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**Pan-African Conference on Biodiversity: “Biodiversity and
Poverty Alleviation: What Opportunities for Africa?”**

First session

Libreville, 13–17 September 2010

Libreville Declaration on Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation in Africa

We, African ministers of environment and of economic planning,

Having met in Libreville on 16 and 17 September 2010 at the first session of the high-level Pan-African Conference on Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation,

Having discussed and exchanged views on the position which Africa could adopt in respect of:

- (a) The forthcoming high-level meeting on biodiversity to be held on 22 September 2010, during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, in conjunction with the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals;
- (b) The tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held from 18 to 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan;
- (c) The new biodiversity strategic plan for 2011–2020, which includes the post-2010 biodiversity targets;

Considering:

- (a) The 1972 Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment;¹
- (b) The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;²
- (c) The Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (d) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- (e) The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;
- (f) The United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals;³
- (g) The 2002 Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;⁴

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5–16 June 1972* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14 and corrigendum).

² *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex I.

³ General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

- (h) The 2006 Algiers Declaration on Desertification;
- (i) The Brazzaville Declaration adopted at the sixth session of the World Forum on Sustainable Development, in 2008;
- (j) The Ouagadougou Declaration, adopted at the seventh session of the World Forum on Sustainable Development, in 2009;
- (k) International and regional conventions dealing with biodiversity and poverty alleviation;
- (l) The agreement setting up a Pan-African agency for the Great Green Wall for the Sahara initiative, adopted on 17 June 2010;

Recalling that, at its thirteenth session, in Bamako in June 2010, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment agreed that African countries should hold a high-level conference on biodiversity and poverty alleviation in Libreville, focusing on the formulation of a common position for the negotiations at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Bearing in mind that:

- (a) Ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss threaten the livelihoods of millions of people, including the poorest;
- (b) The provision of high-quality water, the ensuring of food security, the safeguarding of human, livestock and plant health, the production of energy, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and the alleviation of poverty are all issues directly linked to biodiversity;
- (c) The poorest populations are the most dependent on free ecosystem services providing food, clothes, medicines, fuelwood, shelter or a source of income;
- (d) Obstacles continue to impede the accelerated implementation of integrated strategies and policies needed to tackle environmental and development concerns in a comprehensive manner;
- (e) Indigenous and local communities play an indispensable role in managing biodiversity, and legal recognition of that role is an essential element of poverty alleviation;

Convinced that the conservation of biodiversity, desertification control and climate change are challenges which must be addressed in a synergistic manner if poverty is to be effectively alleviated,

Appreciating the efforts being taken by Governments, regional and international organizations, the private sector, civil society and indigenous and local communities in conserving and sustainably using biodiversity resources in Africa and in alleviating poverty,

Recognizing the urgent need to develop human and institutional capacities and appropriate legal and policy frameworks for the management of Africa's biological resources,

Acknowledging that the main threats to biological diversity in Africa include deforestation, land degradation, land and water pollution, overfishing, poaching and other illegal and unsustainable practices and uses, climate change, change in land use and invasive alien species,

Acknowledging also that the illegal transboundary transport of hazardous waste and mining and oil-related activities represent emerging and substantial threats to biological diversity and ecosystem services,

Acknowledging further that the long-term cost of inaction relating to biodiversity, ecosystem services and poverty alleviation will be higher than the necessary investment in the short and medium terms,

Do hereby:

1. Reaffirm the important value of biodiversity resources and of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in ensuring sustainable and equitable economic growth and alleviating poverty, noting in that context the need to continue to safeguard ecosystem services and to ensure access to those services, particularly for poor populations directly dependent upon them;

⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

2. Agree to strengthen the integration and mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services into relevant intersectoral strategies, policies and sectors at all levels, aiming to accelerate and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, together with their budgeting;
3. Also agree to build the capacity of our countries for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements through partnerships that more closely involve indigenous and local communities, scientists, civil society, elected officials and policymakers;
4. Undertake to update our national biodiversity strategies and action plans as effective instruments to promote the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan for the period 2011–2020;
5. Also undertake to adopt, every two years, a theme focusing on an area for the assessment of biodiversity-related efforts made by African countries, suggesting that the first such theme, for 2011–2012, could be deforestation in Africa; an African committee will be set up by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment with a view to preparing an action plan on that matter;
6. Further undertake to ratify, as soon as possible, the 1968 Algiers Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, as amended by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its second session, in Maputo, in July 2003, noting that the said convention would provide an appropriate framework for the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan for the period 2011–2020;
7. Undertake to develop and update national and regional strategies and policies, along with cooperation frameworks, in order to reconcile environmental and development concerns, including through intersectoral approaches, with the involvement of civil society, and performance, result and impact monitoring systems;
8. Also undertake to step up the implementation of appropriate and more ambitious forestry projects, such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative, with a view to conserving biodiversity and combating climate change and land degradation;
9. Further undertake to participate actively in the high-level event on biodiversity to be held during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, so as to affirm Africa's needs and priorities, with the involvement of civil society and the private sector, in promoting the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals;
10. Commit ourselves to working towards the valuation of ecosystem services and biodiversity resources and to establishing environmental accounting systems which incorporate ecosystem services, to disseminating the results of such systems and to taking them fully into account in development planning and in economic indicators;
11. Undertake to support the establishment and operation of an intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly;
12. Support the creation of a science-policy platform and undertake to contribute fully to its development, including by setting up an African committee on the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services to ensure that Africa is able to become a full partner of this intergovernmental platform;
13. Undertake to make the necessary arrangements:
 - (a) To develop tools and methodologies to assist and support the decision-making process which incorporate the appropriate scientific information and technical standards;
 - (b) To maintain and to extend our scientific expertise and knowledge on biodiversity, its conservation and its contribution to human well-being;
 - (c) To develop and to support systems for the monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and also risk prevention and management systems, at the national, regional and subregional levels;
 - (d) To ensure the transfer of technology for the benefit of indigenous and local communities;
14. Urge all concerned to give urgent consideration and to seek solutions to the challenges which the continent faces relating to the loss and destruction of biodiversity as a result of climate change, taking due account of the need:

- (a) To conduct and increase research activities to gather knowledge about biodiversity and its protection and promotion for the well-being of humankind, and research into the migration routes of key wildlife species and their habitats, and also into areas most vulnerable to climate change;
 - (b) To focus scientific research on quantifying the impacts of vulnerability and of existing and proposed adaptation activities on biodiversity, and also on the ecological responses to extremes of climate variability and interactions with land-use change;
 - (c) To support the establishment of regional biodiversity centres;
 - (d) To integrate biodiversity conservation in adaptation and mitigation strategies with clear cross-sectoral policies;
 - (e) To adapt or to develop biodiversity-related legislation to assess whether it encompasses activities needed to adapt to climate change impacts;
 - (f) To strengthen regional and national legislative and regulatory frameworks and to adopt innovative measures to ensure that inventories are compiled of biological resources and that their value is realized at the local level, thereby substantially increasing their added value;
 - (g) To gather information, to develop tools and to build the capacity to understand social, economic and environmental factors to be taken into account in attaining the common goals of the Rio conventions;
 - (h) To prepare useful complementary and innovative projects on the reduction of greenhouse gases and conducive to the sustainable use of biodiversity by equipping them, from the time of their creation, with independent and transparent performance and results-monitoring systems;
15. Call for the adoption of appropriate measures, at both bilateral and multilateral levels, to combat transboundary environmental crime, including by encouraging African countries to accede to the 1994 Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora;
16. Undertake to make available more budgetary and human resources to national and regional biodiversity, climate change and desertification control activities;
17. Commit ourselves to ensuring the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, including by aligning aid and development programmes with national priorities and strategies on biodiversity protection;
18. Undertake to strengthen South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation and to promote partnerships on, among other areas, innovative financing mechanisms;
19. Also undertake to study the modalities for the creation of a joint body responsible for gathering together and monitoring funding made available to Africa for the purposes of conserving, sustainably using and enhancing the value of biodiversity;
20. Express the wish that international aid policies and cooperation projects in the areas of biodiversity and poverty alleviation be mutually supportive and mutually reinforcing;
21. Undertake to promote the migration of our countries to a green economy, based on their natural resources and the effective use of those resources, thereby enhancing human well-being and social equity while substantially reducing environmental risks and environmental degradation;
22. Encourage the building of synergies between the Rio conventions and the Millennium Development Goals, the development of joint work programmes, the establishment of a peer-review process and the undertaking of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012;
23. Agree, in this context, to develop and strengthen regional and national strategies, frameworks, capacities and monitoring systems for the synergistic implementation of the conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, including by integrating these issues in national development and poverty alleviation strategies and plans;
24. Reiterate our commitment to the African common position on the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing adopted at the thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment;
25. Reaffirm the determination of Africa to see a successful outcome to the negotiations on an international regime on access and benefit-sharing;

26. Undertake to uphold the rights of indigenous and local communities to have access to and to control renewable natural resources, including through the official recognition of indigenous and communal heritage areas as proposed under the work programmes and relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

27. Undertake as promptly as possible to study, together with our partners and regional organizations, the creation of training and research institutions and regional and subregional cooperation arrangements to strengthen our institutional, scientific, legal and technical capacity, with a view to having at our disposal substantial and high-quality expertise on biodiversity and poverty alleviation;

28. Urge civil society, the private sector and community organizations to step up their national and regional efforts to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, bearing in mind the concerns of indigenous and local communities, drawing attention in this context to the need for public and private partnerships, to mobilize traditional and scientific knowledge;

29. Request Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon, host country for the present Conference, to present the above ministerial statement to the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, in September 2010, in New York, and to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, in October 2010, in Nagoya;

30. Express our appreciation to the President, the Government and the people of Gabon for having hosted the Conference and for their warm hospitality.
