

AFRICAN UNION
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UNION AFRICAINE
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Téléphone : 5517 700 Fax : 5511299
website : www.africa-union.org

Directorate of Information and Communication

MEDIA ADVISORY

African Union Commemorates the Africa Environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

WHAT: Commemoration of Africa Environment Day and Professor Wangari Maathai Day

THEME: The event will be celebrated under the theme: “*Partnership for Africa’s Transition to Green Economy in support of African Renaissance*”

WHEN: 03-04 March 2013

WHERE: Hotel Africa, Tunis, Republic of Tunisia

WHO: Jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Government of Tunisia.

WHY:

The celebration for this year is of a particular significance, taking place against a backdrop of key developments both at the level of the African continent and the global level as well. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of our continental organization, OUA/AU. Africa, its citizens with its friends around the world will be celebrating the decolonization of the continent and the tremendous achievements realized in the fields of socio-economic, political and environmental development as well the integration efforts of the African continent. The theme for the Golden Jubilee celebration is: Pan Africanism and African Renaissance. This theme underscores the importance of African countries to intensify work in cohesion and solidarity to preserve and promote their common values and heritage including environment and natural resources. The concept of African Renaissance is built on the conviction that African people and nations can overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, economic, environmental and political renewal. It must be emphasized that the

decolonization efforts in Africa were not only meant to effect political independence, but to also enhance prospects to achieve economic development.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the Africa Environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day celebration is to raise awareness on sustainable environmental management among decision makers at national, regional and continental levels. The celebration affords the chance to rededicate to the principles of environmental conservation and sustainable development and to emulate the legacy of the late Prof. Wangari Maathai, who devoted all her life to promoting ecosystem conservation and the preservation of biological diversity in support of sustainable development and women- empowerment in Africa in particular, and the world at large.

BACKGROUND:

The Africa Environment Day emanated from the decision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers in their Seventy-Sixth Ordinary Session, which took place in Durban, South Africa in July 2002. The ministers adopted Decision CM/Dec.685 (LXXVI) calling on all Member States to commemorate March 03 every year as Africa Environment Day.

In January 2012, the African Union adopted a decision calling for the joint celebrations of the African environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day. The celebration of the Wangari Maathai Day is in recognition of the work and life of the late Prof. Wangari Maathai who dedicated her life to promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development in Africa.

Journalists are invited to attend and cover the official ceremony of the event on Monday 04 March 2013 at 9:00am at Hotel Africa, Tunis.

The draft programme is attached.

For further information and interview request please contact:

Mr. Molalet Tsedeke

Directorate of Information and Communication

African Union Commission

E-mails: molalett@africa-union.org; molalet24t@yahoo.com; Tel: (+251) 911-630631



Africa Environment Day and Wangari Maathai Day

March 3, 2013

Tunis, Tunisia

Theme: “Partnership for Africa’s Transition to Green Economy in Support of African Renaissance”

Provisional Programme

Dates/hours	Activities
Sunday, 3 March	
10.30- 17.00	Field trip to village and the lagoon of Ghar El Melh (Ramsar Convention area) with school children and environmental clubs of the area
20.00	Dinner offered to H.E. Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AUC by the Minister of Environment of Tunisia at Dar el Jeled Restaurant, Medina, Tunis
Monday 4, March	
Official opening ceremony	
09.00 – 10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• -Welcome address of the Minister of Environment of Tunisia• Statement by the Secretary General of UMA• Statement by the Greenbelt Coalition• Statement by the President of the African Development Bank• Statement by the representative of the Executive Secretary of UNECA• Statement by the representative of the Executive Director of UNEP• Statement by the President of AMCEN• Statement by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
10.30 – 10.45	Pause cafe
10.45 – 13.00	<p>Panel discussions</p> <p>Session 1 : Panel discussion on Africa's transition to Green Economy</p> <p>Session 2 : Panel discussion on environmental challenges facing Africa</p> <p>Session 3 : Panel discussion on the ratification of the Maputo Convention</p>

13.00 – 15.00	Lunch
15.00 – 17.00	<p style="text-align: center;">Parallel sessions</p> <p>Session1 : Side-event on Water and partenrship for transiting Africa to green economy by OSS</p> <p>Session 2 : Visit to sustainable school in Tunis</p> <p>Session 3 : Guided tour of CITET and film show on Wangari Maathai</p>
Tuesday, 5 March	Stock taking (Courtesy call on the Hon. Minister of Environment by H.E. Commissioner, REA)
09.30 – 12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Show of appreciation to the Minister of Environment • -Discussions on the experiences and lessons learnt • -Discussions on Other areas of cooperation between the Ministry and the Commission (e.g CAADP, Water, etc)

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