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

First session

Libreville, 13–17 September 2010

**Common position for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the
Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity**

We, the African ministers of environment and of economic planning,

Assembled in Libreville on 16 and 17 September 2010,

Considering that Africa holds nearly 40 per cent of the world’s biodiversity, which constitutes the continent’s natural capital, on which its social and economic systems are based; that the continent is home to 8 of the world’s 34 biodiversity hot spots; that, this wealth of biodiversity notwithstanding, it faces many social and economic challenges; and that poverty remains the main cause of declining biodiversity,

Considering also that African countries are parties to all the biodiversity-related conventions; that 49 countries now have national biodiversity strategies and action plans and have adopted relevant legislation and reforms; and that, all these achievements notwithstanding, African countries still face numerous environmental threats, including biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, overuse of natural resources, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change, which also constitute serious demographic, social, economic and political threats,

Considering further that Africa must combat biodiversity loss; that for this reason biodiversity must be integrated into national development planning and policies, using the ecosystem approach; and that the sustainable use of biological resources must follow the principle of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources,

In accordance with the recommendation made at the thirteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Bamako in June 2010, agree on the following:

I. Access and benefit-sharing

1. We emphasize that:

(a) The international regime on access and benefit-sharing must benefit developing countries in particular, especially those in Africa. Thus many important issues such as the scope of the protocol; commercial research for medical purposes; traditional knowledge relating to genetic resources; the rights of indigenous communities; and genetic resources located outside the borders of national jurisdictions should be negotiated and the outcome reflected in a legally binding agreement;

(b) Users of genetic resources have the obligation to share benefits resulting from new and continued uses;

(c) Prior informed consent, mutually agreed-on terms and compliance with provisions on access and benefit-sharing must be secured even in cases where the genetic resources in question were collected prior to the entry into force of the protocol.

II. Biodiversity strategic plan for the period 2011–2020

2. We support the updated and revised strategic plan for the period 2011–2020 to be considered at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, as an appropriate instrument for tackling poverty alleviation in Africa.

3. More specifically, we would like to highlight the importance of the following:

(a) Development of goals and targets that are strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound (also known as “SMART goals”) with specific time frames and provision of resources for implementing the strategic plan at the regional and national levels based on Africa’s priorities and needs;

(b) Prioritization of the integration of biodiversity into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes, including national accounting systems, in order to tackle poverty in Africa;

(c) Elimination of subsidies to projects and programmes that may contribute to biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystem services (target 3 of the strategic plan);

(d) Reduction of deforestation and forest degradation through the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources as a contribution to combating climate change (via the approach known as “REDD-plus”), bearing in mind that these actions could be achieved once financial and other incentives are agreed on in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (target 5);

(e) Suspension, at the earliest opportunity, of the overfishing in Africa’s seas and territorial waters that results from industrial fishing, and the establishment of marine protected areas so that fish stocks can be replenished and local communities provided with means of subsistence (target 6);

(f) Implementation of measures and mechanisms to prevent pollution from oil spills so as to avoid costly remediation measures and the destruction of unique marine biodiversity and related ecosystem services resulting from such spills (target 8);

(g) A sustained commitment to mobilizing more resources at the global, regional and national levels to combat invasive alien species, with particular efforts to eradicate those affecting agriculture, fishing and forestry and to prevent their introduction (target 9);

(h) Attention to the fact that climate change and ocean acidification increase ecosystems’ vulnerability (target 10);

(i) A commitment to strengthening programmes involving protected marine and coastal areas while keeping in mind the mobilization of Global Environment Facility financial resources to protected areas and other sources of financing as well as technical support (including by Facility executive bodies) and considering the many potential ecological, social and economic advantages of sound national and regional management of protected areas (target 11).

III. Financing mobilization strategy

4. We call for:

(a) Enhanced financial support, including through innovative ways of mobilizing financial resources (for example, via payments for ecosystem services) and South-South cooperation, to local communities for their efforts to ensure conservation and restoration of ecosystems (targets 14 and 15) and through an appropriate access and benefit-sharing regime (target 17);

(b) Additional and timely financial, technical and technological support from the Global Environment Facility and other donors to ensure the development and revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans with the participation of all stakeholders (including indigenous and local communities and the private sector).

IV. Technology transfer and the proposal for a United Nations Decade of Biodiversity

We support:

- (a) Technology transfer as a mechanism for channelling relevant biodiversity-related technologies to Africa on the basis of a needs assessment;
- (b) The proposal to proclaim the period 2011–2020 the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity as a way to build on the momentum created by the International Year of Biodiversity and to encourage broad participation in efforts to achieve the goals and targets of the post-2010 biodiversity strategic plan and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

V. Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

We support:

- (a) The establishment of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and full contribution to such a platform, including by creating a pan-African committee on the platform to ensure that Africa is a full partner in the initiative;
- (b) The establishment of mechanisms for the monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and support for research in that area, including through an African committee for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to enable and facilitate the implementation of the 2011–2020 biodiversity strategic plan and its targets;
- (c) Technology transfer as a mechanism for channelling relevant biodiversity-related technologies to Africa on the basis of a needs assessment.

VI. Green economy

We commit ourselves to establishing green economies, through, for example, the development and use of clean technologies, renewable energies, water supply services, green transportation, waste management, green buildings, and sustainable agriculture and forestry.
