

Abuja Declaration*

We, Ministers responsible for the environment,

Having met in Abuja during the eighth session of AMCEN, on 5 and 6 April 2000,

Noting recent state-of-the-environment reports, such as the Global Environment Outlook report of the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) on the escalating and emerging environmental problems in our continent,

Concerned that Africa is the only continent in which poverty is expected to rise during the twenty-first century,

Also concerned about the increasing

number of emerging and crisis situations in Africa as a result of global environmen-

* African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Abuja, Nigeria, 5 and 6 April 2000. See also page 192. UNEP/AMCEN/8/5

tal changes with adverse social, cultural and economic effects,

Further concerned at the exacerbation of the phenomenon of desertification in Africa and the effects it produces on the life of the people,

Expressing our concern at the persistence of domestic armed conflicts in Africa and the consequent deterioration in the quality of life of the people and the environment,

Recalling the efforts which have been made since the inception of AMCEN in 1985,

Recognizing the role played by regional, subregional, national and international bodies and non-governmental organizations in promoting sustainable development in Africa,

Bearing in mind the fact that success in achieving sustainable development will ultimately depend upon good policies, effective leadership, participatory citizenry, accurate information and informed national decision-making,

Extending our solidarity and sympathy to Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe and other countries which have been affected by the recent floods in the southern African subregion, and acknowledging the international response in providing assistance to them,

Extending concern and sympathy to Ethiopia on the famine situation and land degradation and to the Sahelian countries on drought and the encroachment of the desert, and calling for an urgent international response in those countries to pre-

vent further disaster and loss of life,

Noting with appreciation the efforts made to address environmental concerns at the recent Africa-Europe summit held in Cairo under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity and the European Union, Hereby declare our resolve:

To commit ourselves to the implementation of the renewed AMCEN policy and programmes;

To keep under constant review policy actions that will enable us to address environmental challenges, especially new and emerging issues;

To build capacities in order to deal effectively with major environmental concerns;

To mobilize support from the international community for the establishment of a rapid response fund which will serve as a source of assistance to countries faced with natural disasters;

To draw the attention of the international community to the need for it to become more involved in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, in order to restore the productive capital in the countries affected by desertification;

To forge strategic partnerships with the public and private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the international community in preparing and implementing AMCEN policies and programmes;

To recognize the important role played by women in society and their vulnerability to adverse environmental impacts, and the need for them to be included in all policy-

making and decision-making processes and environment programmes;

To commit ourselves to coordinated implementation of environmental treaties in accordance with the environmental and developmental priorities of the continent;

To encourage African countries to ratify the "Rio generation" conventions, and in particular those relating to control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes;

To ensure adequate preparation for and effective participation in relevant global environmental initiatives in order to address Africa's concerns; in this regard we make reference to the first Global Environment Forum to be held in Malmö, Sweden;

To support the candidatures of Morocco and South Africa to host the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention and the second Earth Summit, respectively, and to cooperate with relevant regional and subregional bodies in the preparation of a common African position for the second Earth Summit and in the implementation of its outcome;

To support the AMCEN secretariat in the mobilization of financial resources to ensure sustainable implementation of AMCEN programmes, and in this regard to commit ourselves to mandatory contributions to the AMCEN Trust Fund in accordance with the scale of contributions agreed in Abuja;

To commit ourselves to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the eighth session of AMCEN.

Decisions

Main preamble

We, the African Ministers of Environment gathered in the city of Abuja, Nigeria, under the auspices of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling the resolutions of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment adopted in December 1985 and at other sessions of the Conference,

Aware of the evolution of global and regional environmental thinking and shifts in emphasis since the institutionalization of the Conference,

Recognizing the many initiatives taken by African countries in response to the changing environmental conditions,

Also aware that accelerated growth is needed as a top priority in all our countries, but that economic growth is not sustainable without reducing the widespread poverty of our people and protecting the resource base needed for our future development, while improving the health, income and living conditions of the majority of our people is imperative for ensuring the political and social stability needed for economic and environmental sustainability,

Noting with concern the increase in the number of emergency and crisis situations in our countries as a result of global environmental changes with adverse effects on Africa, external factors being to a large degree the causes of these disasters, whereas the impacts on our region are increasing in adversity, frequency and scale,

Further aware of the important role of economic performance on the state of the environment and appreciative of the existence of African subregional and regional economic groupings, particularly the treaty establishing the African Economic Community,

Convinced that development which is not sustainable should no longer be called development,

Decision 1: Programme Priorities

Having examined the new proposals for policy and institutional change and the medium-term programme for 2000-2004 and noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the decisions of our seventh session with the very limited financial resources available,

Recognizing the important role that the new organs of the AMCEN – the Bureau, Inter-sessional Committee and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee – will play in promoting the implementation of the medium-term programme,

Decide:

- (a) To adopt:
 - (i) The proposals for policy and institutional change;
 - (ii) The proposals for a medium-term programme;
- (b) To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to meet and prepare a biennial programme budget to be submitted to the Inter-sessional Committee;
- (c) To urge member States of the Con-

ference to integrate the actions agreed in the medium-term programme in their national programmes;

(d) To urge African regional and subregional organizations to take into account the actions agreed in the medium-term programme in their regional and subregional programmes;

(e) To invite the Executive Director of the UNEP to ensure that the actions agreed in the medium-term programme are fully integrated in the programmes and activities of the UNEP.

Decision 2: Global Negotiations On The Environment

Considering the importance of global negotiations and dialogue on the environment and the need for the Africa region to promote its environmental agenda in such negotiations and dialogue,

Recognizing the limited negotiating capacities in the Africa region as well as the difficulties encountered by representatives of the region in global environmental negotiations,

Recognizing also the need for the Africa region to approach global negotiation on the environment with clarity of purpose and common consensus, positions and perspectives,

Recognizing further the seriousness and magnitude of land degradation in the region resulting from desertification processes,

Recognizing also the continuing loss of biological diversity, —

Recognizing also that the adverse impacts of climate change pose serious threats to the development of African countries and that it is therefore necessary for Africa to play a key and active role at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled for November 2000,

Decide:

- (a) To express appreciation to the Executive Director of the UNEP for organizing within the framework of the AMCEN various regional consultations on specific environmental issues prior to global negotiations, and to urge the UNEP to continue to support such consultations;
- (b) To develop common positions and perspectives within the framework of processes relating to global agreements, conventions and international dialogue on the environment;
- (c) To urge the President of the AMCEN to coordinate the positions of the African Group at all global environmental negotiations;
- (d) To urge all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in particular annex I parties, who are responsible for the largest share of historical and current emissions of greenhouse gases, to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in order to facilitate its early entry into force;
- (e) To invite international financial institutions, the African Development Bank and donor countries to support African countries in their efforts at capacity building to enhance the effective implementation of the conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification;
- (f) To work towards formulating common positions regarding the implementation of the Climate Change Convention's Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and the development of such mechanisms as the Clean Development Mechanism, Activities Implemented Jointly, transfers of technology and capacity-building;
- (g) To request the UNEP to assist African countries by convening a regional meeting of scientific/technical, policy and legal experts to prepare position documents on key issues on the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of the conventions on biological diversity, desertification and climate change.

Decision 3: Building Strategic Partnerships

Recognizing the important role that development partners, particularly in the UN system, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, women's groups and community-based organizations, the private sector and international donor countries can play in the implementation of the medium-term programme,

Recognizing also the need to maintain the five geographical subregions (Eastern, West, North, Southern and Central Africa), and the important role that African regional and subregional organizations can play in the implementation of the medium-term programme,

Recognizing further the important role that line ministries can play at the national level in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference;

Decide:

- (a) To build, through consultations and joint programming, partnerships with the

UN system, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, women's groups and community-based organizations, the private sector, donor countries and multilateral donor organizations;

(b) To organize consultation with heads of African regional and subregional organizations with a view to ensuring that the priorities of the AMCEN are integrated in their programmes;

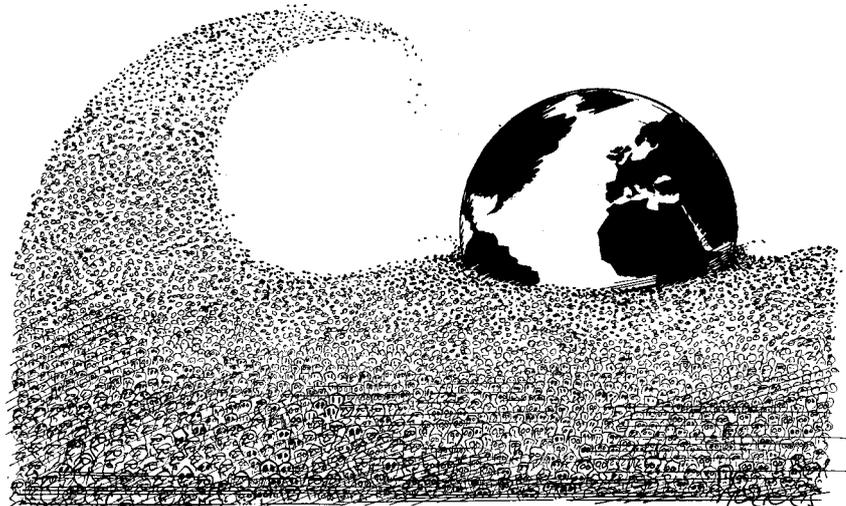
(c) To develop partnerships with the major African ministerial conferences in order to strengthen understanding of the priorities of the AMCEN and ensure their incorporation in national development plans.

Decision 4: New And Emerging Environmental Matters

Recognizing the implications for the Africa region of the planned Earth Summit (2002),

Recognizing also the importance of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum which will be convened in Malmö, Sweden,

Aware of the serious and adverse impacts of natural disasters that are on the increase in the region,



Courtesy: Das Parlament

Aware also of the serious and adverse impacts of civil conflicts on the environment as well as problems of refugees arising therefrom,

Decide:

(a) To commend the UNEP for taking the necessary measures for convening the Global Ministerial Environment Forum which will bring together in Malmö, Sweden, from 29 to 31 May 2000, Environment Ministers from all over the world, and to applaud the Government of Sweden for hosting the Forum, considering that since the issues to be discussed at the forum are of crucial importance to Africa, it is important that Africa should be represented in full force in order to effectively bring to bear on the discussions Africa's perspectives on the agenda items;

(b) To join hands with the OAU, the ECA, the ADB and the UNEP in carrying out necessary preparations for the development of a regional African common position in 2001 to be submitted to Earth Summit II (2002);

(c) To establish a mechanism within the

framework of the AMCEN which will serve as a vehicle for mobilizing actions for the purpose of comprehensive assessment of the impacts of disasters and civil conflicts on the environment, as well as environmental restoration measures.

Decision 5: Financial Resources

Recognizing the importance of having predictable and regular financial resources for the implementation of the decisions of the Conference as well as the medium-term programme,

Recognizing also the need for contributions to the Trust Fund of the Conference,

Recognizing further the financial support that the UNEP continues to provide to the Conference as well as the contributions made by some of the member States of the Conference,

Recognizing also the need to look at the possibilities of other forms of resource assistance,

Expressing our appreciation to the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which have

cumulatively contributed, in the last four years, \$835,700 to the Trust Fund established in 1985,

Expressing especially our thanks to Egypt for contributing \$689,800 of that amount,

Decide:

(a) To express our appreciation to the UNEP for having borne the necessary costs for secretarial services, programme activities and personnel since the inception of the Conference in December 1985, and urge it to continue to do so;

(b) To urge our countries to increase their current contributions to the Trust Fund to a total of \$3 million by December 2001 on the basis of the new system of contributions agreed upon at this session, and to emulate the commendable actions by the above-mentioned countries by making immediate initial contributions to the Trust Fund;

(c) To request the secretariat to take the necessary measures to mobilize additional financial resources for the Conference on the basis of the proposal it presented at this eighth session of the Conference;

(d) To mandate the UNEP to invoice member States of the Conference for their contributions to the Trust Fund in furtherance of this goal, on the basis of the good will enshrined in the decisions taken on the Trust Fund, as well as the pledges which

have been made by member States at this session;

(e) To request further the secretariat to submit a report on the use of the earned interest of the Trust Fund to the ninth session of the Conference;

(f) To mandate the UNEP accordingly to utilize the interest earned in the Trust Fund as at 31 March 2000 for the implementation of the activities in the budgeted biennial programme prepared by the Inter-Agency Technical Committee.

