



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Twelfth session

Johannesburg, 7–12 June 2008

Ministerial segment: 10–12 June 2008

Annotated provisional agenda of the ministerial segment

Introduction

1. According to paragraph 1 of article 9 of the constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the Conference shall hold its ordinary sessions once every two or three years. The offer by the Government of South Africa to host the twelfth session of AMCEN was accepted by the Conference at its eleventh session, held in Brazzaville, Congo, from 22 to 26 May 2006, and by the AMCEN Bureau at its twenty-second meeting, held in Johannesburg on 5 and 6 November 2007.
2. Pursuant to that offer by the Government of South Africa, it was agreed that the twelfth session of AMCEN would be held in Johannesburg from 7 to 12 June 2008. The session would consist of an expert group segment from 7 to 9 June 2008 and a ministerial segment from 10 to 12 June 2008.
3. In that connection, at its twenty-second meeting, held in Johannesburg on 5 and 6 November 2007, the AMCEN Bureau considered and adopted a provisional agenda for the ministerial segment of the twelfth session, which is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/1. The Bureau also chose “Enhancing the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development” as the theme for the twelfth session of AMCEN.
4. A few weeks before the opening of the twelfth session, the secretariat will distribute an information note on the session, under the symbol UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/1. A complete list of the documents which have been prepared for the twelfth session of AMCEN is provided in annex I to the present document.

I. Objectives and overview of the ministerial segment

5. The main objective of the twelfth session of AMCEN is to provide a platform for environment ministers to review the progress made in the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), with a view to enhancing its implementation. The twelfth session will also provide a forum to address emerging environmental challenges in Africa, particularly those related to climate change. The ministers will deliberate on substantive issues of importance to Africa which must be addressed in the context of the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD and the AMCEN work programme for the period 2009–2010. They will also review progress made towards the establishment of the African Environment Facility for the implementation of environmental projects and programmes.

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The ministers will also review progress made towards establishing AMCEN as a specialized technical committee of the African Union.

6. The expert group will bring selected topical issues to the attention of ministers for their deliberation. Ministers will be invited to dwell on the future status and role of AMCEN, taking into account the established and evolving structures of the African Union and the initial measures taken to consolidate the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative into the overall NEPAD process.

7. In considering follow-up processes to the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD, in particular climate change, invasive alien species, land degradation and desertification, and also certain emerging issues, ministers will be invited to assess the progress made since the eleventh session of AMCEN, held in Brazzaville from 22 to 26 May 2006. In the light of the assessment, they will review some of the policy, advocacy and programmatic measures of the Conference, including: environmental law; regional and multilateral environmental agreements in Africa; environment and health; environmental assessment; capacity-building; disaster risk reduction; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative; and sustainable consumption and production in Africa.

8. The ministers will also deliberate on the development of subregional environmental action plans for all the subregions of Africa, in conformity with the project on capacity-building approved by AMCEN at its tenth session held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 26 to 30 June 2004, with a view to adopting the subregional environmental action plans. The ministers will also be kept informed about the national environmental action plans prepared for the five pilot countries.

9. The ministers will also consider the status and use of the AMCEN trust fund. The available records show that the rate at which member States have been contributing to the fund has remained rather slow, hampering the effective implementation of AMCEN decisions. There is, therefore, a pressing need for ministers to make critical assessments and give further guidance as to how contributions to the trust fund can be enhanced.

10. AMCEN sessions have traditionally been funded mainly by donors – in particular, in recent years, by the Government of Norway and UNEP. The over-reliance of AMCEN on development partners to fund its sessions is unsustainable. There is, therefore, a need to enhance efforts to mobilize additional resources in line with decision 8 adopted by AMCEN at its ninth session, relating to resource mobilization and the state of the general trust fund.

11. The publication *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* will be launched at the twelfth session.

12. The Conference will consider for adoption the final draft of the revised AMCEN constitution (UNEP/AMCEN/12/7), which was revised pursuant to the recommendations of ministers at the eighth session of the Conference, held in Abuja, Nigeria, endorsed at the ninth session, held in Kampala, Uganda, and referred for further consideration at the tenth and eleventh sessions, held in Sirte and Brazzaville respectively.

13. The Conference will adopt decisions reflecting its discussions under the various items on its agenda.

II. Items of the provisional agenda

A. Item 1: Opening of the ministerial segment

14. The outgoing President of AMCEN, the Minister of Environment of the Congo, will preside over the official opening ceremony and the Minister of Environment of Egypt will serve as Rapporteur.

15. The outgoing President of AMCEN will introduce the Bureau members and the opening speakers, including the Executive Director of UNEP.

16. The outgoing President of AMCEN will invite a dignitary from South Africa to open the ministerial segment of the twelfth session of AMCEN officially and to launch the publication *Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment*. The atlas is a complementary publication to the Africa Environment Outlook (AEO) report, a flagship publication of AMCEN. It is the first publication to depict environmental change in all African countries in single consolidated report. Through a combination of satellite images, graphs, maps, and photographs, the atlas provides visual scientific evidence of changes taking place on the African landscape. It illustrates the huge environmental challenges facing Africans and the need for urgent action to be taken.

17. A vote of thanks to the representative of South Africa, the Executive Director and other dignitaries will be offered by one of the outgoing vice-presidents of AMCEN.

B. Item 2: Organizational matters

1. Election of officers

18. The outgoing President of AMCEN will present the outcome of the subregional consultations on filling the vacant posts in the manner prescribed by the AMCEN constitution and will make his final remarks as the President of the Conference.

19. The outgoing President will invite the new President to assume his post on the podium and make his maiden speech. At that point, there will be an official hand-over of the AMCEN presidency from Congo to the country elected.

2. Adoption of the agenda

20. The President of AMCEN will introduce the provisional agenda (UNEP/AMCEN/12/1).

3. Organization of work

21. The President of AMCEN will introduce the draft programme of work set forth in annex II to the present document and draw the attention of the Conference to the list of documents for the ministerial segment set forth in annex I.

C. Item 3: Consideration of the report of the expert group segment

22. The chair of the expert group will present the report of the expert group segment, which will include a summary of the proceedings and the recommendations and draft decisions which it developed, relating in particular to topical environmental issues of particular importance to Africa. The report is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/3. The Conference may wish to take note of the report and consider the draft decisions under the appropriate agenda items.

23. A report on the status of implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD since the eleventh session of AMCEN has been prepared (document UNEP/AMCEN/12/4).

24. The selected topical issues of relevance to Africa which the expert group will bring to the attention of the ministerial segment will include: capacity-building; land degradation and desertification; climate change; biological diversity and related issues; chemicals and the environment; poverty and environment; environmental assessment; sustainable consumption and production; regional and multilateral environmental agreements; health and environment issues; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative; and others.

D. Item 4: Ministerial policy dialogue

25. Ministerial policy dialogue will be held as follows: first, climate change – the Bali Action Plan; second, financing adaptation and environmental programmes and projects; and third, international environmental governance and United Nations reforms.

26. The purpose of the policy dialogue on climate change and the Bali Action Plan is to begin a process of discussions and negotiations that will ensure a strong presence and voice for African countries at the crucial Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifth meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that will be held in Copenhagen in 2009. The purpose of the policy dialogue on financing adaptation and environmental programmes and projects is to identify various sources of financing for adaptation and environmental programmes in Africa. The involvement of the private sector in this regard will also be explored.

27. The issue of international environmental governance and the reform of the United Nations has been debated at a number of different forums. The issue was discussed extensively at the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Nairobi in February 2007. Emerging issues have necessitated re-visiting this topic, however, at the twelfth session of AMCEN. The President of AMCEN will therefore invite the panel members to introduce the topic and elaborate on major challenges facing the international community striving to reach consensus on a suitable policy architecture to address the international environmental agenda. The President will subsequently invite ministers to discuss the topic.

28. It is envisaged that the deliberations will enable the ministers, first, to obtain up-to-date information on the topic; second, to make their own contribution to the current debate on international environmental governance and the reform of the United Nations; and, third, to review the options and challenges emerging from the debates on international environmental governance and their implications for the sustainable development of the region.

E. Item 5: Consideration of matters related to the AMCEN process

1. Amendments to the AMCEN constitution

29. In its decision 4, adopted at its ninth session, AMCEN decided that the secretariat should recruit a consultant or consultants to work further on the revised constitution, guided by the initial comments in the preambular paragraphs of the decision. The revised constitution prepared pursuant to that decision was circulated in Sirte in June 2004. Upon the request of AMCEN at its tenth session, that document was re-circulated to the member States of AMCEN for a second round of in-country consultations. At the request of AMCEN at its eleventh session, discussion on the document was deferred until the twelfth session. The ministerial segment will deliberate on the final draft of the revised constitution, contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/7.

2. Status of the general trust fund for AMCEN

30. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the AMCEN work programme, which is an integral part of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD. The implementation of the AMCEN work programme is being undertaken by UNEP in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the NEPAD secretariat, the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, and a number of institutions and organizations, such as the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat; the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); the World Conservation Union (IUCN); and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. Nevertheless, significant achievements could have been made if implementation had not been constrained by very limited financial resources. The AMCEN trust fund was designed to remedy that problem, among others. Although more countries have made contributions to the fund since the ninth session, the rate of payment by member States remains slow.

31. The secretariat will brief the Conference on the status of the AMCEN trust fund and ministers may wish to agree on ways to enhance countries' contributions and the use of funds accruing as interest on the sums of the trust fund. A report on the status of the trust fund is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/12/5.

F. Item 6: Country and subregion case studies

The President of AMCEN will invite the secretariat to introduce the agenda item. As stated above, participants at the tenth and eleventh sessions of AMCEN called for the implementation of a programme on capacity-building for the implementation of the action plan as a high priority. To that end, a number of activities have been undertaken since the tenth session of AMCEN. Support was given to the regional economic communities for eastern, central, north, southern and west Africa in preparing their subregional environmental action plans. These have been adopted by the councils of those communities in most of the subregions. Ministers will be requested to adopt these subregional environmental action plans after they have been formally presented at the twelfth session by a member of the Bureau.

32. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya and Mozambique were selected as pilot countries to develop national action plans on the environment. Representatives from those countries will be expected to present their action plans at the twelfth session.

G. Item 7: Consideration of some matters of relevance to the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable development

33. The President of AMCEN will invite the Minister of Environment of Zimbabwe to introduce this agenda item, before inviting his fellow ministers to deliberate on the matters relevant to the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

H. Item 8: Venue for the thirteenth session

34. The President of AMCEN will introduce the item. The thirteenth session of AMCEN is to be hosted by a member State from West Africa. In the absence of any offers, the President will propose that the thirteenth session should be hosted by UNEP in Nairobi, the seat of the secretariat.

I. Item 9: Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment

35. The Rapporteur will introduce the draft report of the ministerial segment. The agreed draft decisions will be introduced by the President. It should be noted that, in the intervening period while the report of the ministerial segment is being prepared, the President of AMCEN will invite the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility, the executive secretaries of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Montreal Protocol and the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to address briefly the twelfth session.

J. Item 10: Other matters

36. Major issues of interest not included in the agenda will be discussed.

37. It is proposed that any Government that introduces any other matter should be in a position to provide the secretariat with a copy of a background document for circulation during the session. An English version of such a text must be made available. Should there be need for a decision to be taken, a draft text should also be available, in English.

K. Item 11: Closure of the session

38. The President of AMCEN will bring the session to a formal closure after an exchange of courtesies.

Annex I

List of documents

UNEP/AMCEN/12/1	Provisional agenda of the ministerial segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda of the ministerial segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/3	Report of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/4	Status of implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
UNEP/AMCEN/12/4/ Add. 1	Status of the implementation of decisions taken by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its eleventh session and other related activities during the period from June 2006 to June 2008
UNEP/AMCEN/12/5A	Draft revised constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/5B	Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/6	Introductory document – Subregional environmental action plans and the NEPAD national action plans on the environment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1	Provisional agenda of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda of the expert group segment
UNEP/AMCEN/EGM/12/3	Draft indicative work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (2009–2010)
Information documents	
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/1	Information note on the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/2	Overview on the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/3	Report of the twenty-second meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/4	Report of the twenty-first meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/5	Report of the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Annex II

Programme of work for the ministerial segment, 10 -12 June 2008

Tuesday, 10 June 2008	
3 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Item 1: Opening of the ministerial segment
5 p.m. – 5.15 p.m.	Launch of the publication <i>Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment</i>
5.15 p.m. – 5.45 p.m.	Coffee break
5.45 p.m. – 7 p.m.	Item 2: Organizational matters <i>Item 2 (a):</i> Election of officers and handing over of presidency <i>Item 2 (b):</i> Adoption of the agenda <i>Item 2 (c):</i> Organization of work (documents UNEP/AMCEN/12/1 and UNEP/AMCEN/12/1/Add.1)
Wednesday, 11 June 2008	
9 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.	Item 3: Consideration of the report of the expert group segment (document UNEP/AMCEN/12/3)
9.30 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	Item 4: Ministerial policy dialogue (documents UNEP/AMCEN/12/4 and UNEP/AMCEN/12/4/Add.1)
10.30 a.m. – 11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.	Item 4 (continued)
12.30 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.	Lunch
2.30 p.m. – 3.45 p.m.	Item 5 (a): Amendments to the constitution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (documents: UNEP/AMCEN/12/5A)
	Item 5 (b): Status of the general trust fund of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (documents UNEP/AMCEN/12/5B)
3.45 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.	Coffee break
4.15 p.m. – 5.15 p.m.	Item 6: Country and subregion case studies (document UNEP/AMCEN/12/6)
Thursday, 12 June 2008	
9 a.m. – 9.45 a.m.	Item 7: Consideration of some matters of relevance to the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
9.45 a.m. – 10.45 a.m.	Consideration of the Johannesburg Declaration and decisions of the twelfth session
10.45 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.	Coffee break
11.15 a.m. – noon	Consideration of the Johannesburg Declaration and decisions of the twelfth session
noon – 12.30 p.m.	Item 8: Venue for the thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
12.30 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.	Lunch
2.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	Invited presentations; preparation of report
3.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	Item 9: Adoption of the report of the ministerial segment
4.30 p.m. – 4.45 p.m.	Coffee break
4.45 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Item 10: Other matters
5 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.	Item 11: Closure of the session