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Ministers of OACPS Member States and Stakeholders Emphasise Bio-Diversity Protection as Crucial for Africa's Economic Development



The African Union Commission (AUC), through the Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE), hosted the High-Level Conference of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific on the implementation of the Outcomes of the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nineteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP19) to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The ministerial conference was preceded by the senior official's session that took place from 30 May to 2 June 2023.

The ministerial meeting reviewed the action plan framework of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); and the Africa Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

At the opening ceremony of the ministerial session, Hon Philda Nani Kereng, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Republic of Botswana, emphasized the crucial impact of protecting Bio-Diversity for the continent's economic development. "Biodiversity is significant for our cultural heritage as Africans and is a cornerstone of our economies. Losing biodiversity threatens our existence and civilisation. As a continent, this is a risk that we cannot afford to take, and as we are all aware, the environment has a harsh way of responding to our abusive actions".

"As leaders charged with taking care of biodiversity, we have a duty to ensure that we preserve their benefits for future generations too. This will involve a multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder approach. It should also cover transboundary efforts, including at continental and sub-regional levels. Furthermore, we need to harness the collective strength of our continent to speak as one voice. By unifying our voices, we can advocate for the necessary actions to safeguard our environment, mitigate adverse impacts on the environment, and attain our collective goals in the global arena", the minister stressed. Read the full statement on www.au.int

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the ministerial conference, H.E Ambassador Albert M. Muchanga, Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals (ETTİM), reminded the conference that Africa is known to be a Champion of biodiversity conservation despite various challenges. He said, "Biodiversity is an integral part of our livelihoods, and we draw from its resources for medicines, food and other raw materials for multiple uses in addition to various ecosystem services. Therefore, conserving biodiversity in Africa should not be an option but rather a necessity". Commissioner Muchanga added that sustainable management and utilisation of biodiversity in Africa would go a long way in accelerating inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. "This will take us a step further to the realisation of goal 7 of Agenda 2063 - **Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities**", he added.

Amb. Muchanga expressed his gratitude for the collaboration of partners and stakeholders in the green economy realisation, saying one of the fundamental principles for success in the green transition is global solidarity and partnerships. He further said, "Africa is not an island, and the benefits of biodiversity conservation in

Africa are global. Therefore, I would like to call upon our partners present in this auditorium to join us in implementing the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the benefit of all humanity and our physical environment". Read the complete speech on www.au.int

Taking the floor, Ms Cristelle Pratt, Assistant Secretary-General for Environment and Climate Action, Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), highlighted the common challenges that the three regions, namely, Africa, Caribbean and Pacific face, which need close collaboration and synergies to overcome and better advance implementation of the priorities and interests of the outcomes. "There is great potential for amplifying Africa's voice in solidarity and unity with OACPS members from the Caribbean and Pacific regions. The OACPS is convinced that we will work and deliver more for our Member States if we strengthen our structured intra-regional coordination and collaboration with the African Union... ". The full statement is available on www.au.int

The three days High Level Conference was moderated by Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Director for Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the AU Commission.

For Further Information

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