

AFRICAN UNION

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ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION

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ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AN AFRICAN FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(Item proposed by the Republic of Congo)

**COVER NOTE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN PERMANENT
SECRETARIAT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND OF AN
AFRICAN FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

(Item proposed by the Republic of the Congo)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of the Congo, in conformity with the provisions of Article 8(2-d) of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the African Union, proposed an item on the agenda of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union scheduled to hold in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 1 to 3 February 2009. This item is entitled **“Establishment of an African Permanent Secretariat for Sustainable Development and of an African Fund for Sustainable Development”**.

This decision by the Republic of the Congo gives effect to a recommendation made by the 1 348 participants at the 6th World Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme “Africa, Environment and Globalization” which held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 27 to 30 October 2008. Participants included Heads of State and Government, sustainable development actors, representatives of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The prominent ones were:

- Heads of State and Government
 - H.E. Yayi Boni, President of the Republic of Benin;
 - H.E. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso;
 - H.E. Pierre Nkuruzinza, President of the Republic of Burundi;
 - H.E. Denis Sassou N'guesso, President of the Republic of the Congo;
 - H.E. Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire;
 - H.E. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic;
 - H.E. François Bozize Yangouvonda, President of the Central African Republic;
 - H.E. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe;

- H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic;
- H.E. Youssouf Saleh Abbas, Prime Minister of Chad, Representative of the President;
- Sustainable development actors:
 - Mrs. Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Laureate and Goodwill Ambassador for the Congo Basin Forests.
 - Institutions: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the French association *ADAPES*;
 - Representatives of Heads of State and Government: Egypt, France, Italy;
 - Local, regional and international civil society, scientists, researchers, economists, politicians, non-governmental organizations.

2. ISSUES OF CONCERN

The Brazzaville Declaration on Sustainable Development and Plan of Action raised the following issues of concern:

- the significance of the sustainable development concept for States and peoples of the world, in general, and for African peoples, in particular.
- in light of an assessment of sustainable development in Africa after the Earth Summit in Johannesburg and an analysis of the main factors of poverty, notably climate warming, environmental degradation and natural disasters, speedy growth of the population, energy and food crises, emerging diseases, depleting financial resources, African peoples are unlikely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.
- as factors of economic growth and means for curbing poverty, sustainable natural resource management and conservation require a large global partnership for the development of Africa;
- economic development of natural assets: the case of the Congo hydrological and forest Basin;

- unequal transfer of science and technology, as well as problems linked to education, health and training;
- financial flows of basic infrastructure for sustainable development, and financing and partnership mechanisms;
- efficient and ecological agriculture and trade policies, subsidies, interference and complementarity in market-oriented economy;
- environmental governance.

3. KEY IDEAS IN THE PROPOSAL

- The forests of the Congo Basin play an important role in atmospheric carbon gas capture; therefore, carbon generating countries should contribute to a carbon fund to be allocated to sustainable forest management and correlated agriculture.
- Providing food for people is a sustainable development imperative.
- It is vital to create conditions for lasting democracy and security in Africa, through a new contract which includes gender equality, urban growth, social and spatial mobility;
- Sustainable development also depends on the connectedness between education, health, research and inclusion of cultural diversity; this requires financing, rights and nonmarket access to public goods;
- Financing for development should be redirected to sustainable infrastructure, because of the decoupling between the financial sector and the real economy which led to the global crisis.

4. RESOURCES AND GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS FOR THE PROPOSAL

- execute measures contained in the Brazzaville Declaration, notably:
 - encourage African country initiatives in foodstuff production towards self-sufficiency and food security;
 - development of environmental services through ecotourism development initiatives throughout the entire African continent;

- encourage the creation of pan-African universities and promotion of centres and poles of excellence;
- encourage African country initiatives for effective implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014);
- invite African States to promote the construction of lasting, environment-friendly structures and *building* high environmental quality;
- invite the international community to fully apply the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/214 on the conservation and sustainable development of Central African forest ecosystems and to start a global project to harness the Congo River's hydroelectric potential for the production of pollution-free energy;
- recommend the adoption of production, marketing and management modes consistent with sustainable management requirements;
- invite the international community to pay constant attention to problems faced by Small Island Developing States.

5. PRECISE RESOURCES AND MECHANISMS RECOMMENDED TO THE 12TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION WITH A VIEW TO ENDORSING, ON THE ONE HAND, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, OF AN AFRICAN FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The establishment of a Permanent Secretariat under the auspices of the African Union should contribute to ownership by Africa of a highly sensitive dossier in the world today and which will serve as an interface with institutions that handle sustainable development issues, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

It should be emphasized that the United Nations Development Programme has shown its willingness to cooperate by contributing to the establishment of the said Permanent Secretariat.

Furthermore, given that the next Forum, the Second African Forum on Sustainable Development, will hold in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in 2009 and that the implementation process for Conference decisions will end only after the July 2009 Summit, a provisional Secretariat, composed of the present Secretariat and Burkina Faso, should be put in place.

Concerning the establishment of an African Fund for Sustainable Development, it should be admitted that Heads of State failed to honour their financial commitments and resources allocated to sustainable development have been inadequate. Similarly, the financial mechanisms are not only complex, but often inaccessible to Africans. In fact, it is crucial to establish a Fund, as a stopgap measure to complement existing structures, so as to render the current arrangement lighter, within the scope of an innovative and flexible mechanism which takes into account the realities.

This fund will not be another fund which competes with the African Environment Facility set up by the African Union. The fund, to be replenished by Member States, shall form the basis of that facility. The African Development Bank shall determine the organization, rules and operating mechanisms.

Lastly, the African Union Commission, in conjunction with the AfDB and the ECA, should set up a global monitoring mechanism, and submit a report on commitments taken and the criteria at the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in July 2009.

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