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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

REPORT OF MISSION  
ON  
AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
(AMCEN)

by

Regional Advisor on Environment and Development

Second Meeting of the African Technical Regional  
Environment Group (ATREG)

1. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environmental (AMCEN) was preceded by the meeting of the African Technical Regional Environment Group (ATREG) which was held from 20 to 21 May 1991. The following is a summary of the proceedings of ATREG.

2. The ATREG meeting was opened by Mr. W.H. Mansfield III, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP who stressed the need for ATREG experts to provide technical guidance to AMCEN to enable the full realization of the programme goals.

3. The officers of the meeting were as follows:

Gabon - Chairman  
Kenya - Vice Chairman  
Mauritius - )  
Mauritania - ) Rapporteurs  
Ghana and Burkina Faso - WASREG  
Uganda - EASREG  
Rwanda - CASREG  
Tanzania - SASREG  
Morocco - NASREG

4. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are attached as annex 1 and 2 respectively.

Trust fund proposal and parallel APPROACH for mobilization of  
resources for AMCEN programme

5. The secretariat introduced two documents on the subject, namely: An approach for funding an AMCEN programme: Establishment

of a trust fund (AMCEN 4/4) and Parallel approach for mobilizing resources for AMCEN programme (AMCEN 4/3).

6. The meeting noted that:

- (i) No donor would be willing to support AMCEN programme unless African Governments which initiated AMCEN were ready to make initial contributions to it;
- (ii) African Governments may utilize either of the approaches presented in the above documents in order to secure funding for their AMCEN activities.

7. The meeting made the following recommendations:

- (i) The secretariat should carry out before the 1992 UNCED an evaluation of the activities being undertaken at national level which have similar objectives to the Cairo programme including the extent of donors financial involvement in the projects;
- (ii) The secretariat should provide a detailed budget regarding the activities proposed for implementation under the Trust Fund;
- (iii) The secretariat should explore the possibility of the AMCEN Trust Fund benefiting from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Lome IV Convention.

8. The parallel approach (AMCEN Document 4/3) had been prepared with a view to enabling governments to evolve alternative strategies and financing for AMCEN projects. African Governments were urged to support the AMCEN programme by contributing to the AMCEN Trust Fund. Some projects could be funded on a bilateral or multilateral basis. Donors needed to be sensitized adequately in

order to strengthen their support to projects such as anti-desertification and afforestation.

9. The meeting agreed that the participation of non-governmental organization in the Cairo project was essential.

10. Under Agenda item No. 4, the meeting welcomed the Inventory (Document AMCEN 4/5) as a useful in-put into AMCEN programme. The secretariat was requested to provide the missing information on addresses telephone, telex and fax numbers of the organizations listed as well as the other amendments proposed by the delegates.

11. Agenda item No. 5 dealt with the AMCEN Task Force (Doc. AMCEN/TF.2). It was noted that there were duplications and overlapping in the functions of AMCEN organs, particularly the committee, ATREG and the SREG's, and that the major part of the expenditure had gone to organizational aspects leaving little for programme implementation. An ad hoc committee (Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan and Senegal, ECA and a consultant to the secretariat) were requested to reassess the AMCEN's operational and organizational structures. The ad hoc committee made the following recommendations:

12. The Conference:

- The Conference should be maintained as an African institution supported by the African Governments;

- The organization of the Conference sessions should allow it to meet in (1) plenary to receive national reports and consider global issues and to endorse decisions and resolutions including programmes for implementation and (2) committees to discuss technical issues including reports from ATREG.

13. The Bureau:

- The bureau should normally meet annually and should be concerned with the following tasks:

- (i) Monitoring and follow up on the recommendations of the Conference;
- (ii) Acting on behalf of the Conference between sessions and holding extraordinary meetings in emergency situations;
- (iii) Carrying out tasks assigned to it by the Conference regarding specific activities such as fund raising and representation of AMCEN at regional and global levels;
- (iv) Finalizing and approving the Agenda for the Conference sessions.

14. ATREG:

- African regional and subregional organizations should be invited to participate fully in the work of the IAWG.

16. Committees:

- The committees should be primarily conceived as committee's of the Conference. The Conference sessions should make provision in their agenda for meetings of these committees, each under the chairmanship of a bureau member, to consider the ATREG reports and recommendations related to the five principal ecosystems.

17. Networks

- Members of the IAWG should shoulder special responsibilities as regards the eight AMCEN networks according to the following list:

- (i) Environment monitoring network, UNEP/GEMS;
- (ii) Climatology network, WMO;
- (iii) Soils and fertilizers network, FAO;
- (iv) Energy network, ECA;
- (v) Water resources network, UN/DTCD;
- (vi) Genetic resources network, OAU;
- (vii) Environmental education and training network, UNEP;
- (viii) Science and technology network, UNESCO.

18. The secretariat:

- In the long term an independent AMCEN secretariat would be desirable. However, in the interim (two to five years) the secretariat should be a joint venture of UNEP, OAU and ECA. The secretariat should be provided with the means to undertake its coordinating and operational activities.

19. Financing and mobilization of resources

- Since the success of the AMCEN programme depends on availability of financial resources, African Governments should provide concrete financial resource commitment to the programme;

- The secretariat should provide a biennial programme document with the necessary budget to be endorsed by the Conference.

20. Agenda item 6 dealt with reports of the various SREGS which were noted by the meeting.

21. The meeting of the Bureau to the Fourth AMCEN session was considered under item No. 7 (document AMCEN 4/6). The meeting took note of the report and its recommendations. The meeting recommended that African Governments should be urged to ratify the Bamako Convention on the ban of the Import of all Forms of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements of such Wastes generated in Africa. The meeting further recommended that African Governments should be urged to take very concrete measures to protect and conserve their water resources in concert with global efforts being pursued by other countries and international organizations.

#### Fourth session of African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

22. The conference was held on 22-25 May 1991. It was preceded by the second meeting of the African Technical Regional Environment Group (see paragraphs 1-21 of the Report). The conference was opened by its President, Dr. Njoroge Mangai, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya. It was also addressed by H.E. Dr. Samson Kisekka, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda and the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. Mostafa Tolba.

In his speech, Dr. Mungai ascribed Africa's environmental problems to poverty combined with trade imbalances, inequitable pricing policies and the ever-increasing debt burden. On the question of creation of an AMCEN Trust Fund he informed the conference that only three positive responses had been received.

In his statement Dr. Kisekka observed that over-exploitation of natural resources in Africa had resulted in adverse environmental impacts. He urged the conference to devise ways and means to improve the transfer of technology to enhance mobilization of resources. He also stressed the need for collaborative effort at the subregional and regional levels as many of the environmental hazards knew no boundaries.

Dr. Mostafa Tolba informed the conference that Africa's recovery depended on home-grown enterprises as well as equitable treatment. He also emphasized that planners must henceforth integrate environmental concerns in development plans and actions. Finally, he emphasized the need for policy shifts to ensure that AMCEN programme became an integral part of national development plan. There was also need for packaging the AMCEN programme in order to attract more financial support from bilateral and multilateral sources. On the relocation of the AMCEN secretariat to Addis Ababa, Dr. Tolba said that he would have to wait to see who is the next Executive Secretary of ECA and what his/her view on the relocation of the secretariat at ECA in Addis Ababa.

23. The conference was attended by thirty-nine member States thirteen United Nations organizations, five intergovernmental organizations eight non-governmental, and four other organizations. The list of participants and the conference agenda appear as annex 3 and 4 respectively.

24. The conference considered agenda item four and made the following recommendations on each of the issues:

(i) Report of the bureau to the conference

25. The report was endorsed by the conference with the following observations:

- the bureau should take offers by Governments to host AMCEN conference seriously to avoid unnecessary inconvenience.
- in the long term an independent AMCEN secretariat would be desirable, however in the interim, the secretariat should be a joint venture of UNEP, OAU and ECA.



- the transfer of technology should be included among the emerging environmental issues.
  - African countries were urged to adopt a common stand on the Bamako convention on the Ban on Import of all Forms of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements of such Wastes generated in Africa.
26. - (ii) AMCEN trust fund and the parallel approach to mobilizing resources for AMCEN programme
- The conference endorsed the idea of a trust fund as well as the options proposed in the parallel approach for mobilization of resources for AMCEN programme. The President of the conference urged governments to make contributions - however small as an indication of their commitment.
  - Debt swaps and matching grant based on in kind contributions were also proposed as other ways of securing donor support to the AMCEN programme.
  - Delegates requested the secretariat to prepare detailed information on the programmes and budget as a basis for determining the level of contributions expected of governments. The results of these re-assessment should be circulated among member countries for their comments before being submitted to the next bureau meeting.
27. Presentation by the Economic Commission for Africa on the Regional Meeting for the UNCED.

After the presentation, the conference made the following observations:

- ECA was urged to incorporate into the document important elements relating to Africa's pressing environmental concerns such as education and training, public awareness and the involvement of people in critical areas of socio-cultural and economic development.
  - The role of AMCEN should be given greater and specific prominence in the document.
  - The reference to African environment agenda should read African environment and development agenda. In addition, the Bamako recommendations should be incorporated into the ECA paper.
- (ii) Policy shifts to ensure inclusion of AMCEN programme in development policies and plans of African governments;
- (iii) Repacking of AMCEN to attract more financial resources.
- The conference recommended that the bureau should discuss with the UNEP Executive Director about the integration of the AMCEN programme in UNEP-ROA with continued assistance from ECA and OAU.

28. Considerations of the recommendations of ATREG.

- Conference requested Executive Director of UNEP to hold consultations with executive heads of relevant United Nations agencies regarding the possibility of their organizations assuming responsibility as lead agencies in the work of the eight regional net works listed in paragraph 17.

AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN)  
SECOND AMCEN DONORS MEETING

29. The first AMCEN donors meeting was held in 1988 in Nairobi. Since then only a few African countries (e.g. Zimbabwe, Egypt) have managed to receive bilateral funding for their AMCEN projects.

30. The second donors meeting was held on 25 May 1991 under the new AMCEN President Hon. Mr. Jacques Baudin, Minister for Tourism and Protection of Nature of Senegal. Most of AMCEN Ministers were present. However, only a handful of the donors were represented - EEC, the Netherlands, U.K. Switzerland, Japan and Belgium.

31. The major issues on the agenda were as outlined below:

(i) Global environment facility (GEF)

32. It is a three year pilot programme to provide grants and low interest loans to developing countries to help them address problems of environmental degradation. The GEF (1.5 billion dollars) is a cooperative venture of World Bank, UNDP and UNEP and was established in November 1990 in Paris. The fund will support programmes in the following areas:

(a) reducing and limiting emission of greenhouse gases which cause global warming;

(b) preserving the earth's biological diversity and maintaining natural habitats;

(c) arresting the pollution of international waters;

(d) protecting the ozone layer from further depletion.

33. The facility's trust fund is administered by World Bank, and is responsible for GEF investment operations. It undertakes identification, appraisal and supervision of investment projects.

34. UNDP coordinates and manages the financing and execution of pre-investment and technical assistance activities. UNEP provides scientific and technological guidance in identifying and selecting projects; it coordinates research and data collection.

35. Proposals for funding are reviewed by World Bank, UNEP and UNDP in order to determine whether or not they qualify for GEF support. GEF grants are low-cost loans for supporting a country's programmes and activities. A project should contribute to the understanding of global environmental problems and their solutions, including training and other human resource development activities (technical assistance etc.).

36. Developing countries with per-capita gross domestic product at or below US\$400 in 1989 are eligible for GEF funding. New projects may be proposed by non-governmental organizations or governments. Financial support is also available for modification of existing projects.

(ii) Trust fund

37. When AMCEN was established in 1985, it was reckoned that it would be financed from two main sources:

(a) voluntary contributions by African governments from their IPF allotment or from their own resources; and

(b) contributions from donor countries and agencies.

38. Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to obtain funding either from governments or from donor communities to support

various AMCEN programmes and projects. This has resulted in UNEP supporting the essential programmes and activities of AMCEN. In addition to the Cairo programme conceived in 1985, other emerging environmental issues have surfaced for which AMCEN has to secure additional funding and technical expertise. They include issues such as global warming and climatic change, hazardous wastes disposal, the depletion of the ozone layer, and conservation of biological diversity.

11. An obvious approach, as recommended by the third session of AMCEN in May 1989 is to establish a Trust Fund by African governments and supported by donor community.

12. The fund would initially be administered by a United Nations body (UNEP) in order to ensure the necessary acceptability among the international and donor communities.

13. It is important to point out that assistance in the form of pledges or contributions from donor community can only be expected if African governments have demonstrated their commitment by making a reasonable initial contribution to AMCEN. The Trust Fund would be used to cover various activities such as the secretariat, regional net works, priority subregional activities, village and stock-raising pilot projects etc.

(iii) Parallel approach for mobilizing resources for AMCEN programme

14. Some of the options for parallel approaches for mobilization of funds for AMCEN include:

(a) the planning of activities in line with donor requirements;

(b) integrating the AMCEN programme into on-going programmes of global concern - e.g. Global environment facility;

(c) seeking ways of securing funds accrued as a result of debt burden relief by creditors.

15. Regarding (a) above, AMCEN secretariat has produced guidelines for designing AMCEN Pilot Projects to help member States. Specifically, the secretariat has outlined such issues as:

- contracting potential donors
- defining AMCEN pilot projects
- socio-economic and environmental objectives
- final project design.
- involving donors in project design in order to arouse interest.

#### Debate for sustainable development swaps

16. Africa's external debt has been increasing rapidly since 1970. It was \$US 9-10 billion in 1972 and increased to \$US 70 billion in 1982 for all sub-Saharan African countries. It has been increasing more rapidly than the gross domestic product or its exports of goods and services. Sub-Saharan Africa's indebtedness relative to its economic and export capabilities is of special proportions and well beyond its capacity to repay over the foreseeable future. The indebtedness has increased poverty which in turn has led to environmental degradation. Payment of debt has crippled development all across Africa.

17. An increase in population coupled with debt pressure have correspondingly exacerbated the need to produce more food as well as fuelwood. This in turn has resulted in the depletion of

forests, as well as a severe decline in soil fertility, and thereby making it difficult to raise crops for consumption or export.

18. A way out of the vicious cycle is for African States to pay off their debt or part of it by preserving their own environment. Governments would decide those environmental programmes that need support from funds yielded by such swaps. Alternatively, donor agencies/countries would undertake to swap the amount the recipient country has actually spent or has budgeted to spend on environmental projects and activities.

#### STATEMENTS BY AMCEN MINISTERS

19. When the AMCEN Ministers were requested to elaborate on mechanisms that would suit them most in financing their environment programmes, they only gave detailed descriptions of projects which their respective countries had prepared. In fact, this information had already been compiled by the secretariat in AMCEN/Donors 2/3. Over ten interventions were made but none referred to any of the schemes outlined above.

20. In response only the EEC as one of the potential donors made some remarks as follows:

- (i) That none of the member States had clearly indicated how each of the activities would be managed;
- (ii) None of the Ministers had elaborated on how the various government sectors (ministries) were going to collaborate in implementing each of the activities (i.e. multi-sectoral approach). The Ministry of Planning was not brought in the picture;

- (iii) EIA must be part and parcel of each project for it to warrant support by any donor. This was glaringly wanting;
- (iv) Member States should consider the possibility of obtaining funds from the Lome Convention as it does include environment component.

#### COMMENTS ON UNCED PREPARATORY PROCESS

##### Integration of environment in development

21. Since the 1972 Stockholm conference on environment and human settlement some 42 African countries have formulated national action plans for the management of the African environment. The plans have included strategies for the management of forests, soils, drought, decertified lands, etc. Needless to add that African governments have recognized the need to protect their environment, and hence, the establishment of ministries or agencies of environment. The African ministries or agencies of environment are, however, poorly funded; moreover, environmental concerns continue to be dealt with in isolation. A big mistake made during the last two decades was for the establishment of by governments of environment units as separate entities rather than cutting across various sectors of the economy. Indeed, in most member States there is a lack of correlation between conservation strategies and the national development plans. Moreover, in most countries the national developmental plans span a period of five years. This period is too short for the regeneration of depleted natural resources (soils, forests). Even the fast-growing trees will certainly not mature in five years for use as fuelwood nor poles for building dwelling houses etc. African governments must not only integrate environmental programmes in development process but must, in addition, design long-term national projections to accommodate environmental needs. To ensure full integration of



environment in decisions-making process, African governments should establish high level environmental representation in key economic ministries. An alternative arrangement could be to establish a specific agency on environment and development to be responsible for all final decisions on economic development matters. A major responsibility of the agency would be to ensure that environmental concerns are made part of, and constitute the backbone to planning process of all development programmes.

22. This is probably the most difficult step to achieve because the Ministers of Planning consider the ministry of environment just like any other ministry—such as industry or social services. African ministers of planning rarely concern themselves at their meetings with environmental issues. At the recently completed ECA ministers of planning in Addis Ababa, a paper on UNCED preparatory process was presented. However, when the Ministers made their statements, very few of them mentioned the UNCED preparatory process. In the same month (May 1991) the African Ministerial Conference on Environment was held in Nairobi at the United Nations Gigiri Centre, the environment Ministers urged ECA to incorporate into the document relevant and pressing needs such as education and training. Again, these Ministers failed to mention or even to allude to when they were asked to speak the status on environment in their respective countries. A conference on environment and sustainable development held in Kampala in June 1989 and which was attended by Ministers of environment, Planning and Education also failed to evoke discussion on this issue. The pertinent questions which all African Ministers of Environment and Planning must consider seriously as they prepare for the UNCED may be summarized as follows:

- (i) whether national planning agencies include environmental experts as part of their staff;

- (ii) whether strategic frameworks and economic development are sufficiently integrated and are being;
- (iii) Whether monitoring of environmental matters in relation to economic indicators is in place;
- (iv) Whether public inquires and hearings as well as environmental impact assessment studies are being carried out routinely to assist decision-makers in setting development projects such as large-scale hydro-electric and irrigation schemes, etc;
- (v) Whether deliberate attempt is being made to raise public awareness and the participation of the local people in the design and implementation of projects;
- (vi) Whether equitable distribution of benefits of development is practice.

23. Environmental initiatives in Africa have hitherto encountered daunting challenges due to flows in environmental protection laws. The laws are scattered in the various economic sectors whose activities impinge on environmental management. Because different authorities are responsible for enforcing different aspects of the laws, it is difficult to know which takes priority over the other. Time has come when the national environmental protection laws should be harmonized and re-enforced. African governments should also institute mechanisms for environmental review for proposed projects - locally or internationally sponsored so long as they hinge on exploitation of natural resources. Any national projects - in mining, agriculture, fisheries industry etc. should endeavour to rationally utilize the resources in a manner that sustains the environment.

24. This reinforces the question of environmental impact assessments (EIA) for proposed projects. This should be carried out by prospective investors (or donors) in collaboration with government environmental agencies. It may be most prudent to set up parastatal organizations mandated to carry out EIA as most governments and donors are now increasingly insisting on EIA.

Comment on African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)

25. The bureau of African Ministerial Conference on Environment which was held on 27 February- 1 March 1991 at UNEP decided on the relocation of AMCEN secretariat to ECA. However, the Bureau also decided that:

- (i) the relocation be implemented with great caution;
- (ii) the relocation be monitored regularly to ensure that it did not become counter-productive;
- (iii) the matter be referred to the full Ministerial Conference in May 1991 for further consideration.

50. On my return from the Bureau meeting, I recommended that ECA should prepare a paper for the Ministerial meeting in May on the transfer of AMCEN project to ECA. Such a paper should outline as clearly as possible the benefits that would accrue to the project if the ECA - Environment Unit was fully integrated with AMCEN project. The paper was also to provide detailed information on the activities of the substantive divisions of ECA and OAU and the links between the AMCEN project and these programmes.

51. The ECA prepared a paper along the lines outlined in paragraph 50 and faxed it to the Director of the AMCEN project. When we arrived in Nairobi, we were informed that the paper was

never received. Moreover, no item pertaining to the relocation of the secretariat had been put on the agenda of the meeting for discussion by ATREG or AMCEN. As pointed out earlier, the African Ministerial Conference on Environment was preceded by the meeting of ATREG. Even the item on UNCED preparatory process was not included in the agenda of AMCEN. However, because of the intervention of the Executive Director, this item was included in the AMCEN agenda although it had not been discussed by ATREG.

52. On the issue of relocation of AMCEN, the bomb-shell came when the Executive Director of UNEP announced in his address to AMCEN that he would have to wait to see who is the next Executive Secretary of ECA and what his/her view on the relocation of the secretariat at ECA in Addis Ababa. This was totally unexpected because the decision to relocate AMCEN was between the two institutions and not necessarily the individuals. To my mind, individuals come and go but institutions remain. ECA had spent quite a considerable amount of time planning and preparing accommodation and related facilities for AMCEN secretariat and the ROA. However, UNEP decided unilaterally to put off the transfer. I suggest that a memorandum signed by ECA Executive Secretary be sent to Mr. Tolba explaining how disappointing ECA is and requesting for a firm commitment on behalf of UNEP that the two offices would definitely move to ECA. This is a battle that ECA cannot afford to lose and particularly in view of the preparations that have already been

**THE SECOND MEETING OF THE AFRICAN TECHNICAL REGIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT GROUP (ATREG) OF AMCEN**

**NAIROBI 20-21 MAY 1991**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organizational matters
  - (a) Election of officers
  - (b) Agenda and organization of work
3. Presentation and consideration of the Trust Fund and the Parallel Approach for Mobilizing Resources for the AMCEN Programme
4. Presentation and consideration of an inventory of African regional and subregional organizations with related programmes and activities
5. Introductions of the main recommendations of the AMCEN Task Force on the reassignment of AMCEN'S operational and organizational structures
6. Consideration of the reports of the SREGS (WASREG, SASREG, EASREG, CASREG and NASREG)
7. Consideration of the report of the sixth bureau to the fourth AMCEN session
8. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR FOURTH AMCEN SESSION

22-24 MAY 1991

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Consideration of the recommendations of the second ATREG meeting and of the Task Force on the reassessment of AMCEN's operational and organizational structures
4. Consideration of:
  - (a) Report of the bureau to the conference
  - (b) AMCEN trust fund and the parallel approach for mobilizing resources for the AMCEN programme
  - (c) Reports of the Chairmen of committees
  - (d) UNCED PREPARATORY PROCESS.
5. National reports by governments on the status of the implementation of the Cairo programme and on other activities of relevance since the third session and consideration of priority activities for the period 1992-1993, modes of implementation and resources required
6. Election of officers
7. Adoption of final documents of the fourth session
8. Closure of the session.