

AFRICAN UNION

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THE ENTEBBE DECLARATION ENTEBBE, 4-6 JUNE 2012

Preamble

We the Parliamentarians from Africa meeting in Entebbe on 4-6 June 2012 for the African Colloquium on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) under the theme “Multilateral Environmental Agreements in National and Regional Development” which was opened by the Honourable Speaker of the Uganda Parliament.

The Parliamentarians from Africa:

Considering the state of environmental and natural resources degradation on the African continent and its impact on poverty and sustainable development;

Recognizing that in Africa, the environment is the bedrock of all development activities and that it constitutes the most important asset for achieving social and economic development in general and poverty reduction in particular.

Noting the challenges faced by African countries and the role that Parliamentarians can play in facilitating implementation of MEAs through their law making, policy oversight, monitoring and mobilization functions;

Considering the critical role that local and indigenous communities have in the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources through their indigenous knowledge systems;

Recognizing the various efforts, resolutions and recommendations that African Parliaments, governments, institutions and people including the AUC, RECs, IUCN, IPU, UNITAR...have made in sustainable development

Hereby declare that we commit to:

1. Facilitate the integration of MEAs in national governance, development plans and processes and strategies;
2. Provide the executive requisite assistance in the negotiation of MEAs;
3. Establish and strengthen the capacity of Parliaments both at national and regional levels including parliamentary environmental committees/commissions so as to enhance the participation of the legislature in sustainable development
4. Enhance access to information, public participation and access to justice and empower vulnerable groups in environmental management for sustainability;
5. Enhance the capacity of Parliaments and create initiatives such as exchange and training programmes to enable parliamentarians better implement mainstreaming environmental consideration into the development process;
6. Ensure that appropriate budgets are allocated to specific national themes that deal with environment management and sustainability;
7. Promote and reinforce parliamentary oversight and monitoring of environmental institutions;
8. Fast tracking ratification, domestication and implementation of MEAs so as to contribute to sustainable development;
9. Facilitate local and indigenous knowledge in policy and law making and the development process as required under various MEAs;
10. Create partnerships with civil society organizations to increase awareness among the citizens and ensure that environmental laws and policies of our countries and communities are effectively complied with and enforced;

We further:

11. Call upon governments to regularly report to Parliaments on the status of negotiations and implementation of MEAs;
12. Call for involvement of regional Parliaments of SADC, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, CEMAC and related institutions in the implementation of MEAs;
13. Call upon governments to strengthen coordination mechanisms of MEAs at national levels;
14. Urge political parties to embrace environmental sustainability as a core underpinning of their political programmes in order that parliamentarians urge international institutions such as UNITA, UNECA, NEPAD, UNEP, IUCN, IPU and APU, MEAs Secretariats and other international organizations to support the efforts of parliamentarians in implementing MEAs;
15. Request the AUC and UNEP to continue facilitating more interactions and fora that bring together parliamentarians in Africa, and supporting the establishment and strengthening of networks of parliamentarians for the environment in Africa.

Done at Entebbe, 06/06/2012