, ministers:

- adopt the AU Ocean Governance Strategy and its Implementation Plan;
- request the AUC, in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD and UNEP, to host the African Ocean Conference biennially;
- establish an African Group of Negotiators on the Ocean;
- encourage member states to ratify or accede to the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), integrating its provisions into national development policies;
- request the AUC and UNEP to develop an African continental vision and roadmap for implementing the BBNJ Agreement; and
- call on partners and financial institutions to provide coordinated financial and technical support.

Strengthening Chemicals and Waste Governance: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.3 on strengthening chemicals and waste governance, which was adopted without amendment, ministers:

- reaffirm the importance of the Bamako Convention on hazardous wastes, calling for the timely convening of the fourth COP to the Bamako Convention;
- encourage member states, alongside partners, to finalize the Pan-African Strategy and Action Plan for the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes (2025-2035), and requests member states to integrate it into national chemicals and waste management strategies;
- requests the AUC and partners to establish an African task force on chemicals and waste governance, and explore establishing a regional multi-stakeholder forum on chemicals and waste management in Africa;
- urges member states to prioritize and implement actions on open dumping and burning of waste, and requests them to enlarge their participation in relevant global negotiations; and
- requests the BRS Conventions Secretariats and relevant regional centers to coordinate capacity-building activities, including laboratory accreditation programmes and digital platforms for tracking transboundary movements and illegal shipments.

The decision further encourages member states to: establish or strengthen national multi-stakeholder committees on chemicals and waste management; establish a multi-stakeholder initiative to develop standards on the environmental sound management of used lead acid batteries; support the launch of a Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides; and promote private sector investment, circular economy models, and innovative financing mechanisms to support integrated chemicals and waste management systems.

Africa's Participation at CITES CoP20: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.5 on Africa's participation at CITES CoP20, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers:

- endorse the operational framework of the African Group of Negotiators on Wildlife, calling on it to finalize and adopt a common African position on all key agenda items for CITES CoP20, annexed to the decision, and, with the AUC and other partners' support, calling on it to establish a structured African-led dispute resolution and consensus-building mechanism on the conservation and wildlife trade of the African elephant and other species;
- encourage member states to strengthen legal and scientific capacity to undertake non-detriment and legal acquisition findings;
- urge member states to increase financial, technical, and diplomatic investment in wildlife conservation, including by mobilizing national GEF allocations and exploring establishing a dedicated fund, among others; and
- calls on partners to support Africa's coordinated participation in the Convention, including through capacity building for negotiators, engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and promoting community-based innovative nature conservation models beyond ecotourism and sustainable wildlife use.

Africa's key policy messages to CITES CoP20 are annexed to the decision.

Africa's Participation at Ramsar COP 15: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.6 on Africa's participation at Ramsar COP 15, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers encourage member states to:

- intensify efforts to halt further wetland degradation;
- promote sustainable use;
- increase awareness and scientific research;
- address policy and institution gaps in wetland management;
- strengthen regional cooperation and synergies for transboundary wetlands management; and
- actively participate in the forthcoming COP 15, articulating Africa's priorities on wetlands resources as contained in the annex, agreeing to "speak with one coordinated African voice" during negotiations on COP outcomes.

The ministers further:

- agree to support Zimbabwe as Chair of the Ramsar Standing Committee for the period 2025-2028;
- establish the African Group of Negotiators on Wetlands and mandate it to develop its operational modalities;
- encourage the AfDB, GEF, and GCF to collaborate with the Ramsar Secretariat in identifying and investing in opportunities for, among others, ecosystem-based restoration, nature-based solutions, low-carbon investments, and monitoring systems to support the implementation of national and transboundary wetlands restoration; and
- requests UNEP, financial partners, and others to collaborate with the Ramsar Secretariat to establish an African wetlands investment catalyst.

The decision contains an annex detailing African regional key policy messages on Ramsar COP 15 and implementation of the Convention in Africa.

Africa's Participation at the Minamata Convention on Mercury COP 6: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.7 on Africa's participation at Minamata Convention COP 6, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers call on African member states party to the Convention to:

- fully implement Decision MC-5/4, which mandates the phasing-out of key mercury-added products, as well as prevent any further importation of such products into the continent;
- support and expedite the development and enforcement of harmonized minimum performance and safety standards for energy-consuming products; and
- develop and enforce robust regulatory frameworks and monitor and control the importation and distribution of these products.

Regarding responsibly-sourced artisanal and small-scale gold mining, the decision further calls on African member states that are party to the Convention to: implement national action plans and establish and implement traceability and certification mechanisms; and support the formalization of the sector, access to mercury-free technologies, and the establishment of regional centers of excellence for training and knowledge sharing.

The ministers:

- request the African Group of Negotiators on Chemicals and Waste to develop a common African position for COP 6 that reflects the need for strengthened compliance mechanisms,

export restrictions, and enhanced financial and technical assistance for African parties;

- request the AUC, with UNEP's support, to coordinate the development of a regional roadmap for mercury-free and energy efficient products and their markets in Africa;
- invite development partners and financial institutions to provide targeted support, including to enforce the Bamako Convention on hazardous wastes; and
- request the Minamata Convention Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP, to establish a regional coordination mechanism to, among other things, facilitate information exchange and stakeholder engagement, and monitor implementation.

The decision further encourages member states to promote synergies and coordinated implementation across international chemicals and waste conventions, and to enhance cooperation to address transboundary illegal trade in mercury.

The annex contains Africa's key policy messages to COP 6 to the Minamata Convention.

Climate Change: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.8 on climate change, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers, decide to, among other things:

- call for further implementation of the global goal on adaptation, including the adoption of a decision on indicators to achieve the goal, particularly those related to means of implementation;
- call for enhanced support for the formulation, implementation, and financing of NAPs, as key instruments for building resilience to climate change, and urge UNFCCC COP 30 to reach a decision on means of implementation, including on finance, technology transfer, and capacity building;
- stress the need for the delivery of climate finance commitments by developed country Parties under the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, as well as the need for grant-based resources for African countries, particularly for the implementation of adaptation actions; and
- urge developed country Parties to honor and deliver on their financial obligations, including by ensuring the provision of adequate, predictable, and accessible climate finance.

The ministers also, *inter alia*:

- welcome the Baku to Belem Roadmap to USD 1.3 Trillion as a step towards closing the finance gap;
- call for the further capitalization of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage with sufficient, new, additional, and predictable resources to meet the urgent needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;
- recognize that Africa is endowed with resources and strategic minerals that can support the just transition of African countries, and to emphasize the need for a continental cooperative mechanism to enhance climate mitigation, just resilience, and the economic development interests of African countries;
- underscore that the Just Transition Work Programme must go beyond discussions and deliver concrete outcomes towards implementation that supports access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy; and
- urge the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change to continue working with Parties and the incoming COP 30

Presidency to reach further decisions that recognize Africa's special needs and circumstances under the Paris Agreement.

The key messages on the African position to UNFCCC COP 30 are annexed to the decision.

Africa's Participation in UNEA-7: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.9 on Africa's engagement at UNEA-7, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers decide to, *inter alia*:

- mandate the African Group in Nairobi to actively participate in all relevant preparatory processes for UNEA-7, including the OECPR and other intergovernmental and expert-level fora, with the aim of safeguarding and promoting Africa's interests;
- endorse AMCEN's key messages for the African Group's engagement in the OECPR and at UNEA-7;
- mandate the African Group in Nairobi to continue engaging in discussions on the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (2026-2029) and Programme of Work (2026-2027), ensuring that African priorities and perspectives are fully integrated;
- call on the African Group in Nairobi to consider and, in line with agreed AMCEN priorities and decisions, to develop draft resolutions to be submitted under the African Group's name and to coordinate positions in negotiating them; and
- encourage the African Group to put forward an African-sponsored resolution on enhancing the responsible and sustainable management of minerals, including critical minerals, for a just and equitable energy transition to ensure that resources are benefiting the communities.

Key messages on Africa's engagement at UNEA-7 are annexed to the decision.

Draft Protocol on Drought: In decision AMCEN/20/Dec.12 on the drought protocol under the UNCCD in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, which was adopted without amendment, the ministers decide to, among other things:

- establish a continental monitoring mechanism to track restoration and rehabilitation progress and promote knowledge exchange on drought interventions and resilience strategies;
- request the UNCCD, in collaboration with other partners, to operationalize the continental monitoring mechanism and report to AMCEN-21;
- nominate South Africa as Africa's champion, leading up to UNCCD COP 17, supported by co-champions on the drought protocol; and
- encourage member states, at the highest possible political levels, to disseminate key political messages at every available forum, including at the UN General Assembly, to promote support for a legally binding protocol on drought management ahead of and including at UNCCD COP 17.

Africa's Priorities for 2025-2027: In their discussion on AMCEN/20/Dec.4 on Africa's priorities for 2025-2027, the DRC suggested, and delegates agreed to establish an *ad hoc* committee to examine the classification for the massive destruction of environmental ecosystems during the period 2025-2027. They adopted the decision with this amendment.

Biodiversity: In their discussion on AMCEN/20/Dec.10 on biodiversity, the DRC proposed to include armed conflict as a driver of biodiversity loss. Delegates adopted the decision with this amendment.

Tripoli Declaration

On Thursday, Wabunoha noted that the Technical Segment had been unable to agree on all parts of the Tripoli Declaration on Environmental Action in Africa. He pointed to a proposal by Ethiopia to hold an extraordinary special session of AMCEN, just prior to the second Africa Climate Summit in Addis Ababa in September 2025, to ensure AMCEN decisions on climate are reflected in the Summit's outcomes.

Following concerns raised by Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Burkina Faso, and Ghana regarding timing and costs, and clarifications sought on the objective and added value of convening the extraordinary meeting, and legal clarification provided by the Secretariat, ETHIOPIA noted there was precedence for convening extraordinary AMCEN sessions. They underlined the urgency of addressing climate issues prior to the ordinary sessions of the Conference.

MOROCCO proposed a compromise, to convene a high-level meeting of environment ministers on the first day of the second Africa Climate Summit, which was accepted by Ethiopia. Delegates then adopted the Tripoli Declaration as amended.

Final Decision: In the Tripoli Declaration on Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future, African ministers of environment declared their resolve to, *inter alia*:

- urge member states to, among others, prioritize, harmonize, and implement national and regional action plans and policies to combat desertification, land degradation, and drought, and call for a legally binding protocol on drought under the UNCCD;
- work collaboratively with ministers of finance to unlock new green investments and finance and facilitate targeted work on key environment and development priorities for Africa;
- encourage all member states to ratify or accede to the BBNJ Agreement and to integrate its provisions into national ocean governance frameworks;
- request the AUC and the Secretariat to explore establishing a regional multi-stakeholder forum on chemicals and waste management in Africa;
- strengthen and scale up circular economy approaches across Africa by integrating resource efficiency, waste reduction, and reuse into national and regional policies, fostering green job creation, and empowering where applicable subregional and national institutions to govern and monitor sustainable resource management;
- support the hosting of the permanent Secretariat of the ISP-CWP at UNEP headquarters;
- express appreciation to the African Group of Negotiators on Plastic Pollution for effectively representing Africa in the INC on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, and to reaffirm our commitment to actively participate in the resumed fifth session of the INC in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5 to 14 August 2025, so as to advance African interests and priorities;
- endeavor to harness Africa's critical mineral wealth in a manner that safeguards the environment, respects local community rights, and maximizes local benefits for a just and sustainable future, and to agree to develop continent-wide guidelines for environmentally and socially responsible critical mineral extraction and processing;

- commit to engaging with relevant national authorities to ensure sustainable financial contributions from member states to the AMCEN Trust Fund and UNEP's Environment Fund;
- pursue the reform of the international financial architecture to enhance access to climate finance, reduce costs of financing for climate change and development in Africa, and enhance the participation of African states in global financial arrangements; and
- agree to hold a high-level meeting of ministers responsible for the environment on the first day of the second Africa Climate Summit, which will convene from 8-10 September 2025.

Venue and Dates of AMCEN-21

Noting that the next ordinary session of AMCEN will occur jointly with the 58th session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, delegates agreed, on Thursday, that the AMCEN Secretariat, in consultation with both Conference Bureaus, will determine the date and venue of AMCEN-21.

Adoption of the Report of the Ministerial and Closure of the Meeting

On Thursday afternoon, the Secretariat outlined the draft report of the Ministerial Segment of the meeting, which delegates adopted in principle pending its finalization.

In their closing statements, EGYPT noted that AMCEN@40 pointed to the continent's unity and resilience, and that the journey proves that all multilateral efforts are integrated. ETHIOPIA reminded delegates about the second African Climate Summit to convene in Addis Ababa in September 2025.

COMOROS emphasized that sustainable development is "not a choice, but a condition to sustain humanity." They recalled the [2023 Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa](#), emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation.

Mozambique, for the AFRICAN GROUP IN NAIROBI, outlined key priorities for consideration at UNEA-7, among others:

- including desertification, land degradation, and drought among UNEP's global environmental priorities;
- strengthening the presence of UNEP regional and subregional offices in Africa;



Jeronimo Chivavi, Mozambique, speaking for the African Group in Nairobi

- the provision of adequate, accessible, and timely means of implementation;
- upholding the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities; and
- promoting the circular economy.

CABO VERDE underscored that environmental challenges are a threat to national security, including with respect to water stress and sea-level rise. They shared national policies to achieving over 50% renewable energy penetration by 2030 and called for a profound transformation of development models to achieve national development goals.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO shared that environmental vulnerabilities often reveal nature-based and innovative solutions to address climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, and soil pollution. They called for South-South and triangular cooperation, and for investment in youth to make Africa an example of green development.

The SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) underlined the importance of the sustainable use and conservation of the environment to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, and address food and water security, among other challenges. They underscored that the region's vulnerability to climate impacts is affecting all sectors, eroding progress in achieving national and regional development goals.

The DRC stressed that conflicts and wars directly contribute to environmental destruction, recalling their proposal that AMCEN-20 recognize ecocide as an international crime. They urged for sustainable peace in the region, and further highlighted efforts to establish a regional center of excellence on carbon credit markets.

SUDAN decried the environmental genocide taking place in their country, stressing the multiple human, social, and environmental costs of the ongoing conflict, including land degradation, pollution, and the loss of national genetic resource banks and collections. They underlined that the environment "knows no borders."

KENYA commended the meeting's honest and forward-thinking discussions, noting AMCEN-20 showcased Africa's innovate spirit. They emphasized the need for novel and aligned approaches to sustainable and climate-resilient financing.



Ibrahim Munir, Minister of Environment, Libya, and AMCEN-20 President

Mrema commended delegates for their work and on reaching a positive end to AMCEN-20, noting that "we now have our marching orders" to implement Africa's priorities for the environment for the next biennium. AMCEN-20 President Munir then gavelled the meeting to a close at 7:40 pm.

AMCEN@40 Report

On Friday, the high-level special session to celebrate the 40th anniversary of AMCEN opened with a rousing traditional performance by drummers from Burundi, followed by a video commemorating the four decades of AMCEN's history.

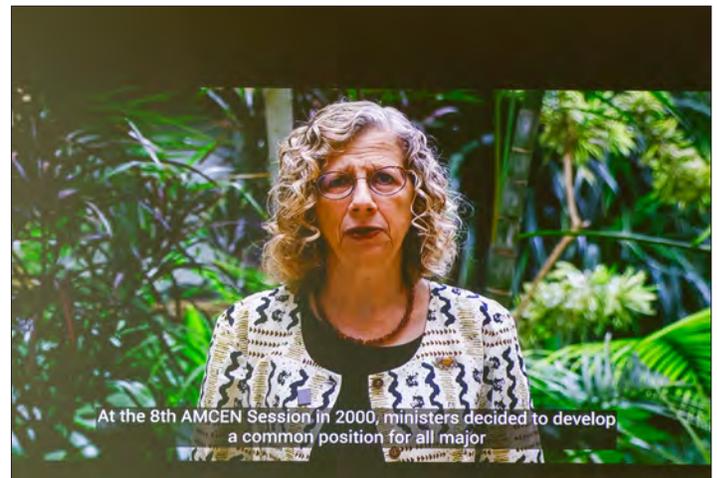
Statements

Delegates then heard video messages celebrating AMCEN's anniversary. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, recalled that AMCEN shaped pivotal regional environmental agreements and initiatives, including the Bamako Convention on hazardous wastes and the Great Green Wall Initiative. She welcomed the Tripoli Declaration, noting it commits AMCEN to safeguarding Africa's natural capital, advancing green growth, and empowering communities for environmental stewardship.

Fitsum Assefa Adela, Minister of Planning and Development, Ethiopia, and AMCEN-19 President, underlined AMCEN's role as the foremost environmental platform for policy, dialogue, and action. She emphasized that AMCEN must continue strengthening partnerships and accelerating action to advance Africa's development and environmental goals.

Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary, UNECA, emphasized AMCEN's instrumental role in shaping global environmental governance, including through creating a unified voice representing the continent's priorities. He called for the next chapter to be bold and transformative, continuing to align with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Delivering his statement both by video message and in-person, Kevin Kariuki, Vice President, Power, Energy, Climate, and Green Growth, AfDB, highlighted that AMCEN and the AfDB share common goals, of achieving a prosperous, low-carbon, and climate-resilient future for Africa. Kariuki noted several initiatives, including the Climate Action Window and Mission 300, contributing to a just transition.



Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP

Rose Mwebaza, Director and Regional Representative for Africa, UNEP, underscored that AMCEN's founding vision, of putting Africa's environment at the heart of development, dignity, and destiny, is more critical than ever. She called for this anniversary to be a turning point for reimagining Africa as a continent of solutions, rather than one defined by crisis.

Moderator Keishamaza Rukikaire, Global Head of News and Media, UNEP, then opened the in-person segment of the session. AMCEN-20 President Ibrahim Munir, Minister of Environment, Libya, emphasized that AMCEN has stood as a beacon of unity, championing Africa's priorities, and forged partnerships that empowered countries to act boldly in the face of the triple planetary crisis. He invited delegates to envision a future where Africa leads the way in environmental stewardship.

Abdullah bin Ali Al-Amri, Chair of the Environmental Authority, Oman, and UNEA-7 President, underscored that AMCEN has been a cornerstone for African environmental governance and leadership, as well as a symbol of regional solidarity against shared environmental challenges. He called for AMCEN to continue championing an inclusive and just green transition for Africa.

Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General, UN Office at Nairobi (UNON), highlighted that "when Africa speaks with one voice, it reflects the continent's needs and aspirations." She underscored that Nairobi is now the seat of global environmental government and that the next decade must be one of action, for the sake of the next generation of Africans who deserve a fairer, greener future.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, lauded AMCEN's historic role in shaping global environmental and chemicals management negotiations, and its current role in the negotiations on a treaty to end plastic pollution. She shared that the Africa Green Stimulus Programme had mobilized over USD 1 million for long-term development, and pointed to the recently launched [African Circular Economy Alliance](#), noting that "together we can ensure a sustainable future for generations to come."

Noting that this was his last mission and highlighting that Africa has the key to sustainable development, Ibrahim Thiaw, outgoing Executive Secretary, UNCCD, underlined that, at age 40, AMCEN can either "choose to decline, or to soar and thus address the needs of millions of Africans." He called on the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) to prioritize action on land degradation, sharing that the solution to sustainable development will come "from land, and from the heart."

AUC Commissioner Moses Vilakati applauded AMCEN for fostering solutions that are grounded in African realities, urged stronger cooperation between AMCEN, the African Group of Negotiators, and CAHOSCC. He called on states to use modern technology and traditional knowledge to craft solutions that work for the continent.

Deborah Mlango Barasa, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya, delivered the keynote speech on behalf of Kenya's President. She stated that the Conference has championed landmark platforms, forged partnerships, and inspired generations. Barasa called on states to remain steadfast in the fight against environmental degradation,



Deborah Mlango Barasa, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya, and **Ibrahim Munir**, Minister of Environment, Libya, and AMCEN-20 President

pointing to opportunities to address this by harnessing the continent's natural capital, youthful energy, and traditional knowledge.

AMCEN@40 Legacy Report

Minister Barasa and AMCEN-20 President Munir then unveiled the report, [AMCEN@40: A Legacy of Environmental Diplomacy and Leadership in Africa](#), which was prepared to commemorate the Conference's 40th anniversary.

Congratulating AMCEN for reaching this milestone, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD, highlighted AMCEN's close partnership with the development agency. She made calls to: revolutionize climate finance with innovative financing mechanisms; strengthen institutional capacity across the continent; harness the power of the youth, "who are the drivers of a just and green transition today"; deepen regional integration to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution; and position Africa as a global leader in the global green transition. Urging ministers to commit to bold action, she opined that, although the journey from Cairo to Nairobi has been remarkable, the best of AMCEN is yet to come.

Jessika Roswall, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, emphasized that joint, global challenges cannot be tackled alone, calling for scaling up collective efforts and knowledge exchange. Noting that a clean economy is a productive and competitive one, she welcomed Africa's leadership and the recent launch of the African Union's [Continental Circular Economy Action Plan](#).

Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, CBD, applauded AMCEN and delegates' commitment to decoupling socioeconomic progress from the root causes of the triple planetary crisis, and highlighted synergies between the 2063 Agenda and the objectives of the GBF. She underscored the importance and impact of Africa's well-coordinated positions in contributing to biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use, and expressed her hope for AMCEN to "go from strength to strength."

Matthias Naab, Director, Regional Service Centre for Africa, UN Development Programme (UNDP), underlined AMCEN's role as a platform for defining, defending, and delivering Africa's priorities, notably by empowering negotiators to bring a unified position to international environmental fora, that is grounded in African realities and strengthened South-South cooperation. Naab stressed that the triple planetary crisis requires reimagining development pathways and strengthened global partnerships.

Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General, CITES, highlighted the importance of strengthened multilateralism in the face of global uncertainties, and stressed the centrality of Africa to global environmental diplomacy. She applauded the recent operationalization of the African Group of Negotiators on Wildlife and the AMCEN-20 decision on Africa's participation at CITES, noting these will amplify Africa's impact on the global conservation stage.

Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention, emphasized that Africa is well-placed to understand the value of water, welcoming the AMCEN decision on wetlands. She highlighted Ramsar Convention COP 15, taking place in Zimbabwe immediately following AMCEN-20, as an opportunity for enhancing Africa's leadership in protecting critical wetland environments.

Catherine Koffman, Director, Department of the Africa Region, GCF, highlighted milestones achieved in AMCEN's history, noting the importance of the Africa Environment Outlook reports in guiding policymakers. She welcomed delegates' continued engagement with the GCF and pointed to opportunities for accelerated impact in building a more resilient and sustainable future for Africa.

IPCC Chair Jim Skea welcomed the critical work of AMCEN in representing the continent in key agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, and acknowledged AMCEN's role in championing science and knowledge to guide climate action. He noted that IPCC reports have informed AMCEN's work, including by highlighting specific climate vulnerabilities on the continent. Skea explained that, with more African authors, the forthcoming seventh assessment report will have a greater focus on adaptation, equity, just transition, and loss and damage.

IPBES Chair David Obura noted that the Platform has produced several assessments and reports, including one focused on Africa. He pointed to the Nexus Assessment and the Transformative Change Assessment and welcomed the opportunity to work with regional bodies, including AMCEN, to address context-specific challenges.

Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, speaking on behalf of UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell, lauded AMCEN for shaping the global agenda on climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development, sharing that it has spearheaded the calls for climate finance. She highlighted the UNFCCC's commitment to working with African countries and welcomed delegates to the "People's COP" in Brazil in November 2025.

Jeronimo Chivavi, Mozambique, for the African Group in Nairobi, commended AMCEN for its role in fostering regional cooperation and providing guidance on sustainable development



Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention

issues. He recognized the continued need for a strong African presence in global environmental governance, calling to forge a clear path forward and think outside the box to use the continent's natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Africans.

Ndeye Fatou Ndiaye, Major Groups and Stakeholders in Africa, lauded AMCEN for designating the first youth day, which was held on 10 July 2025. She called to integrate biodiversity and wetlands into all sectors and underlined the need for a plastics treaty that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, chemicals of concern, and a just transition. She also encouraged ministers to support meaningful stakeholder engagement at the national level in preparation for UNEA-7.

Adoption of the High-Level Political Statement and Closure of the Meeting

Robert Wabunoha, AMCEN Secretariat, orally presented the High-Level Political Statement in Commemoration of AMCEN@40, wherein ministers, *inter alia*, commit to playing a leading role in safeguarding the continent's natural capital, and call on governments to embrace a whole-of-government approach in addressing environmental challenges.

AMCEN-20 President Munir proposed, and delegates agreed, to adopt the statement. Closing the session, he thanked delegates for their unwavering commitment to Africa's environmental future. He welcomed both the High-Level Statement and the AMCEN@40 Legacy Report and called on delegates to continue ensuring that Africa's natural heritage remains a source of life and dignity for all.

He closed the session at 12:54 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar COP 15): Delegates will address calls to align the Ramsar Convention's work more closely with the climate and biodiversity agendas, revisit a COP 14 proposal to delist Ramsar sites in disputed territories, and consider the draft fifth strategic plan, among other items. **dates:** 23-31 July 2025 **location:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe **www:** ramsar.org/meeting/15th-meeting-conference-contractingparties

Second Meeting of the BBNJ Preparatory Committee (PrepCom II): PrepCom II will continue its work on the cluster of issues agreed by the organizational session and discussions at its first meeting. **dates:** 18-29 August 2025 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/bbnjagreement

Second Africa Climate Summit: The second Summit will provide a platform to advance Africa's climate agenda and sustainable development priorities, with thematic areas including nature- and tech-based solutions and climate finance. **dates:** 8-10 September 2025 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **www:** africaclimatesummit2.et

27th Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 27): SBSTTA 27 will address matters of relevance to the implementation of the Convention and the GBF. **dates:** 20-24 October 2025 **location:** Panama City, Panama **www:** cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-27

First Meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) (SB8j 1): Held back-to-back with SBSTTA 27, the first meeting of the Convention's new Subsidiary Body will address matters related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. **dates:** 27-30 October 2025 **location:** Panama City, Panama **www:** cbd.int/meetings/SB8J-01

Second Part of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC-5.2): Delegates at INC-5.1 agreed to convene a resumed meeting of the fifth session to try to conclude negotiations on a treaty on plastic pollution. **dates:** 5-14 August 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5.2

Sixth Meeting of the COP to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP 6): COP 6 will review implementation of the Convention. **dates:** 3-7 November 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** minamataconvention.org/en/meetings/cop6

37th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (MOP 37): MOP 37 will continue to review implementation and strengthening of the Montreal Protocol. **dates:** 3-7 November 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** ozone.unep.org/meetings/thirty-seventh-meetingparties

2025 UN Climate Change Conference: This event will include the 30th session of the COP to the UNFCCC (COP 30), the 20th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 20), and the seventh meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Paris Agreement (CMA 7). **dates:** 10-21 November 2025 **location:** Belém, Brazil **www:** unfccc.int/cop30

20th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP20): CITES CoP20 will convene to review the implementation of the Convention. **dates:** 24 November - 5 December 2025 **location:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan **www:** cites.org/eng/cop/20

Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives Seventh Meeting (OECPR-7): The OECPR will convene to prepare for UNEA and pre-negotiate proposed resolutions, declarations, and decisions for endorsement and approval by the Assembly. **dates:** 1-5 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly/unea7/oepr7

Seventh Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7): UNEA-7 will convene under the theme "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet." **dates:** 8-12 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development
BBNJ Agreement	Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
BRS Conventions	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
EWS	Early Warning Systems
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISP-CWP	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OECPR	Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals