



AMCEN Bulletin

A summary report of the 11th regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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SUMMARY OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT: 22-26 MAY 2006

The eleventh session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) took place from 22-26 May 2006 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo. The meeting opened with an expert group segment, which considered progress made on the implementation of past decisions, AMCEN's 2004-2006 programme of work, and the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The experts also discussed emerging issues such as AMCEN's 2007-2008 work programme, its revised constitution, and the status of AMCEN's General Trust Fund.

The expert group segment was followed by a high-level segment, whereby Ministers of the environment from across Africa, in addition to delegates from major inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, engaged in a policy dialogue to discuss pressing issues affecting the continent. Based on input from the expert group segment, the ministerial segment emerged with the adoption of 11 decisions and the Brazzaville Declaration, which seek to further AMCEN's goal of halting environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development in Africa. Several major environmental governance and finance issues were debated at length, most notably the prospects for the establishment of an African Environmental Facility for financing environmental activities in Africa.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMCEN AND OTHER RELATED CONFERENCES

AMCEN

AMCEN is a permanent forum of African environment ministers, created in Cairo in 1985 after the adoption of the Cairo Programme for African Co-operation. It is convened every two years, with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA) serving as its secretariat. AMCEN aims to halt environmental degradation and promote sustainable development in Africa by enhancing inter-governmental co-operation, in order to: provide advocacy for environmental protection and to ensure that basic human needs are met adequately and in a sustainable manner; ensure that social and economic development is realized at all levels; and guarantee that agricultural activities and practices meet the food security needs of the region.

AMCEN's current programme of work consists of 15 elements, including policy and advocacy, capacity-building, coastal and marine resources, and the African Environment Outlook process. Other work of AMCEN has included the establishment of regional scientific and technical committees and a network of national focal points, which have met with

mixed results on various thematic issues to advance the objectives of AMCEN in the region. It has facilitated the revision of the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention) and is taking measures to strengthen its linkages with the region's marine and coastal conventions (Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions). AMCEN also provides guidance to member countries on policies related to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

AMCEN-8: The eighth session of AMCEN took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 3-6 April 2000, and resulted in the Abuja Declaration and five decisions, pertaining to, *inter alia*, developing a common position regarding international environmental agreements, and developing strategic partnerships with donors, UN agencies and civil society. Ministers decided that UNEP should prepare an Africa Environment Outlook Report to provide a scientific assessment of the African environment and related policies and management programmes.

AMCEN SPECIAL SESSION-1: The first special session of AMCEN was held in Nairobi, Kenya on 16 October 2001 and resulted in several decisions. These included support for the Government of Morocco in hosting the seventh Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP-7), support for South Africa for hosting the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and a request to the UNEP Executive Director to ensure complementarity and harmonization between UNEP's work programme and the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

AMCEN-9: The ninth session of AMCEN took place in Kampala, Uganda from 1 to 5 July 2002, and resulted in the Kampala Declaration on the Environment for Development, which includes, *inter alia*, an emphasis on securing resources for the AMCEN General Trust Fund. This fund, established in accordance with Article 28 of the AMCEN Constitution, aims

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to strengthen cooperation between African governments for the purpose of halting environmental degradation and promoting sustainable development, and to provide financial support for AMCEN and implementation of its activities. At the ninth session, ministers also endorsed the framework of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, and officially launched the first African Environment Outlook.

AMCEN SPECIAL SESSION-2: The second special session of AMCEN took place in Maputo, Mozambique from 9-10 June 2003, and resulted in a ministerial decision endorsing the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. The meeting also provided guidance to the President of AMCEN on the modalities for submitting the action plan to the African Union Summit.

AMCEN-10: The tenth session of AMCEN took place in Sirte, Libya on 29 and 30 June 2004, and resulted in the Sirte Declaration on the Environment and Development and eight decisions. Both the Declaration and the decisions contain a strong emphasis on the implementation of the action plan of the environmental initiative of NEPAD, and on pursuing funding for AMCEN through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

AMCEN EXTRAORDINARY BUREAU MEETING: The extraordinary bureau meeting was held in Nairobi on 21 October 2005. The meeting considered issues related to preparatory meetings for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 7, and UNFCCC COP 11 and Meeting of the Parties 1 of the Kyoto Protocol. The meeting also considered the draft agenda and dates for AMCEN-11 and discussed progress made in the preparation of the Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-2) and the linkages between AMCEN and the African Union Commission (AUC).

OTHER RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

AU: The African Union (AU) resulted from a declaration made by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 9 September 1999, at Sirte, Libya. This was done with a view to accelerating the process of Africa's integration and enabling the continent to play a stronger role within the global economy, while addressing social, economic and political challenges. AU objectives include: achieving African unity and socioeconomic integration; defending member state sovereignty; promoting peace, security, good governance; protecting human rights; and achieving sustainable development.

AUC: The AUC is the AU's primary management body. It represents and defends the AU's interests, and prepares strategic plans and studies for the consideration of the AU's Executive Council. AMCEN is currently holding discussions with the AU's Secretariat on issues related to the harmonization and linkages between the Ministerial Conference and the AUC. It is expected by some that AMCEN will ultimately become a Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of the AUC.

NEPAD: The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an AU programme designed to meet development objectives, including poverty eradication, sustainable growth, integration into the global economy, and the empowerment of women. The NEPAD strategic framework originated from a mandate given by OAU to the five initiating Heads of State (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa) to develop an integrated socioeconomic development framework for Africa, and was adopted by the AU in July 2001 at the thirty-seventh Summit of the OAU in Lusaka, Zambia. The highest authority of the NEPAD implementation process is the Heads of State and Government Summit of the AU.

AMCEN has led the process for the development of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, which aims to reduce poverty and environmental degradation and thereby

promote African sustainable development. This was conducted in two phases: first, a framework for the action plan was developed and then endorsed by the First Summit of the African Union held in Durban, South Africa, in July, 2002. The second phase included workshops and a consultative meeting with civil society groups in early 2003, and resulted in the publication of the final action plan in October 2003. AMCEN has also led the implementation of the work programme of this initiative for the biennium 2005-2006.

MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: The UN Millennium Summit, held from 6-8 September 2000, in New York, adopted the Millennium Declaration, which contains a number of international development goals. The themes contained in the Millennium Declaration were elaborated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as contained in the September 2001 Report of the Secretary-General on the Road Map towards the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The MDGs, which have become commonly accepted as a framework for measuring progress in development, comprise eight overarching goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators.

WSSD: The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), which contains a strong focus on poverty eradication and a dedicated chapter on sustainable development in Africa; and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, which affirms global commitment to sustainable development and also recognizes NEPAD.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 14-16 September, with over 100 Heads of State meeting to develop an action plan for promoting international security and to achieve the MDGs by 2015. It resulted in an outcome document that contains many elements relevant to Africa, including debt relief, support for South-South cooperation, and funding climate change adaptation in the developing world. Most notably, it includes a section on meeting the special needs of Africa, including support for the development of an international infrastructure consortium involving the AU, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

REPORT OF AMCEN-11: EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT 22-24 MAY

OPENING OF THE EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT

Sekou Touré, UNEP ROA, described AMCEN's evolution, noted its achievements in promoting African interests, and said it has guided the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

Foday Bojang, AUC, delivered a statement on behalf of Babagana Ahmadou, Director, AUC Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, noting the AUC's close cooperation with AMCEN and the potential for the streamlining of environmental work and policy making.

Mohamed Hamouda, Technical Advisor, Environment General Authority of Libya, on behalf of Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer, Minister of Environment of Libya and President of AMCEN, observed that many African countries are unlikely to achieve the targets set out under the MDGs and called for Africa to continue addressing ongoing environmental degradation. He explained that the main objective of the meeting was to provide a platform to review the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD and MDG Goal 7 on environmental sustainability. Hamouda noted that AMCEN's future role within

the evolving structure of AUC would be discussed at AMCEN-11, as well as the NEPAD follow-up process relating to UNEP's Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

Henri Djombo, Republic of Congo Minister of Forest Economy and the Environment, reaffirmed his country's commitment to address environmental challenges, and called for the development of financing mechanisms for the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The expert group segment was conducted under the auspices of the Bureau of AMCEN-10, with Mohamed Hamouda as chair and Saadeldin Izzeldin (Sudan) as rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: The Expert Group adopted its agenda without amendment (UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/11/1), and established working groups according to the following themes: AMCEN's draft revised constitution (UNEP/AMCEN/11/5); draft indicative work programme of AMCEN for the 2007-2008 biennium (UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/11/4); implementation of the Rio Conventions and the Africa Outlook Process; and the Brazzaville Declaration (UNEP/AMCEN/11/INF/1).

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE OF NEPAD

Peter Acquah, AMCEN Secretariat, presented the Report of the Secretariat (UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/11/3), beginning with a description of the mandate of the organization to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa while ensuring that basic human needs are met. He described activities designed to fulfill this mandate, including the development of an action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, and the publication of the Africa Environmental Outlook Report. Acquah then described activities undertaken since AMCEN-10, including the status of implementation of decisions taken at that session and the programme of work. He provided an overview of the report on the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD (UNEP/AMCEN/11/3 Add.1), noting that several countries have communicated to the Secretariat their intent to implement select priority projects, and that Norway has offered to support one country from each African sub-region to develop its own action plan. He also said that a follow-up publication to the 2002 Africa Environment Outlook would be launched at AMCEN-11 in conjunction with UNEP. Acquah noted the threats posed by desertification, the destruction of wetlands, and climate change, and described AMCEN's engagement with relevant international agreements that seek to address these threats.

Acquah reported that AMCEN has begun to communicate with the AU on harmonizing activities and mandates pertaining to the environment (UNEP/AMCEN/11/4/Add.1) and lamented that the implementation of the AMCEN programme of work is currently constrained by a lack of resources (UNEP/AMCEN/11/5/Add.1). He described AMCEN's work, which has resulted in several projects designed to help African countries implement their obligations under international chemicals treaties, as well as activities that contributed to all countries in sub-Saharan Africa phasing out leaded gasoline use by December 2005. Regarding Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), he noted the successful development and adoption of a strategy and regulatory framework in conjunction with the AU (EX.CL/228 (VIII)). Acquah also noted other AMCEN Secretariat activities undertaken (UNEP/

AMCEN/11/3 Add.1) including numerous intersessional meetings, and the production of supporting documents. He concluded by noting several challenges that AMCEN must address, including the decline of Africa's natural resource base and unsustainable land degradation, the vicious poverty cycle, and HIV and malaria. Acquah also identified avian influenza as a growing concern.

CONSIDERATION OF THE AMCEN DRAFT INDICATIVE WORK PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2007-2008

Peter Acquah stated that the preparation of the work programme for AMCEN for the biennium 2007-2008 takes into account commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and decisions made at AMCEN-10. He outlined the various work programme components, including: capacity building; land degradation and desertification; coastal and marine environments; biodiversity and biosafety; climate change; sound management and sustainable use of chemicals; early warning and environmental security; environmental education and training; environmental impact assessment; integrated environmental management; poverty and environment; capacity-building and technology support in the context of Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; invasive alien species; and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

During the ensuing discussion, participants discussed the sustainable use of chemicals and the management of hazardous waste, and one participant observed that the disposal of electronic waste had yet to be considered adequately. Participants also discussed issues relating to the delay in convening the first Conference of the Parties (COP) 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, attributing this to ongoing institutional reform in the AU.

CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO AFRICA

Sekou Touré described the recently adopted strategic approach to international chemical management (SAICM) and the EU Green Wall for the Sahara initiative whose objective is to arrest the advance of the Sahara desert southwards and to improve the livelihoods of the inhabitants of the Sahelo-Saharan zone.

AFRICA REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR DRR: Foday Bojang stated that progress in reducing vulnerability to disasters is essential to achieving the MDGs and stated that a NEPAD workshop on disaster management in Africa in April 2003 had identified the need for an African Regional Strategy for DRR and a programme of action. He also said that an African consultative meeting on DRR in June 2003 recommended a baseline study and a regional strategy on DRR, noting that AMCEN-10 had adopted a decision concerning a draft Africa Regional Strategy for DRR.

Bojang said that the baseline study had identified five constraints to DRR, including: lack of institutional capacity; insufficient knowledge management; governance issues relating to inadequate involvement of stakeholders; inadequate risk identification and assessment; and inadequate emergency response capacity. He also noted that even where policies for integrating DRR into national development plans exist, disaster management strategies have yet to be implemented.

Highlighting the AU's programme of action for the implementation of the African DRR regional strategy for 2006-2010, he called for a strategic approach and identified operational mechanisms for the strategy, including: advocacy and resource

mobilization; capacity building in DRR and management; small-scale pilot projects for mainstreaming DRR into development programmes; and mainstreaming DRR in development programmes supported in cooperation with the African Development Bank (ADB) and others. Bojang clarified that the AU/NEPAD and ADB would guide the overall implementation of DRR with support from regional specialized agencies, civil society and UN organizations, and that the proposed activities would be conducted within a five-year timeframe.

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

UNCCD: Bettina Horstmann, UNCCD, noted that about 65% of the population was affected by land degradation and over 3% of agricultural GDP was lost annually to soil and nutrient depletion in Sub-Saharan Africa. She also highlighted the contribution of climate change to desertification with resulting consequences of hunger, poverty, conflicts and migration. Explaining that the exacerbation of desertification would have far-reaching implications on achieving MDG-1 on poverty eradication, she discussed the UNCCD's status and implementation and presented major outcomes of the review of African reports of the third UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) held in May 2005. She emphasized the need to disseminate success stories and lamented the lack of standardized systems for collecting data. Recalling the proceedings at UNCCD COP 7 in October 2005, she noted that decisions were made related to strengthening the implementation of the UNCCD in Africa, follow up of the Joint Inspection Unit report and follow up to strategy development to foster the implementation of the Convention. She explained that CRIC-5 would be held in Buenos Aires in October 2006 and would review implementation of the UNCCD from other regions apart from Africa. She noted with concern that only 10 out of 53 African countries had contributed to the UNCCD's core budget for 2006- 2007.

THE BAMAKO CONVENTION: Foday Bojang summarized plans for holding the first COP 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, in Bamako, Mali, in November 2006. He noted some delay in holding the meeting and that the meeting would focus on the formulation of rules and procedure, and on adapting documents from the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal to the African context.

SAICM STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FOR

AFRICA: Abilola Olanipekun, African Regional Focal Point for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), explained that the SAICM process was undertaken within the framework of the chemical safety goal adopted at the WSSD. She added that one of the key objectives was to position chemical safety as a mainstream sustainable development issue. She explained that the development of SAICM started in October 2003, and that AMCEN-10 adopted a decision emphasizing the need for African governments to prioritize sound chemicals management in national, sub-regional and regional planning. She went on to explain that SAICM was adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management held in Dubai in February, as a policy framework for international action on chemical hazards. She highlighted SAICM components which include the Dubai Declaration, an overarching policy strategy, and a global plan of action that sets out proposed "work areas and activities" for implementation of the strategic approach.

Olanipekun explained that the first step in the implementation phase is the designation of a SAICM national focal point in every country to sustain an integrated approach to managing chemicals and to facilitate communication, both nationally

and internationally. She noted the need to nominate regional representatives, explaining that the SAICM Secretariat is supporting an initial meeting of an African core group, comprising ten countries, in order to meet the challenges for effective implementation of SAICM within the African region. Olanipekun observed that the adoption of a SAICM decision at AMCEN-11 would facilitate access by African countries to the SAICM Quick Start Programme's trust fund, which is aimed at giving financial support to the implementation of national action plans. She also called for better integration of chemical issues in the wider sustainable development agenda at the national planning level and urged increased stakeholder engagement.

CONSIDERATION OF THE SECOND DRAFT REVISED CONSTITUTION OF AMCEN

Acquah explained that consideration of the second draft revised constitution of AMCEN had been deferred, due to the ongoing restructuring of the AUC.

STATUS OF THE GENERAL TRUST FUND FOR AMCEN

Peter Acquah lamented the inadequacy of contributions to the AMCEN General Trust Fund, but observed that the situation had improved with some countries paying more than what they had pledged. He went on to explain the mechanisms emanating from AMCEN-10 to overcome the difficulties relating to non-contribution and the introduction of an indicative scale, highlighting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the issue of voluntary contributions. He stressed that the burden of payment should be shared by all African states, but called on those that are greater financially endowed to increase their contributions.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

The expert group decided that this would be considered within the working groups and not as a separate agenda item.

SECOND AFRICA ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK REPORT

Charles Sebukeera, UNEP, presented the AEO-2 report, explaining that the process had been launched in March 2003. He explored the underlying theme of "environment for development," and described how the environmental sector can contribute to poverty reduction by addressing opportunities as well as threats.

THE GREAT GREEN WALL FOR THE SAHARA INITIATIVE

Foday Bojang presented the Great Green Wall initiative, designed to curb the spread of the Sahara desert, noting that although this concept has been attempted before by individual countries, this initiative is the first regional effort, stretching across the region. He noted that this initiative would go beyond conventional reforestation to address land rehabilitation in general, while contributing to poverty reduction.

Noting that this project was first conceived at AMCEN-10, he said it involves 20 countries threatened with desertification, covers 20 million hectares, and may implicate inter-basin water transfers. Bojang further stated that this would involve multiple sectors and transboundary collaboration. While acknowledging that this fits squarely within the mandate of the UNCCD, he also noted links with both the UNFCCC and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Bojang highlighted an upcoming report that will identify gaps and provide advice regarding implementation at the national levels. He remarked that although adequate political will exists, formidable challenges have presented themselves such as the sheer size of the area in question, difficulties associated with communicating with transient populations in the region, and

the variability of climate. He identified resource, mapping and information needs, and called for community mobilization to address desertification issues.

Cautioning against the use of “quick fix” options, Bojang highlighted the need for long-term solutions that build upon existing national efforts. He urged the use of a multi-sectoral stakeholder approach, which engages the private sector and draws upon local traditional knowledge. He added that it will be important to create ties with other institutions and initiatives, including TerrAfrica and the UNFCCC, and that transboundary collaboration will be essential, given the nature of shared ecosystems. He emphasized that compensation may be required in the form of cash or food where agriculture is affected and that external funding will be required for this.

Bojang proposed that a ministerial-level steering committee meet once each year to discuss the project, and that this could be supplemented by a technical committee of experts from participating countries and institutions. He added that this could be further complemented by multi-disciplinary national committees.

Morocco suggested the need for harmonization regarding environmental indicators used and the development of a common glossary, adding that the “green wall” concept is not new, and that any related statement contained within the Brazzaville Declaration should include reference to existing initiatives. Senegal suggested that institutional arrangements regarding the Great Green Wall should avoid duplicative efforts and the Union du Maghreb Arab (UMA) echoed this sentiment, noting that the Africa Programme of Action on Desertification is about to commence its second phase. Bojang reiterated that the project does not seek to duplicate existing initiatives, explaining that countries are at the forefront of implementation and that existing UNCCD platforms can be used.

AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY

Hany Shalaby, ADB, described the proposed development of an African Environmental Facility designed to provide funding for environmentally beneficial projects in Africa. He noted that in 2004 in Dakar, AMCEN discussed the financial implications of 80 priority projects and ways to mobilize funding, and discussed the option of ADB hosting such a fund. He said that UNEP is conducting a feasibility study to be completed and circulated in the next few weeks, after which the ADB Board of Directors will decide whether to proceed. He added that comments have been made that African countries have yet to fully benefit from the GEF, and that the problem lies with having too many funds and not enough funding.

EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT WORKING GROUPS

Working Groups (WG) were established at the outset of the expert group segment, and met on 23 and 24 May to discuss issues contained within the draft decisions and the proposed Brazzaville Declaration, including: AMCEN’s draft revised constitution; draft indicative work programme of AMCEN for the 2007-2008 biennium; implementation of the Rio Conventions; and the African Environmental Outlook process.

WORKING GROUP 1: WG1 reviewed draft decisions concerning: institutional linkages and harmonization of activities in the context of the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD; the AMCEN Constitution; and major elements of the proposed Brazzaville Declaration.

Regarding draft Decision 2 on institutional linkages, the proposal to integrate AMCEN within the AUC was discussed. Participants expressed a general interest in maintaining strong links with UNEP and other institutions, and identified the need to engage with civil society and the private sector. Issues relating

to the structure of AMCEN, the feasibility of it becoming a specialized technical committee (STC) under the AUC and the capacity of the AUC to accommodate AMCEN were debated at length by participants. Text on cooperation with other institutions was amended to reflect the desire to establish linkages between relevant institutions like the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW) under the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

On draft Decision 3 concerning AMCEN’s Constitution, WG1 members proposed that consideration of this issue should be suspended pending the completion of the restructuring of AUC and the outcomes of a relevant AU study. The group suggested that the AMCEN Secretariat should still report on the draft constitution at the next session.

WG1 members added text addressing the lack of continuity from one term to the next between the different AMCEN bureaux and providing for the immediate past President of the Bureau or at least one other member to attend the Bureau meetings in order to elaborate on AMCEN activities.

Morocco objected to text in draft decision 2 relating to AMCEN’s objective of becoming an STC, emphasizing that no objective has been defined by AMCEN and that the goal was to continue to strengthen links between AMCEN and the AU. Concerning AMCEN’s integration into the AU, he stressed that this had not yet been achieved and that the language of the text should reflect this. Peter Acquah responded by highlighting the background to AMCEN becoming an STC under the AUC, and explaining that in 2004, Heads of State requested the AUC to integrate the mandates and structures of AMCEN, AMCOW and the Ministerial Conference on Agriculture under the AUC. Togo highlighted issues relating to AMCEN’s role as an STC under the AU.

WORKING GROUP 2: WG2 was split into two groups. One group addressed draft decisions on: the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD; status and use of AMCEN’s General Trust Fund; and the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The other group addressed financial matters related to AMCEN and elements of the AMCEN work programme and agreed on minor amendments to preambular text and draft decisions concerning the integration of AMCEN within the AU, and text on urging continued cooperation with other institutions as well as with civil society and the private sector.

WG2 also created a new draft Decision 11 containing elements addressing the creation of an African Environmental Facility in order to strengthen the resolve to implement this proposed resource mechanism.

WORKING GROUP 3: WG3 addressed draft decisions related to SAICM, implementation of the Rio conventions, and the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative, as well as related text contained within the Brazzaville Declaration.

On draft Decision 5 concerning SAICM, Nigeria stressed the importance of including hazardous products such as electronic waste. Consensus was achieved within the group that language should be included that urges regional consultations on SAICM and the involvement of Basel Convention Regional Centers, and to change the focus from poverty “reduction” to “eradication.”

On draft Decision 8, regarding the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, WG3 added text urging the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to give Africa priority. On draft Decision 9 concerning the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative, WG3 agreed on the need to acknowledge previous efforts, particularly in the context of the UNCCD.

WG3 also considered several paragraphs contained within the draft Brazzaville Declaration, and agreed that the declaration should be strategic in nature and not overly technical. They also agreed to include a paragraph urging countries that have not already done so to sign and ratify the three Rio conventions.

Regarding text within draft Decision 10 concerning the GEF, several countries cautioned against suggesting an overly narrow focus on desertification, and urged calling on the GEF for a more equitable allocation of funding for Africa in general, with African countries playing a more active role. It was noted that the upcoming GEF Assembly meeting to be held in South Africa in August 2006 represents a good opportunity for this.

Egypt cautioned that the creation of an African Environmental Facility could give the GEF an excuse for decreasing funding for Africa. Guinea suggested mentioning that many worthy environmental projects are currently not being funded, and that although many countries have national action plans, these go largely unimplemented due to lack of funds. Uganda said the challenge is to ensure that finance ministers see environmental issues as high priorities. Zambia expressed concern regarding the absence of a decision that addresses the debt burden faced by many African countries and the relationship of this issue with environmental funding. Union du Maghreb Arab urged highlighting complementarity between the GEF and an African Environmental Facility.

WORKING GROUP 4: WG4 discussed draft Decision 6 concerning the Africa Environmental Outlook process and the Africa Environment Information Network, and draft Decision 7 on the integration of environmental dimensions into the implementation of the Africa regional strategy on DRR.

WG4 amended draft Decision 6 to include the sub-regional dimension to reflect the achievements of the African Environment Information Network. Emphasis was also placed on the sustainability of funding under the African Environmental Outlook and African Environment Information Network within the region.

The preamble of draft Decision 7 was revised to acknowledge that disasters may be human-induced, and text was added to encourage linkages within the UN system and the donor community.

FINANCING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES

Delegates convened on Wednesday, 24 May in an afternoon session moderated by Fatima Dia Touré (Senegal) to listen to two presentations regarding sustainable sources of financing for environmental programmes.

TERRAFRICA: Hany Shelaby, ADB, and Madame Raine Kohl, NEPAD, presented TerrAfrica, an initiative designed to enhance land use productivity as well as food security, with a view to scaling up sustainable land management in rural Africa. Hany noted that two-thirds of Africa's arid lands may be rendered non-productive by 2025, resulting in widespread migration from these areas, and a loss of US\$9 billion per year.

Shelaby highlighted ways to scale up sustainable land management, including by removing "barriers and bottlenecks" linked to: institutions, knowledge exchange, policy formation, finances, and delivery mechanisms. He described three sustainable land management activities associated with coalition building, information management, and investments. He then reviewed the definition of sustainable land management, noting the relationship between ecological and social functions and sustainability, and the importance of achieving both intra- and

inter-generational equity. Shelaby went on to explain that the ADB was represented in the executive committee of TerrAfrica and had been actively supporting it.

Kohl introduced the ADB's strategic investment programme, which aims to scale up the mainstreaming and financing of effective and efficient country-driven sustainable land management approaches. She explained that the strategic investment programme was conceived as a phased programme, supported by the GEF, which enabled beneficiaries to access GEF resources on a programmatic basis. Elaborating on the advantages of the strategic investment programme, Kohl explained that agencies were working with NEPAD on a full programme design for implementation.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING IN ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS IN AFRICA: Alain Lambert, UNEP, explained that sustainable development is often promoted without consideration of the financial sustainability of environmental projects, and that environmental activities often cease once funding is exhausted. He urged countries to learn from experiences in Latin America and Asia regarding improving financial sustainability. He discussed the AMCEN-proposed African Environmental Facility, clarifying that it is not intended as a funding mechanism, but as a vehicle for ensuring the sustainability of environmental activities with the potential to act as a magnet for attracting and absorbing funding. He made the distinctions between endowment funds, sinking funds and revolving funds.

Noting that financial mechanisms for payment for ecosystems services were promising, Lambert observed that debt could be swapped for the protection of nature, but cautioned that the process can be difficult. He also discussed the potential for carbon off-setting for Africa, reiterating that these initiatives would not work without the appropriate political will.

Participants highlighted the need for public awareness and the role of civil society in TerrAfrica. Fatima Dia Touré emphasized the need for political support and an enabling environment to move beyond rhetoric in terms of environmental funding. In response to questions regarding funding for implementation, Kohl said that TerrAfrica is more of a vehicle for addressing land degradation, noting the important role that civil society has played. Regarding linkages with NEPAD, she noted that they are putting together an action plan. Lambert invited participants to explore literature associated with debt-for-nature programmes, including "Debt Swaps for Sustainable Development," a paper he co-authored with Jürgen Kaiser for IUCN in 1996. He emphasized the importance of assessing the value of ecosystem services and knowing how to obtain payment for these. Fatima Dia Touré noted that very few African countries currently benefit from carbon credit programmes.

ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT

Expert Group Co-Chair Izzeldin presented the draft report of the expert group, which was adopted with minor modifications. Morocco expressed concern over text on the second draft revised constitution of AMCEN contained within draft decision 3, particularly regarding the integration of AMCEN as a technical arm of the AU.

Senegal observed that under draft Decision 11 concerning the African Environmental Facility, there should be a summary of the debate and methodology approach regarding the establishment of an African Environmental Facility involving finance and economic ministers, which takes into consideration the ADB's feasibility study of the proposed Facility.

APPROVAL OF DRAFT DECISIONS BY THE EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

On Wednesday, 24 May, the expert group read through the draft decisions and made minor changes. Text was forwarded to the AMCEN ministerial segment for consideration.

EXPERT LEVEL SESSION CLOSING CEREMONY

Sekou Touré, on behalf of UNEP, thanked the Republic of Congo for facilitating deliberations and recognized the Expert Group's accomplishments. Charles Sebukeera, UNEP Department of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), introduced the African Environment Outlook for Youth report. He explained that the AU for Youth process had involved over 3000 young people from over 41 countries. Rosebud Kurwijila, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, noted that the African Environmental Outlook report was the first comprehensive, integrated report on the African environment and that it had been repackaged in a youth-friendly format. She went on to explain that it was a timely initiative for engaging youth and that it is important for all stakeholders to play a role in addressing environmental concerns.

Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer, Libyan Minister of the Environment and President of AMCEN, closed the meeting by thanking the Government of the Republic of Congo for its hospitality, noting that this was the first time that an AMCEN meeting had been held in this sub-region. He observed that AMCEN had been reinvigorated, but that the challenge of maintaining the momentum remains.

REPORT OF AMCEN-11: MINISTERIAL SEGMENT 25-26 MAY 2006

OPENING CEREMONY OF MINISTERIAL LEVEL SEGMENT

In the afternoon of Thursday, 25 May, Isidore Mvoumba, Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo, on behalf of that country's President, Denis Sassou Nguesso, welcomed conference participants. He described Africa's huge development potential, but lamented that progress towards meeting the MDGs and achieving the objectives of environmental programmes has been hindered by lack of funding.

Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP Deputy Executive Director and Officer-in-Charge, observed that the ministerial segment of the AMCEN-11 would address important environment challenges facing Africa, focusing on key issues relating to financing for programmes and projects within the biennium work programme for 2007 -2008. He congratulated AMCEN for initiatives addressing environmental challenges, including the African Environmental Outlook, noting that this has expanded in terms of scope and interest to include the African Environmental Outlook for Youth report. Affirming UNEP's commitment to supporting AMCEN activities, Kakakhel expressed hope that synergies with AMCEN, AMCOW, the African Ministerial Conference on Energy and the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development would be enhanced. He also acknowledged China's contribution to the growth of South – South cooperation in relation to capacity building, disaster management and environmental assistance.

Len Good, GEF Chief Executive Officer, reiterated the GEF's support for AMCEN and NEPAD, drawing attention to the GEF Council meeting in June, which would consider work programmes and projects for approval totaling US\$600 million. He expressed hope that Africa would use its six GEF Council members to ensure that these projects were implemented.

Referring to the GEF Resource Allocation Framework, Good acknowledged that the framework was a concern for African countries, but added that allocation is transparent and based on environmental potential and performance. Regarding least developed countries, Good drew attention to funds available under the GEF for climate change adaptation and the cross-cutting programme on capacity building. He urged African countries to explore the lesser-known grants programmes under the GEF, and to attend the GEF Assembly to be held in South Africa in August 2006, stressing that the 4th GEF replenishment totaling US\$3 billion would be launched soon.

Zhu Guangyao, Chinese Vice-Minister of the Environmental Protection Administration, noted the longstanding relationship between China and Africa, and said that both regions share a parallel history of being subject to foreign exploitative influences. He remarked on the China–Africa Environment Conference held in 2002, and added that China continues to face the challenge of harmonizing environment and development efforts. Guangyao noted serious problems associated with pollutants and acid rain in Chinese rivers, soils, and coastal waters. He said that the Chinese population and energy consumption will continue to grow and that China wishes to continue South-South cooperation with other developing countries. He noted China's support for UNEP, as well as multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

Henri Djombo discussed how the forestry company Congolese Industrielle du Bois has successfully worked towards earning Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for one of its large forest concessions (267,000 hectares) in the Republic of Congo. He said this is the first such certificate in Africa, assuring sustainability of forest management, and empowering market access. He noted that obtaining certification remains a challenge that must be met. Heiko Leideker, Executive Director of the FSC, presented Congolese Industrielle du Bois with its certificate, noting that although this demonstrates that FSC certification is a viable option for developing countries, it is only the beginning, and called on governments to create an enabling environment and regulatory and financial incentives to nurture certification efforts. Leideker lamented that certified companies such as Congolese Industrielle du Bois are still forced to compete with companies that do not uphold the same environmental and social standards, and called on the international community to support FSC.

Rosebud Kurwijila stressed that the Sirte Declaration calls for the integration of AMCEN as an STC of the AUC and reiterated that the AUC was committed to the implementation of an integrated plan that would involve AMCEN, AMCOW, the African Ministerial Conference on Agriculture and other development partners.

Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer, thanked country donors for their support, particularly Norway and China. He also thanked UNEP, paying tribute to the past UNEP Executive Director, Klaus Töpfer, for championing AMCEN's agenda. He closed by launching a publication on the history of AMCEN from 1985 -2005.

Prime Minister Mvoumba closed the ceremony by noting the environmental challenges facing the international community such as drought, desertification, armed conflicts and population growth. He called for the mobilization of financial resources and continued support from developed countries in addition to harmonization of efforts and sharing of experiences concerning the Congo, Mekong and Amazon basins.

LAUNCH OF AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK REPORT II: Prime Minister Mvoumba announced the launch of the second edition of the African Environment Outlook report, and participants were shown a short film on African environmental issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The AMCEN Secretariat announced that the following members had been elected to the AMCEN Bureau: Guinea for West Africa; South Africa for Southern Africa; Republic of Congo for Central Africa; Egypt for Northern Africa; and Rwanda for East Africa. The Republic of Congo was elected President; South Africa, Guinea and Rwanda were elected as Vice-Presidents; and Egypt was elected Rapporteur.

Henri Djombo, as newly elected AMCEN President, congratulated the outgoing bureau for its excellent work, assuring members that AMCEN's obligations and work programmes would continue in this spirit.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: The ministers adopted the meeting's agenda without amendment (UNEP/AMCEN/11/1).

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: Henri Djombo introduced the draft programme of work and associated documents (UNEP/AMCEN/11/1/Add.1).

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP SEGMENT

Expert Group Segment Chair Hamouda presented the report of that meeting (UNEP/UNCED/11/3), noting successes and close cooperation with the AUC.

Morocco expressed reservations regarding the composition of the technical committee as described in draft Decision 9 concerning the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative. He noted that the UNCCD has been unable to attract GEF funding despite 10 years of effort, and suggested that AMCEN should refer to the specific GEF mechanism dealing with desertification.

This and other minor amendments were approved by ministers. The report was approved, to be annexed to the report of the ministerial segment.

MINISTERIAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Ministers then engaged in a policy dialogue, primarily concerned with the financing of environmental activities, with presentations by the ADB, GEF, and UNEP. AMCEN President Djombo noted that the finance issue is the primary driver of project implementation.

AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY: Hany Shelaby described the status of the proposed African Environmental Facility, and the ADB's feasibility study, which was presented at the expert group segment. He noted that information in the feasibility study was used in draft Decision 11, which reinforces a previous request for the ADB to host the fund, and to implement this as soon as possible. Shelaby reported that the feasibility study will be presented to the board of directors of the ADB, and expects a decision by July 2006. He noted that the ADB had yet to make a decision regarding the creation of an African Environmental Facility, but that the feasibility study had resolved many questions. Shelaby added that there needs to be proper justification for adding another fund.

Discussion: In the ensuing discussion, Senegal noted that ADB has been very receptive to the idea of creating an African Environmental Facility, and drew attention to the need to discuss this with finance ministers. Rwanda supported an African Environmental Facility being hosted by the ADB, said that the environment needs to appear in national lists of priorities in order to attract funding, and urged the GEF to increase fund accessibility instead of blaming countries for not using the funds. Guinea commented on the possibility of complementarity between the GEF and an African Environmental Facility. Egypt expressed concern that the logistics of the ADB hosting an African Environmental Facility remain unclear. Uganda stressed that an African Environmental Facility should address national as well

as continental priorities. Zambia noted that the GEF has not been engaged effectively despite longstanding discussions regarding this issue at AMCEN meetings.

Burkina Faso supported the establishment of the African Environmental Facility, calling for support from finance ministers who are members of the governing board of the ADB. Nigeria called on AMCEN to make a formal intervention at the next AU Summit in July 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia, to sensitize Heads of State in order for them to provide additional funds for environmental challenges. Malawi supported the establishment of an African Environmental Facility, stating that environmental issues are cross-cutting. Kenya supported the African Environmental Facility and called for the issue to be discussed at the next AU Summit, suggesting that the environment could be the theme of the summit in order to generate maximum exposure and prioritize funding. Calling for the establishment of an environmental unit in all ministries to place environmental matters at the forefront of development, Zimbabwe called on the AMCEN Bureau to explore other opportunities for accessing funding.

UNCCD observed that a significant proportion of GEF funds are not utilized. He called for pressure to be put on developed countries, noting that 80% of GEF funding went to 10% of countries. He drew attention to the under utilization of GEF funds flagged for international waters, and urged governments to utilize available funding.

Gabon, Egypt and Kenya observed that under the GEF, countries with the most problems were burdened with the most conditionalities. Benin noted that GEF eligibility criteria do not allow many countries to benefit from these funds, and urged flexibility. Rwanda stated that environment ministries should take the lead in ensuring that environmental issues are featured in national priorities so that they are provided for in national budgets. Republic of Congo said that locating the African Environmental Facility within the ADB is appropriate, as the bank has already funded a significant number of environmental projects without excessive conditionalities.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY: Len Good acknowledged the reservations that many African governments hold regarding the GEF and its Resource Allocation Framework, but suggested that the fourth replenishment of the GEF would produce a positive outcome. Drawing attention to the Adaptation Fund under the UNFCCC, he explained that it is administered by the GEF and financed by receipts from the commitment period reserve under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism. He expressed regret that at UNFCCC COP 11 in Montreal, certain members of the G-77 maintained that it was inappropriate for the GEF to administer the Adaptation Fund for the purposes of the Kyoto Protocol.

Good expressed reservations concerning the proposed African Environmental Facility, but supported the idea in principle, to the extent that it does not amount to diverting existing resources to a new window. He acknowledged that the proposed mandate of an African Environmental Facility did not seek to duplicate GEF efforts. He clarified that the GEF would support the African Environmental Facility in terms of providing technical support, knowledge sharing, co-financing projects and providing institutional cooperation, but expressed doubts as to whether the GEF would ever channel funds into an African Environmental Facility. While commenting on the GEF's complicated institutional structure, he encouraged African governments to be proactive and invest time and energy to learn the rules regarding eligibility criteria and how to manipulate the system, lamenting that knowledge regarding access to the GEF funds is not being effectively disseminated.

UNEP: Alain Lambert noted that environment ministers are often ignored by their finance ministers, because they do not speak in terms that the finance ministers understand. He noted confusion regarding the nature of environmental funding, adding that this can be located outside governments. He suggested that AMCEN needs to first establish an African Environmental Facility's "*raison d'être*," then determine how much is needed, and lastly seek funding and a home for the fund, instead of the other way around.

Lambert commented on the potential for environmental services payment, illustrating with a Rwandan case study, but noted that markets cannot solve everything, and that payments can also take the form of social assistance. He said Africa holds great potential for debt-for-nature swaps, and concluded with a description of the potential for carbon offset projects.

MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: Madagascar noted that his government had committed to tripling Madagascar's forest cover, and has tried to accomplish this without compromising national development. He described a project that his government has undertaken in conjunction with a number of partners, including Germany, and added that Germany has cancelled the debt owed to them by Madagascar. He highlighted that the project aims to conserve biodiversity while reducing donor dependence, and has resulted in positive developments in conservation and ecotourism development.

ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Marthinus van Schalkwyk, South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, gave a presentation on the need to control elephant populations in his country, noting that conservation programmes have been overly successful, raising total African elephant populations to present levels of over 300,000. He also described the adverse effects that this increasing elephant population has had on biodiversity and elephant-people conflicts. He said that non-lethal solutions such as translocation and contraception are overly expensive, and emphasized that culling elephants must be considered as a management option.

He acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue, and that the elephant is an African symbol and a charismatic flagship species. He highlighted how seven range states recently met in Zimbabwe to discuss a regional plan, which is necessary as most populations are transboundary.

He discussed possible courses of action, noting the inadequacy of "passive" options, and suggested that culling presents an effective solution. He noted the relevant domestic legal framework and international obligations that must be taken into consideration, and emphasized the urgency of the situation.

Discussion: Zambia said that there is also an elephant problem in Zambia, adding that excessive crocodiles pose an additional threat. Libya noted that elephants were once present in his country, adding that the biggest oil reserve in this region is known as the Elephant Field, and encouraged South Africa to conserve its elephants. Angola noted that elephants have been returning to his country from surrounding regions now that their habitat is better protected. Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), noted that CMS facilitates transboundary species management, adding that an agreement regarding the genetically distinct West African elephant already exists. Hepworth extended an invitation to facilitate a similar agreement for southern Africa. Zimbabwe said it is important to consider the region's carrying capacity, noting the large amounts of food and water that elephants require, and suggested letting drought take its natural course in limiting populations. Namibia noted elephant conservancies that had been established in communal areas as an

attempt to address human–elephant conflicts. Malawi endorsed the sub-regional approach to managing elephant populations and asked to be included in the initiative.

ADDRESS BY THE UNCCD

Hama Arba Diallo, UNCCD Executive Secretary, outlined the UNCCD's activities, noting that 2006 has been recognized as the International Year of Drylands and Desertification. He highlighted several related events that have been held so far, as well as several upcoming meetings. Voicing concern over the increasing impact of climate change in relation to desertification, he noted that 39% of the continent's total area is affected and called for support for implementation of the UNCCD. Observing that the Congo basin acts as a "second lung" of the Earth, he stressed the prioritization of strategies in central Africa.

LINKAGES BETWEEN AMCEN AND THE AFRICAN UNION

Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer clarified issues relating to AMCEN becoming an STC under the AU. He explained that this emanated from a decision taken at AMCEN-10, which called for AMCEN to feed into the AU decision-making process along with AMCOW and the African Ministerial Conference on Agriculture.

Rosebud Kurwijila, responding to the issue of AMCEN's relationship with UNEP, clarified that ministerial conferences are usually serviced by the AU, adding that this arrangement does not preclude support from other development partners.

South Africa expressed support for AMCEN becoming an STC under the AU. Libya explained that the intention was not to jeopardize AMCEN's relationship with UNEP, mentioning that modalities are being explored to maintain this relationship.

CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATED TO THE AMCEN PROCESS

AMENDMENTS TO THE AMCEN CONSTITUTION:

The Secretariat recalled that the need to revise the AMCEN Constitution was identified at AMCEN-8, and that a revised constitution was drafted between 2002 and 2004 and circulated for comment. He described how these comments have been incorporated, and said that legal advice has indicated the need to complete AMCEN/AU discussions before proceeding. He concluded by saying that the Expert Working Group has recommended deferring discussions until the debate regarding the technical committee has been resolved.

STATUS OF THE AMCEN GENERAL TRUST FUND:

The Secretariat introduced the issue of the Status of the AMCEN General Trust Fund, noting that although contributions have improved since 2002, 55% of members have not contributed at all.

VENUE FOR THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Ministers approved a decision to hold the AMCEN-12 in 2008 in South Africa (UNEP/AMCEN/11/5/ADD.1).

OTHER MATTERS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Kenya highlighted that both the UNFCCC and Basel Convention will hold their COPs in Nairobi this year, and invited the participation and support of AMCEN members.

The AMCEN Secretariat gave a presentation on the 2nd Intergovernmental Review of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities. He noted that the objectives of this year's meeting

include strengthening implementation, the use of the ecosystem approach, sanitation, and guidance for the programme of work for 2007-2011.

Discussion: Mali noted that additional funding would be required for the Bamako Convention. Libya suggested that they seek funding from the international donor community, as this agreement carries global benefits. The Gambia recalled that the Bamako Convention was developed in response to the threat that hazardous waste poses specifically to the African environment, and that as disposal in developed countries becomes more expensive, there will be increased pressure on African countries to accept these materials.

CMS: Robert Hepworth gave an overview of CMS' work, focusing on its approach to migratory species protection through listing in Appendix I and Appendix II of that convention. He explained that agreements for species protection such as the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) had been concluded under Appendix II. He went on to discuss other agreements under CMS, highlighting a Memorandum of Understanding concerning conservation of West African elephants. He emphasized the high-priority action plan for gorillas, listed under both Appendix I and II of CMS, and described how CMS had established a project to facilitate negotiations between ten range states in partnership with the UNEP/UNESCO Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) and with support from Italy and the UK. In relation to avian influenza, he said that a CMS-led scientific task force had been established to assess the role of migratory species in spreading the virus and to develop early warning expertise. He explained that outbreaks in Africa appeared to be linked to the poultry trade and particularly to the smuggling of day-old chicks from Asia and Turkey.

ADB: Hany Shelaby described the proposed African Environmental Facility and its mission of improving natural resources and environment. He emphasized that ADB is not a multilateral aid agency, and that an African Environmental Facility would not supplant existing GEF funding, but that it would seek to invest in natural resource conservation and exploitation. He urged making the transition from studies to investment, and highlighted complementarities that could exist between an African Environmental Facility, ADB and GEF. He noted the emerging potential for China to play an important role.

SOMALIA: Somalia expressed gratitude that his country's transitional government has finally been recognized by the international community, but lamented that this is the first time that they have been able to participate in AMCEN in 16 years, and that they have missed out on global environmental discussions. He said that his country continues to suffer greatly from land degradation, and added that during the conflict in Somalia, natural resources have been plundered by both domestic and foreign interests. He called for a special programme for the reintegration of Somalia into AMCEN, appealed to GEF for environmental and capacity-building projects, and thanked donors for their support thus far.

UNIDO: Ibe Chibi, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), expressed a desire to concretize interactions with AMCEN, adding that the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD was a credible response to environmental degradation. He went on to say that AMCEN, as an apex body for the environment in Africa, should reinforce relationships with the AU and NEPAD within the context of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

AMCOW: Henry Ntale, AMCOW, explained that AMCOW was established to address pressing water challenges facing Africa and to provide a framework for regional cooperation relating especially to achieving the MDG target on access to safe drinking

water, in addition to strengthening national and regional dialogue on water issues. Mentioning the African Water Facility within the ADB, he affirmed AMCOW's willingness to share experiences relating to this facility in addition to hosting joint meetings of the bureaus and other strategic events and called for strengthening cooperation between the regional ministerial bodies.

GRASP: In a signing ceremony, Rwanda and Gabon joined 16 other range states and many donor, non-governmental organization (NGO) and MEA partners in affirming their commitment to the protection of the remaining great apes, by signing the 2005 Kinshasa Declaration on GRASP. Samy Mankoto, UNESCO, explained that GRASP is an alliance between UNEP and UNESCO formed at the WSSD. He highlighted GRASP achievements, and said that the Kinshasa Declaration is testimony to the political commitment to ensuring the survival of the great apes. He added that the Declaration would also provide a platform for synergies between AMCEN and GRASP.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

On Friday afternoon, 26 May, AMCEN President Djombo presented the report of the ministerial segment (UNEP/AMCEN/11/L.1), and it was adopted with minor amendments, following discussion of the decisions to be adopted, as contained in Annex II of the document. The Secretariat stated that the Brazzaville Declaration on the Environment for Development would be attached as Annex I once it has been harmonized with the revised decisions.

The following section provides a brief description of each decision, noting any discussion that took place.

DECISION 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE OF NEPAD:

This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final text: The decision calls on the AUC to lend high-level political support to the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, and urges development partners to provide financial assistance for developing the capacities of the regional economic communities and for GEF and others to support the implementation of projects and programmes. It requests UNEP to provide technical support to regional economic communities in order to finalize sub-regional action plans and for UNESCO to support African counties to implement NEPAD. It also requests UNEP to maintain and develop further issue-based modules, in addition to mobilizing financial support for their implementation, and further requests UNEP to mobilize support for a partnership for the development of environmental law and institutions in Africa.

DECISION 2: INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES AND HARMONIZATION OF ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE OF NEPAD:

Text regarding AMCEN's relationship to the AU as a "separate" and "distinct" STC drew many comments during both the expert group and high-level ministerial segments. Several countries opposed the inclusion of this text. Libya, supported by Uganda, stressed that it was necessary to ensure that the STC, under the AU, would be independent. The AMCEN Secretariat clarified that consensus relating to AMCEN integration in the AUC as an STC was reached in Sirte, Libya, during the second Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, adding that the term "specialized technical committee" already exists within the AU Charter. Many countries queried the status of AMCEN as an STC as it is principally a political policy forum. The AUC observed that

AMCEN's integration as an STC would not preclude it from continuing as a political policy forum. Overall, participants emphasized maintaining AMCEN's relationship with UNEP.

Final text: The decision calls for the integration of AMCEN as a separate and distinct STC under the AUC while maintaining strong links with UNEP and with other organs of the AU, and calls on AMCEN to maintain linkages with other relevant institutions such as AMCOW on strategic issues related to the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD.

DECISION 3: CONSTITUTION OF AMCEN: This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final text: The decision calls for deferring the process of revising AMCEN's Constitution, pending the complete development of the institutional structures of the AU, and decides that the meetings of the Bureau of AMCEN should be attended by the immediate past-President or at least one member of the most recent bureau.

DECISION 4: STATUS AND USE OF THE GENERAL TRUST FUND OF AMCEN: This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final Text: The decision urges governments to make any outstanding contributions to the General Trust Fund of AMCEN, and requests the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to make proposals for sponsorship of conference activities and AMCEN sessions.

DECISION 5: IMPLEMENTATION OF SAICM AND OTHER CHEMICAL AND HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT ISSUES: This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final text: The decision endorses SAICM as a policy framework to support achievement of goals set out in paragraph 23 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation regarding the management of chemicals, and urges governments to start formulating national action plans for implementing the strategic approach, building on efforts undertaken in related MEAs, and to explore possible regional approaches to implementing the strategic plan.

DECISION 6: AFRICA ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK AND THE AFRICA ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION NETWORK: This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final text: The decision asks the UNEP Executive Director to continue mobilizing financial support for capacity building through the Africa Environment Outlook and Africa Environment Information Network processes and to support the production of the third Africa Environment Outlook report. It also endorses the proposal for the extension of the Africa Environment Information Network from 12 to 38 countries in Africa.

DECISION 7: INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS INTO DRR PROGRAMMES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR DRR: Guinea requested text stating "urge Governments" to be removed in the context of integrating DRR into development policies and programmes. Several countries made comments relating to the relevant ministry that should coordinate DRR programmes, with Gabon stating that such activities were usually coordinated by the Ministry of Natural Disasters and not the Ministry of the Environment. Benin called for a new paragraph to address the inaugural sub-regional centre for disaster management.

Final text: The decision urges governments to integrate DRR into development policies and programmes and to further develop disaster management plans. It also requests the inter-agency secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy

for Disaster Reduction, UNEP and UNDP to provide assistance to national governments regarding implementing Africa Regional Strategy for DRR.

DECISION 8: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: During discussions on this decision, Benin called for UNEP to support the facilitation of an inter-basin tropical forest agreement.

Final text: The decision requests governments, through AMCEN, to expedite the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, requests the UNEP Executive Director to provide additional support to the six countries involved in the pilot project for the Plan's implementation in Africa, and requests the UNEP Executive Director to expedite the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between UNEP and UNDP for the Plan's implementation.

DECISION 9: GREEN WALL FOR THE SAHARA INITIATIVE: This decision was adopted without amendment.

Final text: The decision requests UNEP, UNCCD, the World Bank and other agencies to cooperate with the AUC and to report to AMCEN-12 on progress made in the facilitation of the implementation of the initiative.

DECISION 10: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES AT COUNTRY, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS: During discussion of this issue, Morocco called for an emphasis on vulnerability to climate change, especially regarding the allocation of financial resources.

Final text: The decision requests the UNEP Executive Director and heads of other relevant institutions to continue to provide technical support to African countries to develop capacity in sustainable financing; requests the GEF Council to continue to support the TerrAfrica initiative and its Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management; and requests the GEF to review its Resource Allocation Framework in line with concerns that have emerged in the consultative meetings organized by the GEF Secretariat and African countries.

DECISION 11: AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY: This decision drew the most debate during both the expert group and ministerial segments. Support for the establishment of the African Environmental Facility was strong because of the perceived difficulties in fulfilling GEF eligibility criteria. Debate centered around whether the decision to establish the African Environmental Facility would be contingent on the outcome of the ADB feasibility study.

In relation to a paragraph on pursuing AMCEN's commitment to establish the African Environmental Facility at the ADB, Guinea, supported by Burkina Faso, requested the inclusion of text urging ministers to pursue the matter with their finance ministers. Lesotho proposed postponement of the decision to establish the African Environmental Facility pending the outcome of the feasibility study. Abdul-Hakim Rajab Elwaer clarified that consensus to establish an African Environmental Facility had already been achieved, adding that there was no need for postponement of the decision to establish the African Environmental Facility. This position was supported by several countries, including Cameroon, Rwanda and Senegal.

Final text: The decision commits AMCEN to pursue the establishment of an African Environmental Facility based on the positive outcome of the feasibility study, requests the President of the ADB to facilitate this and to submit a request for the establishment of African Environmental Facility to the Board of Directors and the Board of Governors of the Bank for their consideration and possible implementation.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

Shafqat Kakakhel extended his gratitude to the Republic of Congo for hosting the session, and stressed the importance of promoting synergies between the AUC and AMCEN. He noted that this session marks another important milestone in African efforts to achieve sustainable development, and that this demonstrates solidarity. He congratulated Rwanda and Gabon for becoming part of the Kinshasa Agreement on GRASP, noting the importance of this agreement as the last hope for saving these species.

AMCEN President Djombo concluded by noting the seriousness of the problems that have been addressed at this session, thanked delegates for the solutions that have been put forward, and encouraged the exploration of innovative financing mechanisms. He suggested the development of an African environmental prize that will reward people or organizations that have demonstrated leadership in this field.

AMCEN President Djombo officially closed the session at 7:00 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF DRYLANDS: The meeting will be held from 19-21 June 2006 in Tunis, Tunisia. This international scientific conference on desertification and drylands research is being organized by UNESCO and will help mark the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification. For more information contact: Thomas Schaaf, Man and the Biosphere Programme, UNESCO; tel: (+33-1) 45 68 40 67; fax: (+33-1) 45.68.58.04; e-mail: sc.drylands@unesco.org; Internet: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/ecosyst/futureDrylands.shtml>

WORKSHOP ON RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD: This workshop will be held in Carbondale, Colorado, USA, from 19-23 June 2006. The workshop is sponsored by Solar Energy International and will focus on how to incorporate renewable energy technologies into development projects. For more information, contact: Solar Energy International; tel: +1-970-963-8855; fax: +1-970-963-8866; e-mail: sei@solarenergy.org; Internet: <http://www.solarenergy.org>

SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION: This session will be held in Banjul, the Gambia, from 1 – 2 July 2006. The theme of the Summit will be “Rationalisation of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Integration.” For more information, contact: African Union Headquarters, tel: +251 11 551 77 00; fax: +251 11 551 78 44; Internet: <http://www.africa-union.org>

G8 SUMMIT: The annual G8 Summit will be held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 15-17 July 2006, and will address high-priority issues including energy security and infectious diseases. For more information, contact Sergei Yurievich Vyazalov, G8 Organizing Committee Secretariat: fax: +7 495 206 4822; e-mail: vyazalov_sy@gov.ru; Internet: <http://en.g8russia.ru>

AMCOW EXCO: The Executive Committee of the African Minister’s Council on Water will meet in August, 2006, location and exact date to be determined. AMCOW seeks to promote cooperation, security, and poverty eradication of member states through development of water management. Contact Dr. Ja’afar A. Sadeeq, AMCOW Secretariat: tel: +234 9 413 8504; fax +234 9 234 2895; email: amcow2@yahoo.com; Internet: <http://www.amcow.org>

THIRD GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

ASSEMBLY: This meeting will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 29-30 August 2006. As the principal governing body of the GEF, the Assembly will chart the forthcoming years’ agenda and work programme. For more information, contact: GEF Secretariat; tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240/3245; e-mail: assembly@thegef.org; Internet: <http://www.gefweb.org>

THE IASTED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POWER, ENERGY, AND APPLICATIONS: This conference will be held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 11-13 September 2006, providing an international forum for researchers and practitioners focusing on the advances in and applications of power and energy systems. For more information, contact: IASTED; tel: +1-403-288-1195; fax: +1-403-247-6851; e-mail: calgary@iasted.org; Internet: <http://www.iasted.org/conferences/2006/Botswana/c506.htm>

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY APPROACHES FOR DESERT REGIONS: This meeting will be held in Amman, Jordan, from 18-22 September 2006, and will present a range of information regarding the development of wind, solar, biomass and geothermal energy in desert regions. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; fax: +962-6-535-5588; e-mail: gcreader@ju.edu.jo; Internet: <http://www.ju.edu.jo/conferences/gcreader/index.htm>

SECOND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES: This meeting will be held from 16-20 October 2006 in Beijing, China, and will focus on issues such as mainstreaming the Global Programme of Action (GPA) into national development plans and financing GPA implementation. For more information, contact: GPA Coordination Office; tel: +31-70-311-4460; fax: +31-70-345-6648; e-mail: gpa@unep.nl; Internet: <http://www.gpa.unep.org/>

TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: UNFCCC COP 12 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 2 will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-17 November 2006. These meetings will also coincide with the 25th meetings of the UNFCCC’s subsidiary bodies. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-15 will take place at UN headquarters in New York from 30 April - 11 May 2007. CSD-15 will be a “policy year” to decide on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome obstacles and constraints for implementation of actions and goals on energy for development, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change and industrial development. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev>

THE 12TH SESSION OF AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT: AMCEN-12 will be hosted by South Africa; date and venue to be confirmed. For more information, contact the AMCEN secretariat, tel: +254-20-624-289; fax +254-20-623928; e-mail: amcensec@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/roa/Related_Programmes/AMCEN/index.asp