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## PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

### **AMCEN opens with a call for Africa to unite on implementing Rio+20 outcomes**

*Arusha, Tanzania, September 12, 2012*-The fourteenth session of African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), opened with Tanzanian Vice President, H.E Mohammed Bilal urging African nations to speak with one voice in implementing the Rio + 20 outcomes.

Officially opening the conference themed, “Africa’s post Rio+20 Strategy for Sustainable Development,” Hon. Bilal stressed the need for concerted efforts by African countries to address climate change challenges as it was the most vulnerable continent considering her relatively weak resilience to environmental catastrophes.

Hon. Bilal noted that while the AMCEN session had come at an opportune moment when Africa was preparing to implement the outcomes of the Rio +20 meeting, there were some unfulfilled Millennium Development Goals that needed to be met before 2015.

“Rio +20 should not be the end of the process but part of a development path, it should steer us to getting a better life for people, it should promote holistic, integrated policies and actions to enhance inter-linkages between climate change, food and water, hence any focus on green development should be by national objectives with the aim of achieving MDGs,” he said.

Hon. Bilal also impressed upon Africa to be a champion of conservation efforts, adding that environmental challenges required corporate action as well international community efforts, to overcome.

During the opening session, the African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, called for the need to have coordination mechanisms, at the national level to facilitate the implementation of the Rio outcomes.

“This mechanism should go beyond the line ministry of environment so that there is inter ministerial synergy during the process of implementation,” she said.

Other dignitaries at the official opening included the Vice President of the Union of Comoros, President of AMCEN and several African Ministers of Environment.

The two day conference is also being attended by development partners, Civil Society Organizations, Regional Economic Communities and national experts from the AU Member States.

During the conference, African Ministers of Environment are expected to discuss issues related to the:

- Africa road map to address outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit held last June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;
- Preparation of Africa for the 18th Session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP.18/UNFCCC) that will be held in December 2012 in Doha, Qatar;
- Other environmental issues impacting on Africa Sustainable Development.

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