



African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Distr.
General

UNEP/AMCEN/12/INF/2
12 May 2008

Original: English

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
Twelfth session
Johannesburg, 7–12 June 2008

Subregional environmental action plans and the NEPAD national action plans on the environment – an introductory account

1. Capacity-building underpins the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Agenda 21 (chapter 37) defines capacity-building as encompassing "the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environmental potentials and limits and of needs as perceived by the people of the country concerned. As a result, the need to strengthen national capacities is shared by all countries". Capacity-building is a knowledge-intensive process requiring the continuous upgrading of skills, organizational capabilities, policies and laws and is therefore a long-term and dynamic process.
2. African countries face numerous challenges in their efforts to implement their commitments under global environmental conventions and to achieve sustainable development. Since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, many agreements and related regulatory instruments have been adopted at the international level to conserve and manage the natural environment and to guide human activities for sustainable development. Today, there are well over 200 relevant multilateral agreements concluded on environmental subjects as diverse as biological diversity, biosafety, transboundary long-range air pollution, the law of the sea, climate change, toxic substances, desertification and protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Several environmental agreements have been concluded at the regional and subregional levels.
3. Building the capacity of African countries to implement global environmental conventions has been recognized as one of the priority challenges in the attainment of sustainable development. This recognition is articulated in decisions of conferences of the parties to all major global and regional environmental conventions. As the financial mechanism of the conventions signed in Rio de Janeiro, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) recognized such a need by initiating in 1996 enabling activities and an initiative known as the Capacity Development Initiative. There is a growing commitment by African countries themselves and the international community to investing in strategic and coherent activities that build the region's capacity to implement conventions in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.
4. One of the priority goals of the NEPAD environment initiative is to build Africa's capacity to implement environmental conventions and such related international legal instruments as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. To respond to such an urgent need, a strategic plan for capacity-building for Africa – to attain the capacity-building goals of the environment

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initiative – has been developed. The plan was organized around clusters of activities and processes that would be implemented over a five-year period (see annex II to the present document).

5. The proposed activities targeted specific needs identified by African countries themselves. The countries were also expected to take overall leadership in implementing the plan, which would build on and complement the GEF Capacity Development Initiative and would aim to attain its overall objectives. The plan was endorsed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) at the first Partners' Conference on the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD, held in Algiers in December 2003. AMCEN has therefore been implementing aspects of the plan since December 2003.

6. Since capacity-building had been identified as a key element for the effective implementation of NEPAD and its environmental action plan, a capacity-building initiative was adopted in Cairo in October 2003 by the Steering Committee of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/GEF medium-sized project on NEPAD at its fifth meeting and by the first Partners' Conference.

7. At its tenth session, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in June 2004, AMCEN again emphasized the importance of capacity-building in implementing the action plan and the need to develop subregional action plans as part of capacity-building for the implementation of the NEPAD environment initiative. At that session, AMCEN requested UNEP to provide technical support to the regional economic communities in the development of subregional action plans.

8. The capacity-building initiative comprises the following components:

- (a) Development of a partnership approach for the implementation of the action plan;
- (b) Preparation of subregional NEPAD environment initiative action plans;
- (c) Strengthening the capacity of African countries to implement global and regional environmental agreements of relevance to the action plan;
- (d) Development and implementation of a comprehensive training strategy for the implementation of the action plan;
- (e) Identifying and strengthening African centres of excellence and specialist networks.

9. Since the beginning of 2004, the NEPAD secretariat has been working closely with UNEP/GEF on finalizing the UNEP/GEF-led medium-sized project for a capacity-building programme for the development of subregional environmental action plans. The project received funding from GEF and the Governments of Belgium and Norway and was aimed at assisting African countries in implementing the NEPAD environmental action plan. The main components of the project were:

- (a) The development of five subregional environmental action plans;
- (b) Human and institutional capacity-building;
- (c) Synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

10. An account of the development of the five subregional action plans in Africa is given in the present document. The secretariats of NEPAD and AMCEN, in addition to UNEP/GEF, worked together to ensure the project's completion. It is envisaged that they would also collaborate during the implementation phase of the subregional environmental action plans. Description of the work undertaken regarding the two other components (i.e., human and institutional capacity-building and synergistic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements) is contained in document UNEP/AMCEN/11/3/Add.1.

11. The objective of this component of the medium-sized project was to develop five subregional environmental action plans, each covering a different subregion: North Africa; the Economic Community of West African States; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; the Economic Community of Central African States and the Southern African Development Community, respectively. The action plans were developed in such a way as to ensure ownership by the subregions and to take into account the peculiarities of each subregion.

12. In that context, UNEP, GEF and the NEPAD secretariat provided financial and technical support to the regional economic communities to develop the action plans for all the subregions in Africa. Consultative meetings of experts – which included representatives of regional economic communities, national ministries of environment and civil society organizations, together with development partners working in the region – were held to review each of the draft action plans. The meetings were held in Central Africa (Libreville), Eastern Africa (Djibouti), Northern Africa (Algiers),

Southern Africa (Gaborone) and West Africa (Abuja) during 2005. The revised draft action plans were also circulated to countries, regional economic communities and development partners for their further comments.

13. Ministerial-level consultative meetings on the action plans for Eastern, Central, Southern, North and West Africa were held from 28 to 30 March, on 7 and 8 April, from 25 to 27 April, on 4 and 5 June and from 25 to 27 June 2007, respectively. The main objectives of the ministerial level meetings were to review the finalized action plans with a view to their endorsement by the ministers of environment in the respective subregions and to discuss the modalities, where appropriate, for submitting the action plans to the respective councils of the regional economic communities.

14. The action plans were endorsed by the ministers of the various subregions, who requested the respective vice-presidents to submit their plans to AMCEN at its twelfth session, scheduled to be held in South Africa in June 2008. Accordingly, these action plans will be submitted by the respective vice-presidents of AMCEN at the Conference's twelfth session. The resolutions adopted by the ministers in the subregions can be found in annex I to the present document. The reports on the action plans will be published and circulated to member States in due course.

15. In response to the request from AMCEN for the development of NEPAD national action plans on the environment, the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, with financial support from Norway, has provided assistance to five pilot countries to develop such action plans. Initial consultations on the development of the national action plans for Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mozambique have been held. These involved field missions to the above-mentioned countries. Those countries will make a presentation on the development of the NEPAD national action plans in their respective countries to the twelfth session of AMCEN.

Annex I

Central Africa

Ministerial resolutions

Resolution on the Central Africa sub-regional environmental action plan

We, the Ministers of Environment of Central Africa sub-region,

Referring to the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 and its chapter VIII on sustainable development for Africa,

Referring to the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000,

Referring also to the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted on 16 September 2002 by the General Assembly, at a high-level plenary meeting,

Referring to the adoption of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in July 2003 by the African Union Summit held in Maputo, Mozambique,

Considering the priorities outlined in the sub-regional environmental action plan for Central African States to combat the deterioration of soils and desertification,

Considering the need to integrate various plans and actions with the aim of harmonizing them at the sub-region level,

Considering the enactments of the Treaty establishing the Commission of Central Africa Forests (COMIFAC) and its related organizations, whose mission is among other things, to facilitate the harmonization of national policies regarding the environment and forests,

Recognizing the efforts being made to implement the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Congratulating the African Union, the NEPAD Secretariat, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and the Economic Community of Central African States for their coordinating and facilitating role in the implementation of the action plan for the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD),

Decide to:

Endorse the sub-regional environmental action plan for Central African States;

Invite the Central African representative on the Bureau of the African ministerial conference on the environment to submit the said Action plan for endorsement at the 12th ordinary session for adoption;

Require the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to make arrangements for the implementation of the Action Plan of the NEPAD initiative for central Africa;

Invite ECCAS to make arrangements to coordinate the implementation of the sub-regional environmental action plan for Central African States jointly with other sub - regional organizations and central African States;

Request that Central African States make arrangements to initiate the implementation of the sub-regional environmental action plan for Central African States.

Done in Brazzaville, 08 April 2007

Resolution on the general policy of the economic states of Central Africa on matters related to the environment and management of natural resources

We, the Ministers of Environment of Central Africa sub-region,

Referring to the Libreville Treaty of 18th October 1983, establishing the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), including its Articles 4, 43 and 54, defining the crucial mission of ECCAS, as being, among others, to harmonize States' policies concerning sustainable management of natural resources,

Considering the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held in June 1992,

Considering, the Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development of August 2002,

Considering the recommendations of the African Union Commission on the rationalization and the revitalization of the continent's regional institutions,

Persuaded of the need to unite with the view to having joint and responsible management of our natural resources for the benefit of future as well as current generations,

Reaffirming our commitment to cooperate with each other on the issues of environment and management of natural resources within the structure of the ECCAS mandate on the conservation of ecosystems and the biodiversity of the Central African region ,

Considering the need to increase partners' assistance to development for sustainable management of the natural resources of our states under the auspices of ECCAS,

Expressing the will to reinforce regional integration in the framework of the Pan African Process on the protection of the environment supported by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the NEPAD Secretariat,

Taking into account the priorities outlined in the sub-regional environmental action plan to combat the deterioration of soils and desertification,

Considering the need to integrate various plans and programs with the aim of reconciling actions at the sub-regional level;

Considering the enactments of the Treaty establishing the Commission of Central African Forests (COMIFAC) and its related organizations which state that its mission is, among others, to facilitate the harmonization of national policies on forests and the environment;

Recognizing that the forest is one of shared natural resources of Central Africa and that its concerted management can contribute effectively to subregional integration and the safeguarding of the environment,

Having endorsed the subregional environmental action plan for Central African States,

Decide to:

Endorse the General Policies of the ECCAS relating to the environment and natural resources ;

Request that the Economic Community for Central African States:

- Establish a network of national focal points for the sub-regional environmental action plan for Central African States;
- Make arrangements for its implementation in accordance with its decision making processes and the subregional environmental action plan for Central Africa;
- Enhance the capacity of the proposed Management of environment and natural resources with the aim of strengthening it and making it operational;
- Start a process of mobilizing the necessary resources for the implementation of the said policies in States, particularly as concerns the strengthening of their operational capacities;

- Organise an annual meeting of ministers responsible for the environment in this subregion.

Done in Brazzaville, 08th April 2007
The Ministerial Conference.

Vote of Thanks

We, the participants at this meeting of Ministers of Environment of Central Africa,

Express our deep gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Congo for accepting to host this meeting in their country and for the warm reception we received during our stay in Congo.

We are particularly grateful to His Excellency Mr Denis SASSOU NGUESSO, President of the Republic of Congo, Head of State, Current President of the ECCAS, for without His kind support, our meeting would not have been held.

Done in Brazzaville, 08th April 2007
The Ministerial Conference

Eastern Africa

Ministerial resolutions

Resolution on the Eastern Africa sub-regional environmental action plan

We, the Ministers of Environment of Eastern Africa sub-region,

Recalling the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 and its chapter VIII on sustainable development for Africa,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000,

Recalling also the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted on 16 September 2002 by the General Assembly, at a high-level plenary meeting,

Recalling the adoption of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in July 2003 by the African Union Summit held in Maputo, Mozambique,

Acknowledging the efforts being made to implement the action plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling Decision 1 of the tenth regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Sirte, Libya in June 2004, regarding the development of the Sub-regional Environmental Action Plans of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Expressing our appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility for their support in the development and of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Acknowledging the role of the African Union, NEPAD Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in coordinating and facilitating the development of the Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan as an integral part of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Resolve to:

Endorse the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

Invite the Eastern Africa representative on the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan to the twelfth regular session of AMCEN for adoption;

Urge Eastern African Regional Economic Communities to take measures to initiate the implementation of the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

Call upon the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development to take measures to initiate coordination, in collaboration with the East African Community, to implement the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

Urge Eastern African countries to take measures to initiate the implementation of the Eastern Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Resolution of the Ministers of IGAD member States on the environment and natural resources

We, Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources of IGAD member states of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, have held a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on March 30 2007;

Convinced that the severe degradation of natural resources, and the environment have resulted in high vulnerability of the livelihoods of the population and posed a great threat to sustainable development of the region,

Reaffirming our commitment to cooperate in the field of environmental protection and management of natural resources of the region in accordance with the Charter Establishing IGAD,

Noting the need for increased donor assistance through existing instruments and facilities based on commitment made at previous UN forums including the UN Rio-de Janeiro Declaration; the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Expressing the desire to enhance integration into the Pan-African Environment Protection Process as outlined by AMCEN and NEPAD and endorsed by AU in Maputo in July 2003 on management of environment and natural resources,

Recalling the 11th IGAD Summit Decisions of March 2006 on measures to intensify the cooperation between Secretariats of IGAD, NEPAD and Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, in the implementation of the IGAD Sub-regional Action Plan; within the context of the implementation of the UNCCD,

Having considered and endorsed the NEPAD sub-regional Action Plan for Eastern Africa, the recommendations from the IGAD Environment Outlook and the IGAD Environment and Natural Resources Strategy,

Resolve to:

Develop common approaches in national environmental policies taking into account peculiarities and interests of each country including, harmonizing environmental policies and strategies, environment management tools such as economic instruments, effective implementation of national and sub-regional environmental action plans; as well as the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building;

Create a regional information network in the field of environmental protection and management of natural resources taking into account existing national, sub-regional and regional initiatives;

Encourage Private-Public Partnership to tackle the environmental problems in accordance with IGAD Summit Decision of 2002 in Khartoum, Sudan;

Enhance synergies among and implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Conventions to which our member states are Parties;

Enhance synergies and collaboration with other organizations of the region involved in the field of environment and natural resources;

Call upon international community, donor countries, non-state actors and other interested parties to support and assist IGAD countries in their efforts of managing and maintaining the sustainability of the natural ecosystems and the livelihoods of the people of the region.

In this regard, we request IGAD Secretariat to:

Establish a Ministerial Sectoral Committee of IGAD Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources to direct IGAD Secretariat on issues of environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources;

Create a regional **eminent expert committee** composed of independent experts in environmental issues, to advise the Secretariat and make recommendations to the envisaged IGAD Committee of Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources;

Organize once every two years, sensitization conferences and tours for Parliamentarians and other high level decision and policy makers with a view to developing or strengthening environmental legislations, policies and strategies in the Member states; **and mobilizing** resources for convening the experts meeting, ministerial meeting and the regional parliamentarian conference; and

Implement the endorsed IGAD Strategy on Environment and Natural resources with other sub-regional interventions consistent with the main IGAD Strategy.

We express our deep gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting this Ministerial Meeting and further call upon and mandate the Minister of Kenya as the current Chair of IGAD to bring this resolution to the attention of the next council of Ministers and to the IGAD Summit

North Africa

Resolution of ministers and heads of delegation of North Africa made at the High-Level segment of the consultative meeting on the subregional environmental action plan for North Africa held in Tripoli, Libya Arab Jamahiriya on 5 June 2007

We, the Ministers of Environment and Heads of Delegation of North Africa sub-region,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000,

Recalling the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 and its chapter VIII on sustainable development for Africa,

Recalling also the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted on 16 September 2002 by the General Assembly, at a high-level plenary meeting,

Recalling the adoption of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in July 2003 by the African Union Summit held in Maputo, Mozambique,

Recalling the outcome of the Partners Conference on the action plan for the environment initiative of NEPAD held in Algiers, Algeria in December 2003,

Acknowledging the efforts being made to implement the action plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling Decision 1 of the tenth regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Sirte, Libya in June 2004, regarding the development of the Sub-regional Environmental Action Plans of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling also the 9th Summit of CENSAD held in Sirte, Libya on 2 and 3 June 2007 expressing their concern on environmental issues in the region,

Expressing our appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility for their support in the development and of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Acknowledging the role of the African Union, NEPAD Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in coordinating and facilitating the development of the Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan as an integral part of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Expressing our deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for hosting this Ministerial Meeting and the hospitality accorded to us,

Resolve:

To endorse the North Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To invite the North Africa representative on the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit the North Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan to the twelfth regular session of AMCEN for adoption;

To urge Arab Maghreb Union in collaboration with the Sahel and Sahara Observatory and other Institutions to take measures to initiate the implementation of the North Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To call upon the Arab Maghreb Union to initiate a mechanism for coordination with Sahel and Sahara Observatory and other subregional Institutions to implement the North Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To urge North African countries to take measures to initiate the implementation of the North Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

West Africa

Ministerial meeting for the endorsement of the NEPAD sub-regional environmental action plan for West Africa Accra, Ghana 25-27 June 2007

Resolution on the sub-regional environmental action plan of the environment initiative of NEPAD for West Africa

We, the Ministers of Environment of the West Africa sub-region,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000,

Recalling the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, from 26 August to 4 September 2002 and its chapter VIII on sustainable development for Africa,

Recalling also the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted on 16 September 2002 by the General Assembly, at a high-level plenary meeting,

Recalling the adoption of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in July 2003 by the African Union Summit held in Maputo, Mozambique,

Recalling the outcome of the Partners Conference on the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD held in Algiers, Algeria in December 2003,

Acknowledging the efforts being made to implement the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling Decision 1 of the tenth regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Sirte, Libya in June 2004, regarding the development of the sub-Regional Environmental Action Plans of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling the decision of the African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2007 endorsing the establishment of the African Environment Facility and requesting the African Development Bank to ensure its establishment,

Expressing our appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility for their support in the development of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Acknowledging the role of the African Union, NEPAD Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in coordinating and facilitating the development of the sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan as an integral part of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Acknowledging the need to promote synergies and complementarity among the different sub-regional environmental policies, strategies and action plans to ensure better coordination and collaboration in their implementation,

Expressing our deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana for hosting this Ministerial Meeting and the hospitality accorded to us,

Resolve:

To endorse the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To invite the West Africa representative on the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to submit the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan to the twelfth regular session of AMCEN for adoption;

To urge ECOWAS in collaboration with UEMOA and CILSS and other Institutions to take measures to initiate the implementation of the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To urge ECOWAS to coordinate with other sub-Regional organizations to ensure synergies, coherence and complementarity in the implementation of the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in line with other sub-Regional policies, strategies and action plans;

To call upon ECOWAS to initiate a mechanism for coordination with UEMOA and CILSS and other sub-regional Institutions to implement the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To urge West African countries to take measures to initiate the implementation of the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To urge West African countries to take measures to integrate the West Africa Sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development into national development strategies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategies, as well as in national environment management strategies and action plans;

To urge West African countries to provide an enabling environment for the participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in the implementation of the West Africa sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To request West African countries to take measures to integrate environmental assets into national accounting systems;

To request West Africa countries to take appropriate measure to make adequate national budgetary allocations for the implementation of the priority programmes of the West Africa Sub-regional Environmental Action Plan;

To call upon the United Nations Environment Programme to collaborate with the NEPAD Secretariat and the African Development Bank for resource mobilization to support the implementation of the priority programmes of the West Africa Sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;

To call upon the Global Environment Facility to allocate resources in support of the implementation of the West Africa Sub-Regional Environmental Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Done in Accra, Ghana on 27 June, 2007
Ministerial Meeting

Annex II

Strategic plan to build Africa's capacity to implement global and regional environmental conventions (Excerpt from the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD)

Introduction

1. Agenda 21 (chapter 37) defines capacity-building as encompassing "the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity-building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environmental potentials and limits and of needs as perceived by the people of the country concerned. As a result, the need to strengthen national capacities is shared by all countries". It is a knowledge-intensive process requiring the continuous upgrading of skills, organizational capabilities, policies and laws. Capacity-building is therefore a long-term and dynamic process.

2. Building the capacity of African countries to implement global environmental conventions has been recognized as one of the priority challenges in the attainment of sustainable development. This recognition is articulated in decisions of conferences of the parties to all major global and regional environmental conventions. As the financial mechanism of the conventions signed in Rio de Janeiro, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) recognized such a need by initiating in 1996 enabling activities and an initiative known as the Capacity Development Initiative. There is a growing commitment by African countries themselves and the international community to investing in strategic and coherent activities that build the region's capacity to implement conventions in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

3. GEF, through its Capacity Development Initiative, has supported a number of assessments of national and regional capacity needs. National capacity needs assessments are aimed at identifying and clarifying the specific human resource, institutional, financial, policy and other capacity requirements of countries. They provide the necessary basis for formulating and implementing national and regional capacity-building programmes.

4. One of the priority goals of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is to build Africa's capacity to implement environmental conventions and such related international legal instruments as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. To respond to such an urgent need, the Strategic Plan for Capacity-Building for Africa (SPCB) - to achieve capacity-building goals of the Environment Initiative - has been developed. The plan is organized around clusters of activities and processes that will be implemented over a five-year period. The proposed activities target specific needs identified by African countries themselves. The countries will also take overall leadership in implementing this plan. The suggested plan will build on and complement the GEF Capacity Development Initiative and will aim at achieving its overall objectives. It will be submitted to the donors' meeting to be held in December 2003 on the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

5. African countries face numerous challenges in their efforts to implement their commitments under global environmental conventions and to achieve sustainable development. Since the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, many agreements and related regulatory instruments have been adopted at the international level to conserve and manage the natural environment and to guide human activities for sustainable development. Today, there are well over 200 relevant multilateral agreements concluded on environmental subjects as diverse as biological diversity, biosafety, transboundary long-range air pollution, the law of the sea, climate change, toxic substances, desertification and protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Several environmental agreements have been concluded at the regional and subregional levels.

6. The implementation of global environmental conventions must necessarily be carried out at the national level. Unfortunately, many African countries lack the capacity to fully implement the complex provisions of this growing body of international law. Building the capacity of these countries to do so must now be given top priority. Such capacity-building, however, must be informed by and based on the country's own needs and priorities.

7. Africa's priorities for the implementation of these conventions can generally be drawn out of national reports, strategies and action plans, statements by delegations at meetings of conferences of the parties, project proposals submitted to financial institutions and donors, reports of national workshops and country studies. Africa's capacity needs include the following:

- (a) Development of adequate national policy frameworks for the effective implementation of global and regional conventions;
- (b) Coordinated preparation and implementation of national, legal and regulatory frameworks to comprehensively address the complexity of issues covered by global conventions;
- (c) Promotion and enhancement of adequate institutional mechanisms for the implementation of such frameworks, including strengthening the role of environmental institutions;
- (d) Promotion and enhancement mechanisms for environmental information, including coordination, integration and delivery to identified targets, particularly those involved in the policy and decision-making process;
- (e) Promotion and enhancement of mechanisms required for regional cooperation on issues of common concern such as the management of shared ecosystems, in conformity with existing agreements between the countries concerned, including, for example, migratory species, trade in endangered species, shared coastal and inland water bodies, transboundary river basins, pollution and exchange of information and expertise;
- (f) Promotion of information on and understanding of the status of and trends in environmental degradation, vulnerability to climate change, impacts of land degradation and desertification and implications of biodiversity loss in addition to a variety of other environmental challenges is still modest in many African countries;
- (g) Enhancement of the negotiating and technical skills of the African representatives at the meetings of the major global conventions;
- (h) Public awareness of global conventions and related sustainable development instruments.

Objectives

8. The overall objective of SPCB is to enable African countries to implement in a coordinated and comprehensive manner their commitments under global and regional environmental conventions and other international legal instruments. It will also promote sharing of experiences at the national, subregional and regional levels and encourage South-South cooperation.

9. SPCB is being developed and will be implemented through partnership among Africans themselves and between them and the international community. It will take a comprehensive approach to the development of the capacities needed by African countries to fulfill their commitments under global and regional environmental agreements. It is process-oriented and aims at maximizing impact at the national and regional levels. As stated above, the plan focuses on capacity needs identified by countries themselves. The following are the specific objectives of SPCB:

- (a) To support African countries to generate and use relevant knowledge and information to implement their commitments under global environmental conventions;
- (b) To assist African countries to implement the capacity-building provisions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;
- (c) To support African countries in implementing the capacity-building provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
- (d) To assist countries to implement the capacity-building decisions adopted by the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP);

- (e) To assist African countries to implement the capacity-building decisions adopted at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2001;
- (f) To support African countries to prepare for the entry into force and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to UNFCCC;
- (g) To support countries in creating skills for negotiating and participating at meetings of parties to global environmental conventions;
- (h) To support the implementation of national, subregional and regional policies and related legal capacity-building for the implementation of environmental conventions;
- (i) To strengthen national, subregional and regional institutional arrangements for the implementation of global environmental conventions and related sustainable development instruments;
- (j) To assist countries to implement capacity-building decisions and activities of chemicals and waste-related conventions, including through existing regional mechanisms;
- (k) To assist the least developed countries (LDCs) of Africa to prepare and implement national adaptation programmes pursuant to the decision of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC adopted at its seventh session;
- (l) To support African countries in implementing the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa and the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention) and to prepare for the entry into force and the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm Convention) and the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade;
- (m) To strengthen the capacity of African countries to implement regional seas conventions and related regional and global programmes of action;
- (n) To support countries in implementing the environmental pillar (in particular those aspects related to global environmental conventions) of the Johannesburg Summit Plan of Implementation;
- (o) To promote the maximization of synergies between environmental and other global and regional conventions.

Guiding principles and elements

10. The design, preparation and implementation of SPCB shall be guided by the following principles:

- (a) It should be consistent with African national priorities and needs as contained in national action plans and strategies as well as national reports on the implementation of relevant conventions submitted to the conferences of the parties;
- (b) It should be consistent with the relevant provisions of environmental conventions and the guidance of their conferences of the parties;
- (c) It should be country-driven, with the full participation of major stakeholders, in particular the representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, women and youth;
- (d) It should be flexible so as to be adaptable to the evolving needs and priorities of countries;
- (e) It should follow the principle of learning by doing and take a step-by-step approach;
- (f) It should be a continuous, progressive and interactive process;
- (g) It should be undertaken in an effective, efficient, integrated and programmatic manner;
- (h) It should mobilize and enhance national, subregional and regional institutions and build on existing processes and endogenous capacities;

- (i) It should take into full consideration the specific needs of the LDCs of Africa;
- (j) It should be consistent and in conformity with other activities of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD;
- (k) It should assist in the implementation of the environment component of the Millennium Declaration adopted in September 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly;
- (l) It should build on existing bilateral and multilateral capacity-building initiatives;
- (m) It should complement, support or be part of the GEF Capacity Development Initiative.

Activities

11. To achieve the above objectives, the activities below may be considered and developed.

Human resources development

12. One of the capacity requirements of many African countries is human skills or expertise in policy, legal, technical and scientific aspects or issues emerging from environmental conventions and related protocols. Generally, the expertise necessary to translate the provisions of conventions into concrete national activities, policies and laws is in short supply in many countries. The countries have often identified shortage of skills in such areas as taxonomy, climate science, environmental economics and environmental law. There is also a shortage of expertise or skills for negotiating environmental agreements.

13. To support the building and strengthening of Africa's human resources base for the implementation of environmental conventions and related sustainable development instruments, the following activities may be considered:

- (a) Preparation and review of appropriate training course modules on environmental conventions;
- (b) Identification and selection of appropriate regional and international training institutions;
- (c) Preparation of specific training projects. These will focus on specific capacity needs of countries. The training may be offered as short and long courses, depending on specific needs. Emphasis will be placed on developing a core of skills or critical mass of expertise that can be shared across the continent. This critical mass will also be utilized for training. Specific training courses on negotiations, with emphasis on different approaches and tools for negotiating conventions, may be developed;
- (d) Frequent review and evaluation of training projects.

Public education and awareness raising

14. The achievement of the objectives of global environmental conventions by African countries largely depends on the extent to which their general public and decision makers are aware of the conventions and their respective national obligations. Public and decision makers' support to and ownership of the conventions are very crucial to national implementation.

15. Most global environmental conventions recognize the importance of educating the public and increasing public awareness of the conventions. The Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, has devoted its article 13 to measures aimed at public education and awareness. Article 13 calls on parties to the Convention to "cooperate, as appropriate, with other States and international organizations in developing educational and public awareness programmes, with respect to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity." Public education and awareness considerations are also integrated into the Convention to Combat Desertification, UNFCCC and the Stockholm Convention.

16. Within the framework of SPCB, specific activities will be developed to implement the public education and awareness provisions of global environmental agreements. Recognizing that countries have developed or will develop their own priorities and activities on public education and awareness, the following activities may be considered:

- (a) Development of common strategies to integrate issues on environmental conventions into education at all levels. This may involve review and revision of school and university curricula;
- (b) Establishment of a regional environmental education programme to be coordinated through a network of centres of excellence;
- (c) Supporting university and other tertiary research and educational activities on environmental policy and law. In addition, encouraging and supporting the establishment of interdisciplinary environmental courses in African universities;
- (d) Supporting countries to develop and provide appropriate information packages to the public, if possible in their national languages;
- (e) Supporting countries to establish media facilities that focus on global environmental conventions and related sustainable development issues;
- (f) Organizing regional youth environmental sessions and putting emphasis on dissemination of information on global environmental conventions;
- (g) Encouraging and supporting non-governmental organizations to increase their involvement in environmental awareness building, with emphasis on issues on and emerging from global conventions.

Strengthening institutions and improving coordination

17. The capability of African countries to fulfill their commitments under global environmental agreements largely depends on the nature and capacities of institutions that they establish and how such institutions are configured to achieve synergies in their operations. As already stated above, the implementation of conventions is often not effectively achieved because of weak institutions at the national, subregional and regional levels. Strengthening the capacity of institutions, particularly to develop and negotiate appropriate mandates and modus operandi as well as appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, will be one of the key priorities of SPCB.

18. On the basis of the specific priorities of African countries, SPCB may focus on the following:

- (a) Supporting countries to strengthen the mandate and capacities of the relevant institutions responsible for the implementation of global and regional environmental conventions;
- (b) Promoting coordination of and synergies among national, subregional and regional institutions responsible for the implementation of conventions;
- (c) Supporting the strengthening of AMCEN and participation of subregional and regional economic bodies in the negotiation and implementation of conventions;
- (d) Promoting the establishment and/or strengthening of centres of excellence in environmental law, policy and science and strengthening their participation in regional processes on conventions.

Supporting the development of information systems and related environmental assessments

19. The absence of adequate and relevant information and data has been identified as one of the capacity needs for the implementation of global and regional environmental conventions. In addition, the capacity to generate, manage and effectively use information and data on various aspects of environmental management and governance is in short supply in Africa. Meeting commitments under global conventions will require African countries to strengthen their capacity to generate, manage and use relevant information and data.

20. To contribute to the building of capacity to implement information and environmental assessment-related provisions of global conventions, and building on such ongoing efforts as the African Environment Outlook produced through AMCEN, SPCB may:

- (a) Support training of Africans in the assessment and information management aspects related to global environmental conventions;
- (b) Support national and regional capacity to collect and use multi-sectoral information in decision-making processes and build capacity to collect and analyze data and information for decision-making;
- (c) Consider supporting the establishment of a comprehensive regional information framework.

Mobilizing and strengthening the role of the scientific and technical communities

21. The implementation of global environmental conventions and related sustainable development instruments is a knowledge-intensive effort that largely requires scientific and technical knowledge. For African countries to meet their commitments, such as drawing up inventories, assessments and restoration of ecosystems, they require scientific and technical capacities.

22. SPCB will support African countries in mobilizing and utilizing their existing scientific and technical communities. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the role of existing science networks in negotiation, participation in meetings of the parties and scientific research. African science networks can play a major role in the mobilization of existing scientific skills and expertise, generation and provision of scientific information to policy makers and agencies, organizing and offering specialized training courses on environmental conventions, participation in project design and development with governmental agencies, and support to project review, monitoring and evaluation.

23. SPCB may support the mobilization of the scientific and technical communities by:

- (a) Assisting countries in the preparation of capacity profiles of African scientists working on various aspects of environmental conventions and related sustainable development;
- (b) Organizing or supporting the organization of meetings of regional science networks or academies to explore specific thematic issues on global conventions;
- (c) Promoting information exchange between African science networks and their counterparts in other regions of the world;
- (d) Supporting research through such networks on issues or problems identified as a priority by African countries;
- (e) Promoting information exchange through such means as newsletters or journals on environmental conventions.

Promoting South-South cooperation and sharing of experiences

24. The building of Africa's capacity to implement global and regional conventions can be achieved through the development of South-South cooperation and networking. South-South cooperation is crucial for enabling African countries to learn or to draw lessons from the capacity-building efforts of other developing countries and regions. In addition, South-South cooperation is important for purposes of training, information exchange and exchange of scientists. Some Asian and Latin American countries have developed expertise and experience that are useful to Africa's goals of building capacity to implement conventions.

25. In addition, South-South cooperation may be a source of institutional strengthening in Africa. African countries can learn from various institutional models developed in other developing countries. On the basis of the specific identified priorities of African countries, SPCB will promote South-South cooperation through activities that include the following:

- (a) Promotion of exchange and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned between Africa and other developing regions;
- (b) Strengthening of collaboration on issues of common interest at the regional, subregional and inter-regional levels among developing countries;
- (c) Promotion of sharing of information and experiences in the implementation of conventions.

Implementation modalities

26. SPCB will be a flexible, long-term framework so as to adjust its activities to the evolving needs and requirements of countries and their changing circumstances. It should be considered as a living document and be reviewed on a regular basis.

27. The implementation mechanism for this plan shall be the same as the mechanism for implementing the overall Environment Initiative of NEPAD. It will be implemented under the overall responsibility of AMCEN through its Bureau, which will be assisted by the steering committee for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD, which comprises representatives of the five members of the Bureau of AMCEN and the five founding members of NEPAD. The first meeting of this steering committee will identify and recommend for adoption to AMCEN, through its Bureau, a process of identifying relevant capable institutions to develop and implement the proposed activities. The steering committee will provide guidance to the process for developing each of the clusters of activities on the basis of needs and priorities of countries. It will report on a regular basis to AMCEN, through its Bureau, on the status of implementation of this plan.

28. The implementation action plan on capacity-building will be submitted to the donors' meeting to be held in Algiers in December 2003.
