



CO-OPERATION THAT COUNTS

ACP MEAs



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

CONCEPT NOTE

COLLOQUIUM FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS ON MAINSTREAMING MULTI LATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAS)

Uganda, 4 - 6 June 2012

1. Background and Justification

The African component of the ACP Capacity Building Program related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs Project) is housed at the African Union Commission (AUC) and has as overall objective to build the capacity of Africans to adequately implement MEAs thereby contributing to sustainable development and poverty reduction on the continent. The European Union (EU) is the funding agency and United Nations Environment program (UNEP) the facilitator and funds manager on behalf of the EU. The MEAs project was endorsed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in its Johannesburg meeting of June 2008.

The outcome of the needs assessment exercises conducted during the inception phase of the project indicated that capacity development was needed in several areas including in the area of mainstreaming of MEAs into developmental plans and processes by policy makers. This would facilitate the development and establishment of appropriate approaches and mechanisms in support of decision-making in order to achieve sustainable development. One of the prerequisites of sustainable development is to make the right laws and take the right policy options and for that informed law-makers are needed to exercise oversight over Government programs.

Parliaments as legislative bodies of states are crucial partners for promoting sustainable development, environmental governance and for advancing law and policy. The main roles of Parliaments are to develop, review, debate and enact laws and agreements including those relating to environment. In some countries Parliaments are also involved in adoption, ratification and approving treaties and agreements including Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). They also act as overseers in enforcement of and compliance of MEAs. In this regard, they are responsible for monitoring Government efforts to protect the environment in order to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The African Union Commission, as the Secretariat of the African Union, is responsible, inter-alia, to promote environmental sustainability on the continent. Its principal role in this regard is to coordinate and facilitate implementation of programs and strategies related to the environment, to enhance capacity of Africans in environmental management and to raise environmental awareness. Among the organs of the African Union (AU) is the Pan African

Parliament (PAP). PAP forms part of the Africa parliamentary governance and has its headquarters in South Africa. At the regional level, there are various parliamentary bodies such as the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Parliament of ECOWAS, IGAD Inter-Parliamentary Union, the network of Parliament Members of Central Africa etc. At the national level, each of the Member States also has either a national Assembly or a national Parliament, and in most cases a sub-committee dealing with environmental matters. In addition to these bodies, there are other parliamentary organizations on the continent such as the Parliamentary Centre based in Accra, Ghana. The Colloquium will

organisations in many countries. It will also be held in various parliamentary bodies by arranging others development of a course book

It is within this context that the A.I.C. in collaboration with the Government of Uganda and with assistance from UNEP will hold a colloquium in Uganda in May 2012 to raise awareness of well as building capacity of Parliamentarians on the importance of environmental laws and agreements, as well as their capacity to mainstream them into developmental plans and policies. The colloquium will also provide technical capacities of Parliamentarians in as far as environment management is concerned. This would go a long way in the fulfillment of their roles in society. It would also compliment the roles of the other institutions of the state in fulfilling their constitutional mandates and obligations.

2. Objective of the Colloquium

The Colloquium is primarily aimed at creating greater awareness and enhancing the capacity of Parliamentarians in environmental management, environmental policy and mainstreaming of MEAs in sustainable development plans and policies.

The specific objectives of the Colloquium are to increase capacity and awareness of Parliamentarians on:

- 1) the linkage between environmental conventions and sustainable development;
- 2) their role in mainstreaming MEAs in developmental plans and policies;
- 3) the role of different stakeholders in enforcement and implementation of environmental laws and agreements;
- 4) their role in compliance and enforcement
- 5) the importance of environmental governance
- 6) the importance of networking

3. Expected Output

The Colloquium will focus on achieving the following results:

- 1) Increased knowledge and empowerment of Parliamentarians so that they become active supporters of sound environmental management, effective environmental policy and sustainable development.
- 2) Enhanced capacity of Parliamentarians with regard to the execution of their roles in compliance with, and enforcement of environmental laws, policies and conventions at regional and national levels
- 3) Improved networking and cooperation between national and regional Parliamentarians to achieve better cohesion on the continent.

4. Participants

About forty participants will be invited and the workshop will simultaneously be conducted in English and French. The participants will be drawn from Pan African Parliament, the regional and national Parliaments. The composition will comprise of Parliamentarians, MEAs experts, relevant CSOs and participants having a role in decision making. The host country would naturally be allowed to nominate more participants from relevant portfolio Committees, as this is expected to have no cost implication.

5. Methodology and Organization of the Colloquium

The Colloquium methodology will use the participatory process that allows the ideas of individuals to be tested, argued, amplified, and refined by the arguments of others. It will be designed to be responsive to the objective of exchanging informed ideas on approaches to environmental law and policy and sustainable development in general. Key speakers knowledgeable on parliamentary work and environmental management will be invited to address the colloquium. It will be an open and practical forum to exchange ideas and share experience among the participants, and the following topics, though not limited will be discussed:

- a) Role of Environmental Agreements and Conventions in Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development
- b) Clustering and Synergies of MEAs and Environmental Law Principles;
- c) Environmental Mainstreaming in programs and policies;
- d) Role of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities in MEAs;
- e) Role of Parliamentarians in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental agreements;
- f) Necessity of domesticating environmental laws and agreements and translating them into national actions and strategies, including regional agreements and trans-boundary processes
- g) Enhancing environmental governance;

In collaboration with UNEP, the AUC will facilitate and undertake the training with the aid of knowledgeable consultants who have legal background and long standing experience in environmental management issues. The colloquium will take the form of presentations by experts and inter active panel discussions. In order to ensure parliamentary ownership of the colloquium outcome, Members of Parliament and selected experts and individuals will be chairing the sessions and facilitating discussions. At the end of the colloquium, the consultants will refine the papers and prepare a Sourcebook on MEAs for African Parliamentarians. A joint statement or Declaration encapsulating the major discussions and agreements reached would be made at the end of the colloquium.

6. Date and Venue

The colloquium will take place in Uganda from 4th to 6th June 2012.