



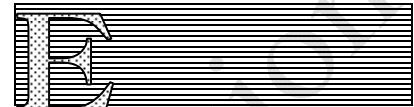
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AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

AFRICAN UNION

The Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable
Development (Rio+20)

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RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
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United Nations
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I INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministerial Segment of the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24-25 October 2011. It was preceded by the Expert Segment which convened from 20 to 23 October 2011 at the same venue. The Conference was organized by ECA jointly with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), in partnership with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its main objective was to deliberate on the objective and themes of Rio+20 and other substantive matters of importance to Africa, with a view to arriving at a consensus on Africa's key priorities and concerns to be reflected in the outcomes of Rio+20.

II ATTENDANCE

2. It was attended by representatives of 51 member States, namely: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. The African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), the African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) and the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) participated in the deliberations. Seven out of the eight African Union-recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely; Arab Maghrib Union (AMU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Southern African

Development Community (SADC) also took part in the deliberations of the Committee. Furthermore, all nine major groups recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, namely; Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, as well as Workers and Trade Unions were actively engaged in the discussions.

4. Observers from the following member States of the United Nations were present: Brazil, France, the European Union, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, South Korea, Sweden the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. Also present were the League of Arab States, l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)
5. Observers from the following United Nations Agencies were present: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Liaison Office with the African Union (UNLO-AU), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Food Programme (WFP).
6. The complete list of participants can be accessed at http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/events/Rio20/CFSSD7.asp

III OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

7. Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Under-Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), welcomed the assembled dignitaries and sustainable development actors and partners to the Ministerial Segment of the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20, saying that their great diversity reflected the multi-dimensional nature of the sustainable development agenda first established at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Since that time, African economies had enjoyed more than a decade of sustained positive growth and shown great resilience in the face of global

economic and financial crises, but that had failed to translate into commensurate reductions in unemployment and poverty; environmental degradation and erosion of the natural resource base had continued unabated; and there had been no significant progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

8. The call in 1992 for the balanced integration of the three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development therefore remained as relevant as ever, and Rio+20 would set out to review the journey since the Summit and, taking into account present-day realities, to secure a renewed political commitment and agreed outcomes on its two main themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.
9. The international community might still be struggling to grasp the concept of the green economy and what it meant for the sustainable development agenda, but there was no doubting the need to rethink existing growth paradigms and – given the continuing imbalance between the three pillars – to move from old resource-intensive methods to alternative models conducive to boosting productivity through a more efficient use of natural resources while reducing environmental degradation and tackling climate change. Africa had moved to embrace the concept in view of its undoubted advantages in terms of job creation and attainment of the MDGs, but it feared that the transition would be costly and the global regulatory framework might diminish competitiveness, foster trade protectionism and impose even more policy conditionalities on developing economies.
10. The Rio+20 outcomes must address those concerns for the good of Africa and the rest of the world. A key element was the means of implementation to ensure the necessary financing, technology and capacity-building, and to capitalize on the opportunities offered by globalization, trade, regional integration and South-South cooperation. In view of the limited progress since 1992, Africa must strive to secure the renewed international commitment required, among others, for the strengthening of NEPAD and its integrated framework for sustainable development.
11. The African Consensus Statement was a first step towards achieving those objectives, and the ministers present were urged to help identify and articulate practical and effective policy options and measures. As most of the consultations would take place in New York,

strong coordination was required between capitals and diplomatic missions there and in Addis Ababa so that Africa spoke on its interests and priorities with a single, powerful, voice.

12. Mr. Janneh concluded his remarks by calling for one minute's silence in memory of Professor Wangari Maathai, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and tireless campaigner for environmental protection in Africa, who had died the previous month. The Conference observed one minute's silence in memory of Prof. Wangari Maathai.
13. Statements were delivered by Ms. Amina Mohamed, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme; and H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.
14. Ms. Mohamed began her statement by paying tribute to the late Prof. Wangari Maathai, expressing the hope that her inspiration, vision and spirit would help participants at the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20 deliver on the promise to build a better and brighter future for Africa. The common position to be finalized at the present Conference would demonstrate the continent's ability to act as a key player in setting and moving forward the international agenda for achieving the goals of sustainable development. It was a unique opportunity to come up with an optimum solution for economic growth, social equity and the responsible management and use of natural assets in the interest of present and future generations. Africa was the custodian of the world's largest reserves of natural resources, which were more than ever the focus of global interests, activities and discussions; and it should cease being the victim of development strategies that were incapable of quickly improving livelihoods, creating wealth and decreasing the vulnerability of its peoples.
15. Systemic value creation for Africa's assets would be determined by the boundaries, conditions and strategies formulated in the run-up to Rio+20. The present Conference had to revisit the basics of African development strategies and programmes with a view to mainstreaming the principles of inclusivity and ensuring that vulnerable communities and ecosystems were protected against further environmental degradation. It should also agree

on the key priorities and a common set of rules and regulations governing transition to the green economy, and review the institutional framework for sustainable development in order to ensure the balanced integration of the three pillars. In regard to the latter, Heads of State and Government at the African Union Summit in Malabo had called for the transformation of UNEP into an international specialized institution for environment based in Nairobi, thereby showing a clear vision for – and commitment to – the structural reform of international environmental governance.

16. In conclusion, she said that business as usual was no longer an option; Rio+20 had to serve to determine how decision-makers confronted 21st century challenges with 21st century solutions in a climate of economic and financial crisis. UNEP stood ready to provide its full support to African member States in their critical preparatory deliberations and negotiations.

17. In his statement, Mr. Gettu described the African Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20 as the culmination of a process aimed at ensuring that African countries had their voices heard in Rio de Janeiro, and stressed that the end result – the Africa Consensus Statement – had to reflect the hopes and aspirations of their people. The 1992 Rio Declaration had placed human beings at the centre of the sustainable development agenda and there were compelling reasons why that was especially important for Africa. In spite of marked improvements in economic growth over the previous decade, African countries still had the largest numbers of people living in poverty and hunger; and while environmental sustainability played a critical role in ensuring the well-being of current and future generations, the evidence clearly showed that those with the highest human development indices also had the largest ecological footprint and were responsible for the highest carbon emission rates.

18. The dilemma for Africa was that its human development indices were the lowest in the world but it would pay the highest price in terms of the impacts of the climate change caused by unsustainable global practices. Low and middle-income countries in Africa thus faced a complex set of challenges in order to address that situation and to improve the utilization of their vast wealth of natural resources. The answer lay in the underlying theme of Rio+20: transition to a green economy. Efforts to that end must serve not to exacerbate but to reverse current trends of deepening inequalities between countries and

regions, which called for inclusive strategies linking positive economic growth to poverty reduction. UNDP would continue to work with African decision-makers to help generate the stronger commitment needed to explore and implement practical policy options and to move sustainable development from the periphery to the heart of national development planning.

19. In his statement, Mr. Ping said that Rio+20 would provide Africa with a great opportunity to express clearly to the international community its needs and priorities in terms of sustainable development and poverty eradication. That opportunity had to be seized by adopting a common position and speaking with a single voice. In the 20 years since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, most African States had acceded to the Rio Conventions but little had been done to implement them, and the state of the environment in Africa had continued to deteriorate significantly.

20. A more coherent institutional framework was crucial and that, in turn, called for reform of international environmental governance structures. African Heads of State and Government at the recent African Union Summit in Malabo had recognized that no existing institution had the capacity to respond fully to Africa's needs in terms of the environment, climate change and sustainable development. They had therefore decided that UNEP should be strengthened and transformed into an international specialized institution for environment based in Nairobi; and the fourth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Bamako had gone further by stating that it must be made fully operational on the ground and provided with the adequate resources to assist States in capacity-building and implementation. The outcomes of the Expert Segment the previous week had given grounds for optimism with respect to the overall approach; and Rio+20, in building on the experience of preceding meetings could come to be remembered as the Africa Conference.

21. H.E. Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso President of the Republic of Congo, began his keynote address by saying that the late Prof. Wangari Maathai could have made a great contribution to Africa's preparations for Rio+20, but her memory and spirit would continue to provide inspiration on the long road to safeguarding the world's natural capital. After thanking the Prime Minister of Ethiopia for hosting the present Conference and commending the various institutions responsible for organizing the event on their

work, he stressed the importance of Africa adopting a common position for Rio+20 in order to have its voice heard in the debates on its main themes. It should be seen as an opportunity to put the world back on the right track and to give momentum to the drive for sustainable development. Human beings had to be placed at the centre of development and action must be taken to create jobs, address social inequalities and curb the rapid depletion of natural resources.

22. Africa had much to offer in terms of knowledge and practical experience in tackling political, economic, social and environmental problems should be taken into account in efforts at Rio+20 to find solutions to the new and emerging challenges and to meet the needs and priorities of sustainable development and poverty eradication at the global, regional and national levels. It also had much to gain from securing the renewed commitment of the international community to providing the support it needed for its continued development.

23. With respect to the green economy, it had already produced many successful initiatives and projects in such areas as sustainable biodiversity use, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, reforestation, and water and waste management. Despite providing a great opportunity for the diversification of African economies, however, the green economy was still held back by a number of major obstacles. Governments therefore had to make it a core national and subregional policy priority, entering into partnerships and introducing incentives to overcome barriers, among others, to technology transfer, capacity-building, funding difficulties and unfair trade without subjecting the continent to any further conditionalities.

24. As for international environmental governance, it was essential to foster synergies between global decision-making and implementation at the national level within an adequate institutional framework capable of improving integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. The conclusions of the fourth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Bamako offered valuable guidance for proposals on the architecture of an international specialized institution for environment.

25. He concluded by wishing the participants at the present Conference every success in their work of finalizing the Africa Consensus Statement.

26. H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, after welcoming participants to the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20, recalled the hopes raised 20 years earlier by the adoption of Agenda 21 as a blueprint for achieving sustainable development through the promotion of socially equitable, environmentally responsible, economic growth: that it would generate the resources and political will for the common pursuit of a more sustainable way of managing the planet's resources. However, little or nothing had been done to deliver on promises of funding and technology transfers since 1992, and the countries lacking the means to cope with the changing global environment had continued to draw the short straw in the deals made at international forums. African countries understandably failed to see the point of such meetings and he shared their frustration and scepticism.
27. Instead of giving up the fight, however, Africa had to adopt a better, more realistic, approach and to speak with a single voice in climate change negotiations; such was the purpose of the present Conference and the efforts to streamline a unified common position for Rio+20 under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Congo. In spite of the countless unfulfilled promises, and no matter how slim its chances of success, Africa's interests would be best served by a dual approach: a relentless struggle on the one hand to secure decisions that enhanced flows of resources and technology transfers, and, on the other, to ensure their implementation.
28. When push came to shove, Africa was on its own and had to have a plan it could implement with or without outside support. Confident in the belief that it had the ability, on the back of a finalized Consensus Statement and the draft resolution to be adopted at the Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit scheduled to be held in January 2012, to pull together and do whatever was necessary to promote sustainable development throughout the continent, he wished the participants every success in their deliberations.
29. Further statements were delivered by Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director of the Sustainable Development Division, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs; Mr. Phologo Jim Gaumalcol of Botswana, Africa Representative on the Rio+20 Bureau; Mr. Aly Abou-Sabaa, Chairman, Climate Change Coordination Committee, African

Development Bank; and H.E. Ms. Isabel Cristina de Azevedo Heyvaert, Ambassador of Brazil to Ethiopia.

30. In his statement, Mr. Seth noted that the present Conference had been preceded by other regional preparatory meetings in Santiago, Seoul and Cairo, and that nowhere were the themes and objectives of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development more relevant than in Africa. Rio+20 would provide the continent with an opportunity to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development; to galvanize implementation of the sustainable development agenda; and to introduce coherent policies and programmes at all levels.
31. Turning to the two themes of Rio+20, he said that the wide-ranging discussions on a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication had yet to produce a common understanding of the meaning, scope and implications of the concept. There was, however, an emerging consensus as to what it was not: a standardized, top-down approach to development; a means of legitimizing green protectionism in trade; or a pretext for green conditionality in aid and finance. It could be based on guiding principles endorsed at the 1992 Earth Summit, for instance, such as that of common but differentiated responsibilities. It could also be regarded as a means of reorienting public and private decision-making in such a way as to reflect and respect natural capital, and of ensuring that the poor were the main beneficiaries of – and active participants in – building such an economy.
32. As for the matter of the institutional framework for sustainable development, analysis of the existing framework had shown a lack of integration, commitment to implementation and coherence among the various bodies, entities and institutions at every level. Regarding the proposal to elevate UNEP to the status of an international specialized institution for environment based in Nairobi, more detail was being sought on the implications and impact, and other options included the creation of a sustainable development council, along the lines of the Human Rights Council, and the strengthening of regional commissions.
33. The most critical issues for Africa to address in order to secure a successful outcome to Rio+20 were those of financing, science and technology, gender empowerment, education and capacity-building.

34. In his statement, Mr. Gaumalcol, speaking on behalf of Botswana and Egypt, the two Africa representatives on the Rio+20 Bureau, endorsed the call by Mr. Janneh for coordination between capitals and diplomatic representatives in Addis Ababa and New York, and said that Rio+20 would provide an opportunity to assess progress and to remind partners of their commitments to Africa. The Africa Consensus Statement to be finalized at the present meeting was crucial to ensuring that the continent was not left behind in the Rio+20 process. Participants were reminded that that Statement must be submitted to the Secretariat of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs by 1 November 2011, meaning that the timetable of the meeting had to be revised accordingly. Failure to meet that deadline would result in Africa's concerns not being reflected in the basic working document of the second Preparatory Committee meeting for Rio+20, to be held in New York on 7-8 March 2012.
35. In his statement, Mr. Abou-Sabaa drew attention to the fact that the Bank had been working with UNECA and other institutions to develop a common African position for Rio+20. Sustainable development challenges facing the continent offered new opportunities to articulate the African perspective, and there was a need to strengthen institutional structures and develop shared visions in order to address issues related to gender inequality, water management, and energy production. Regional integration would play a critical part in promoting market diversification and addressing transboundary issues; and science, technology and innovation would also be required to resolve issues of sustainable development in Africa.
36. Mr. Saaba stressed that Africa depended on its natural resources, which were being affected by climate change. However, he noted that adapting and mitigating climate change also presented opportunities, such as access to additional resources. He underscored the fact that green economy represented a paradigm shift in development planning and an important opportunity for Africa. These opportunities if well harnessed could lead Africa to sustainable growth and development. He described the forthcoming Durban and Rio+20 conferences as opportunities to articulate the African perspective on climate change and sustainable development.

37. In her statement, Ms. De Azevedo Heyvaert, the Ambassador of Brazil to Ethiopia, said that by reassessing the current development model, the Rio+20 conference had the potential to determine the sustainable development agenda for the next 20 years, and she urged governments to set their priorities with respect to eradicating extreme poverty within the framework of Agenda 21 and the Rio Principles. The green economy should be considered a possible means of generating new opportunities for economic growth, employment and the development of new technologies, while international environmental governance should prioritize solutions that would strengthen the implementation capacity of UNEP in developing countries without institutional reform.

IV ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

A. Ministerial policy dialogue

Session 1: Progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and new and emerging challenges

Moderator: Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary the United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat

Presenter: Mr. Rudolph Sandy Kuuzegh, Ghana

Panellists:

Government:

H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayittey, Minister of Environment, Science and Technology, Ghana

H.E. Mr James Musoni, Minister Local Government, Good Governance Community Development and Social Affairs, Rwanda

H.E. Mr. Immanuel Ngatjizeko, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Namibia;

Private sector:

Mr. Kebour Ghenna, Executive Director, Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

Civil society:

Ms. Lucy Mulenkei, Executive Director, Indigenous Information Network, Kenya.

Introduction by the Moderator

38. In a brief overview of Africa's progress since the 1992 Earth Summit, the Moderator said that the continent had made great strides on the economic front but had failed to move forward on issues related to poverty, food security and employment.

Presentation of the report

39. The presentation highlighted the need to mainstream sustainable development into national and regional development strategies, which required human and institutional capacity-building at all levels and effective political leadership. It went on to identify intersectoral linkages conducive to making more effective use of existing financing sources, and underscored the importance of technology transfer and information-sharing.
40. The key challenges that emerged from the expert-segment discussions included those of trafficking and piracy and how they affected fishing, tourism and trade; genetically modified crops in connection with food security and the long-term effects on the environment; the development of agricultural mechanisms promoting the use of arable land; low penetration of information and communication technology (ICT) services; and the migration-related problems caused by drought and desertification.

Presentations by the panellists

41. Hon. Minister Ayittey began her presentation by noting how implementation of Agenda 21 had been held back by underfunding, insufficient technical resources and an inadequate institutional framework. She went on to say that African countries were lagging behind in their efforts to meet the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and that Africa had benefitted little from foreign direct investment, most of which flowed into the extractive sectors. Regional cooperation had to be enhanced and Africa's needs must be prioritized.
42. With regard to the three pillars of sustainable development, the economic pillar should be strengthened via a bottom-up approach, with local authorities mainstreaming sustainability into the activities of grass-roots communities; the social should prioritize gender equality in policy-making and the enhancement of primary goods; and the environmental should maintain a focus on ownership of natural resources, investment, and science and technology.

43. In his presentation, Hon. Minister Musoni suggested that Africa should present a 20-year plan in Rio de Janeiro, including measures to capitalize on migration by harnessing the potential of diaspora communities through trade, investment and remittances; to improve education systems; and to empower students as agents of change for sustainable development.
44. Hon. Minister Nagatjizeko urged governments to develop interconnecting, inclusive strategies that drew on the participation of the social groups suffering most from food insecurity, desertification, floods and crop loss: the working poor, the elderly and informal sector workers. Furthermore, the Africa Consensus Statement should place a clear emphasis on the issues of poverty reduction, job creation and social inclusion; and on ensuring that the green economy were integrated into social policy geared to mobilizing youth. Responding to a question from the floor on the role of skilled labour in the green economy, he stressed the need for capacity-building and the use of domestic labour in place of hiring overseas workers.
45. Mr. Ghenna, speaking on the subject of new and emerging challenges, drew attention to the key role of businesses in the sustainable development agenda. They could help deliver – and share the costs of – solutions based on local and global values to mitigate the effects of climate change, desertification and youth unemployment. Responding to a question on the role of business in combating desertification, he stressed the need to enhance public-private partnerships and to provide subsidies for financial incentives.
46. Ms. Lucy Mulenkei, speaking on the subject of progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments since 1992, said that civil society had increased its engagement on all fronts and at various levels by organizing forums, carrying out new activities and advocating paradigm shifts. It had successfully forged linkages and mobilized thinking and resources across national borders. The time had come to acknowledge its constructive role and to boost its participation in Africa.
47. The main challenges facing Africa included deteriorating natural resources, biodiversity loss, climate change and population pressure, made worse by their adverse effects on poverty and stability. Most affected were the population groups lacking the capacity to use market mechanisms to survive. Mechanisms governing international trade and

resources for the collective benefit of the whole of society would provide the best means of protecting the weak and ensuring the equitable distribution of resources. Meanwhile, the term “green economy” should be extended from green technologies, infrastructure, investment and jobs to embrace a more equitable society. Furthermore, the Rio+20 process must ensure that measures were in place to help countries maintain adequate resources and secure sustainable development for future generations.

48. Recommendations included efforts to ensure civil society participation in the sustainable development agenda; capacity-building; development of a supportive international framework; and ensuring that the three pillars were fully integrated in the sustainable development agenda.

Comments from the floor

49. In the ensuing discussions, several speakers said that there had been a great deal of talk about what Africa expected from developed countries at the Rio+20 Conference, but it should be remembered that in spite of the concrete programme of work and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities set out in Agenda 21, many of the commitments made in 1992 had never been fulfilled. Africa was not begging for anything; it was merely trying to ensure that the developed countries lived up to their responsibilities in regard to technology transfer and the environmental degradation caused by industrialization and heavy use of fossil fuels.
50. Several speakers endorsed the President of Congo’s comment that Africa must not forget its own responsibilities in relation to sustainable development within the context of the green economy and poverty eradication. One said that Africa’s biggest problem was Africans themselves, and stressed that the desired growth had to be harnessed for the benefit of all Africans rather than just the privileged few. Africa was the richest continent in terms of resources but the poorest as far as development in general was concerned. It had to strive for self-sufficiency and develop local sources of investment because when the developed world did provide aid, it came with strings attached. The time had come for African countries to work together and help each other.

51. One speaker called for financial coordination among African countries and stressed the need for job creation through the green economy. Another said that coherence of the sustainable development agenda began at home, and that African countries must look at their national situations and assess what had and had not been done to integrate the three pillars. Most had done very little in the 20 years since the original Earth Summit, and they were now being offered another concept – the green economy – that was not yet widely understood. As well as looking at deliverables at the national level, African countries needed to take into account the international situation, which was far from encouraging, especially in the light of the severe global economic and financial crisis, and the failing – if not already failed – Doha Round.
52. Several speakers emphasized the need for safety nets to upgrade the social pillar. The green economy alone would not suffice; a failure to provide social justice and to tackle cross-cutting issues relating to women, children and other vulnerable and marginalized groups was a recipe for social unrest. Social protection policies must be seen as an integral part of sustainable development.
53. One speaker emphasized the importance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification (UNCCD): African countries should place greater emphasis on improving its implementation as it would be highly beneficial for development.
54. Technology should be transferred free of charge to Africa as long as it did not impinge on intellectual property rights; and it should receive compensation for climate change from those responsible for its causes. Meanwhile, short-term financing had only pledged for the period through to 2013, and the emphasis should be placed on long-term financing.
55. Summing up, the Moderator, said that the message from the floor had been clear: African countries must work to bring about peace and stability, without which sustainable development was impossible; the development of intra-African trade and cooperation was key; and Africa would not be going to Rio de Janeiro as a beggar because the developed world had a very clear responsibility toward it.

Session 2: Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; Institutional and strategic frameworks for sustainable development

Moderator: Mr. Yoshiteru Uramoto, Deputy Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Presenter: Dr. Charles Mutai, Kenya

Panellists:

Eminent person:

Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Sustainable Development Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Government:

H.E. Hon. Mr. Tiémoko Sangaré, Minister of the Environment and Sanitation, Mali

H.E. Hon. Mr. Wycliffe A. Oparanya, MP, Minister of State for Planning, Kenya

Private sector:

Mr. Dotun Ajayi, Africa Business Roundtable

Civil society:

Ms. Marlene Laros, Policy and Strategy Advisor, Africa Secretariat, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), South Africa

Introduction by the Moderator

56. The Moderator stressed that while African countries had among the fastest-growing economies in the world, they were still struggling with the serious environmental degradation caused by the existing fossil-based energy system paradigm in place for the previous 50 years, which had impacted disproportionately on the very poor. Given that natural capital accounted for 25 per cent of the GDP of developing countries yet only 2 per cent of that of the developed world, resource-based economies had to diversify into processing and adding value. However, industrialization was impossible without sustainable access to energy, which only very few Africans enjoyed. Energy systems and the entire energy chain therefore had to be improved and the use of renewables scaled up.

UNIDO was launching a pioneering initiative on sustainable energy for all by 2030, which entailed catalyzing actions among a broad range of partners in order to green the industrial sector and to increase green jobs, which called in turn for collaboration between governments, the private sector and civil society.

Presentation of the reports

57. The first presentation began by describing the green economy as a system that resulted in greater human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It was a vehicle for achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty and, as far as Africa was concerned, an agenda for growth, poverty reduction and employment creation. The report outlined pathways for transition to a green economy in Africa through building on natural capital assets, identifying green opportunities for industrial growth, and harnessing Africa's clean-energy potential. It went on to discuss enabling policies and institutions; policy and regulatory frameworks; access to and transfer of technology; financing; and the means to trade opportunities. A number of Africa success stories were described.
58. Key issues and recommendations to have emerged from the experts' discussions centred, *among* others, on the fact that green economy was still a new concept and, hence, required solid principles and policy space; that social equity issues related to green growth should be addressed, with attention paid to gender issues and vulnerable groups, such as children and people with disabilities; that the roles of various sectors in the transition to a green economy should be identified and clearly defined; that the implications of Africa's transition called for careful consideration; and that the United Nations 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production should form the basis for the transition.
59. The second presentation examined the ways in which institutional and strategic frameworks, among others, promoted integration of the three pillars of sustainable development; encouraged multi-stakeholder participation and decentralization; and catered for inter- and intra-generational equity. Studies of existing institutional structures had shown that they did not address Africa's needs in matters of the environment and sustainable development, and that they had yet to take on board the Malabo Decision and the outcomes of the fourth special session of AMCEN. In that light, attention was drawn to a number of recommendations on capacity-building and integrated strategies for the governance of sustainable development. Options included the strengthening of UNEP

through its elevation to the status of an international specialized institution for environment, reviewing its mandate within its current structure, or its transformation into a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. Whichever option were chosen, the end result would be a stronger, more consolidated UNEP, although it would differ in form and in terms of the implications depending on the route chosen. Another option was the conversion of ECOSOC into a sustainable development council. The experts had suggested that an open-ended working group be established to discuss UNEP's transformation.

60. Strengthening international environmental governance alone would not suffice to achieve the goals of sustainable development, and the balanced integration of the social, economic and environment pillars was crucial. Africa had responded to the need for that balanced integration with varying degrees of success in the areas of planning, budgeting and implementation of plans and programmes. Multi-stakeholder participation to that end had been promoted and institutional and programmatic linkages established, but limited financing was a persistent constraint at the subregional, national and local levels. There should be an equal emphasis on all three pillars of sustainable development, not just the environmental, although the latter was the weakest of the three – not only in Africa but also globally – and had to be strengthened.

61. Governance at the regional level could be strengthened by capitalizing on the comparative advantages of existing institutions to ensure effective vertical linkages, with the African Union Commission scaling up its coordinating role and establishing effective outreach and communication channels with regional economic communities. African governments, meanwhile, should demonstrate ownership by exploring and budgeting for alternative sources of funding for NEPAD programmes.

Presentations by the panellists

62. Mr. Seth, after examining the relationship between the three pillars of sustainable development and presenting an overview of the global, regional, national and local institutions established in – and strengthened since – 1992, stressing that any reform of the infrastructure for sustainable development had to begin at the national level, and it must be seen as a process: Africa should not expect Rio+20 to spark a “big bang”. He went on to outline the history of the current environmental architecture, beginning with the establishment of UNEP. Achievements had included public awareness-raising, an end

to narrow conservationist approaches to the environment, and the mainstreaming of environmental management into corporate governance frameworks.

63. However, the institutions and associated networks established since 1992 had been hampered by a failure to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns, a lack of horizontal coordination due to inter-institutional rivalries, resulting in an absence of much-needed joint programming, and a preference for short-term solutions. Major gaps included poor implementation and monitoring capacities, and poor or non-existent analysis and stocktaking. Integration, coordination and coherence were particular areas of weakness that had to be addressed before the foundations could be laid for future institutions. It was essential to build on successes, especially in regard to awareness-raising. The legal framework needed strengthening, but responsibility for the crucial improvements needed in the area of implementation should not be left entirely to environment ministers, which meant placing a greater emphasis on partnership.
64. Proposals for international environmental governance reform should take full account of the limitations of United Nations processes, as well as the successes and failures of the Commission on Sustainable Development. A key proposal, which had received a great deal of attention was the elevation of UNEP to the status of an international specialized institution for environment. Another alternative was the establishment of a sustainable development council, i.e. a high-level consultative body along the lines of the Human Rights Council. It was unclear at present how UNEP might be strengthened. All proposals would be examined, and other options might not prove incompatible with an enhanced UNEP, but in his experience of the United Nations system, completely new bodies were generally more successful than those that had been overhauled. It was important for the form of the institution to be dictated by the substance and not the other way round.
65. In his presentation, Hon. Minister Sangaré outlined some of the key stages in the greening of African economies as countries moved towards transition to a green economy. Such a transition was crucial for them to achieve their development objectives and required a plan of action that set clear targets for job creation, poverty reduction, capacity-building and resource mobilization, including through technology transfer. Capacity-building was crucial, but it was not only new capacities that were needed: traditional capacities had to be reassessed, rather than dismissed as worthless. That was especially true in relation to

natural resource management, an area in which Africans had centuries – if not millennia – of experience. Intra-African cooperation had to be promoted in order to leverage change. Above all, Africa had to stand united and remember that the rest of the world needed it as much as it needed the rest of the world. A realistic common position backed by convincing arguments was the only way to ensure that its demands were met at Rio+20.

66. In his presentation, Hon. Minister Oparanya stressed that efficient and sustainable use of natural resources was impossible without proper planning. Population growth, especially in Africa, was a critical factor. Some regarded it as an advantage in that the larger the population the greater the domestic demand, but the economy would only benefit from “quality” population growth. As it was, more than 60 per cent of people in developing countries lived below the poverty line, and while the population was growing the amount of land remained the same. Good planning was essential for the use of natural capital in order to achieve sustainable development.

67. He went on to give examples of what was being done in Kenya to improve the environment. The Vision 2030 programme, launched some years previously, was being revised to take account of climate change; action was being taken to curb and reverse the deterioration of ecosystems; and a number of programmes were under way in the areas of reforestation and water management. Central government had also allocated public money to local development efforts within the framework of constituency development funds, at least 5 per cent of which had to be devoted to environmental issues. In view of the fact that food security was at the heart of the green economy, Kenya was striving to improve its agricultural systems and technology and had invested in irrigation.

68. Less than 20 per cent of Africans had access to energy, and Kenya, like many other countries in Africa, spent a significant share of export earnings on imported energy, meaning that price fluctuations and any devaluation of local currencies weighed heavily on the economy. Kenya was therefore looking at clean and renewable energy sources, such as geo-thermal and wind, and offered tax incentives for the acquisition, among others, of solar panels and geo-thermal equipment. The Government was also seeking alternative fuels to kerosene, a great deal of which was used in rural areas, because it was both costly, as it had to be imported, and very harmful to health.

69. The presentation concluded with a number of “policy messages”: encouraging bi- and multilateral collaboration to ensure that policies were consistent; creating an enabling environment to attract investment in green economy projects and compensate for limited public resources; adopting more efficient clean technologies; the strengthening of international environmental governance; capacity-building, including through technology transfer; mainstreaming a focus on environmental issues, especially climate change, into planning and budgeting; improving environmental protection legislation; and setting up environment committees in national assemblies to monitor the executive and coordinate follow-up to international decisions and recommendations.
70. In his presentation, Mr. Ajayi stressed that responsibility for green growth lay with both the private and public sectors, and that while transition to the green economy might be costly, there was no alternative. African countries therefore needed to mobilize the resources for capacity-building, including – given the absence of much-needed technology transfers from developing countries – investment in research and development to produce their own technologies. While innovative financing mechanisms were in place at the global level, Africa as a region had to introduce market reforms and to establish domestic capital markets. It should also work to ensure that the outcomes of Rio+20 included the emergence of a nexus between trade and the environment, which would be a win-win situation for African countries. The overall message was that government had to work with business to promote the sustainable development agenda; and that Africa as a whole should strive to become self-sufficient instead of relying on others.
71. Ms. Laros, after an overview of her organization’s activities as a major group organizing partner and awareness raiser in the build-up to Rio+20, drew attention to the importance of the urban green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Cities were the hubs of the global economy, and Africa as a region had the fastest rates of urbanization in the world. As an estimated 60 per cent of the African population was expected to be living in urban areas by 2050, the planning and financing of urban development was not only a priority but a major opportunity to structure growth and catalyze the green economy, with high employment elasticity, secure ecosystem services, and affordable public services.

72. Urban economic growth in Africa had, in recent times, been mirrored by increasing urban poverty. It was essential for Africa and the international community to consider what action needed to be taken to ensure effective urban services for a possible 800 million additional inhabitants. That called for a new understanding of the concept of the “city”, and a new paradigm for modern African urbanism. One comparative advantage was that African cities had the potential to leapfrog the conventional development path to an urban green economy.
73. Greening the local economy was a matter for local governments, since many economic activities came within their jurisdiction. They could channel public spending into influencing local markets; encourage private sector investment through financial incentives and disincentives; initiate public information programmes to raise awareness and promote the involvement of stakeholders; drive local innovation; and play a key role in catalyzing and scaling up transition to a green urban economy. They were key implementing agents at grass-roots level in the area of the management and use of environmental resources. Rio+20 had to acknowledge their role and create the local financing mechanisms to support urban green growth.
74. Regarding the institutional and strategic frameworks, ICLEI supported the strengthening of international institutions through the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on sustainable development to ensure an appropriate policy-science interface; a United Nations environment agency to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development; a council for sustainable development along the lines of the Human Rights Council, reporting to the General Assembly; a new comprehensive global indicator for sustainable growth integrating the economic, environmental and social pillars; and the transformation of the United Nations system in such a way as to ensure that local governments were formally recognized as key actors in future United Nations institutions for sustainable development.
75. ICLEI advocated the strengthening of regional institutions such as ECA; support for the AUC-NEPAD sustainable development programmes; and enhancement of the African Peer Review Mechanism to take account of all three pillars of sustainable development. It further advocated the strengthening of national institutions, especially the National

Commissions on Sustainable Development, and their incorporation into national planning frameworks to ensure the balanced integration of the three pillars.

76. In conclusion, the United Nations should move beyond the definition of “united nations” to that of “united actors”; and the major groups system should formally recognize local government organizations as fully-fledged actors with the right to participate in UNCSO dialogues. Local governments, collectively, had the capacity to stimulate the global impact required for sustainable development.

Session 3: Means of implementation: Bridging the gap

Moderator: Mr. Brice Lalonde, Assistant Secretary-General, Executive Coordinator of Rio+20

Presenter: Patrick Mnisi, Swaziland

Panellists:

Eminent person:

Mr. Aly Abdou Sabaa, Chairman, Climate Change Coordination Committee, African Development Bank

Government:

H.E. Hon. Hlangusemphi Dlamini, Minister of Planning and Economy, Swaziland

Private sector:

Mr. Stanford Mwakasonda, Corporate Climate Change Specialist, Engen Petroleum Ltd., South Africa

Civil society:

Dr. Edith Madela-Mntla, Director, ICSU Regional Office for Africa

Introduction by the Moderator

77. The Moderator stressed the need to ensure that the Africa Consensus Statement set out the commitments African governments were making and what they expected of the international community. It was important to remember that there would not only be environment ministers at Rio+20 but also social affairs and finance ministers. Key outcomes would include an agreement on innovative forms of development financing, such as the proposed tax on financial transactions that was gaining support among African countries. Another issue to be tackled was partnership between the public and private sectors, and between bi- and multilateral partners.

Presentation of the report

78. The presentation began with an overview of the commitments made at conferences and meetings over the previous 20 years in the areas of financing sustainable development; aid and development effectiveness; technology transfer; capacity-building; globalization and trade; regional integration; and South-South cooperation. It went on to cover the action that had been taken, the progress made, the constraints and challenges, and the lessons learned, before turning to the way forward in terms of implementation.

79. Few commitments had been met and African countries needed to work with development partners to scale up their efforts and ensure that they met their sustainable development targets. Each country was responsible for driving its own sustainable development agenda, which called for assertive action in mobilizing domestic resources and capacity-building; strengthening the African Union as the voice of Africa; fostering regional and subregional integration; capitalizing on economic interdependence between African countries; harnessing science, technology and information for sustainable development; diversifying national economies; and promoting participation in multilateral organizations and institutions.

80. The Expert Segment had recommended keeping regional integration and cooperation as a core feature of Africa's sustainable development strategy, with an emphasis on stronger regional and subregional institutions, joint infrastructure programmes, and increasing regional trade. Other recommendations had included using climate change funding for the wider sustainable development agenda; finding better ways to mobilize domestic resources both within the country and in the diaspora; ensuring aid – and development –

effectiveness by adhering to the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action; and encouraging countries to identify and disseminate best practices.

Presentations by the panellists

81. In his presentation, Mr. Sabaa drew attention to the fact that most African economies were dependent on a natural resource base that was exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, and that in spite of the close relationship between climate change and development, the two tended to be discussed in separate forums. Africa was responsible for just 4 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions but was disproportionately affected by global warming. As such, it had to play a full part in climate change debates and decision-making.
82. The previous decade had seen increased flows of aid and investment from Africa's emerging partners, but both fell short of what was needed. Further aid was required to boost trade funding and intra-regional trade. Africa itself had to invest in infrastructure, rather than wait for outsiders to do so. Foreign direct investment could contribute to economic diversification and knowledge spillovers, but most of it went to resource-rich countries. Growth had to be inclusive, which required investment in small and medium-sized businesses, especially those run by women, while the current global financial crisis meant that every effort should be made to mobilize local resources through national and subregional partnerships. There was a need for new forms of innovative financing that did not place too heavy a burden on developing countries. Improvements were required in the fields of technology transfer, capacity-building and education; and a more focused development agenda had to be formulated.
83. As far as policy recommendations were concerned, negotiators should strive to secure a new agreement that set more ambitious targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and green development efforts should capitalize on Africa's relative underdevelopment as an opportunity, something that would require greater funding and political commitment. Access to energy had to be increased not only for the productive sectors but also for, among others, education and health. A particular emphasis had to be placed on underutilized energy sources such as hydro-, geothermal, wind and solar power, and a number of initiatives had been launched in various countries. The development of renewables, however, relied on significant investment, which in turn called for outside

support. Green development was generally hindered by a lack of funding and the customary donors needed to see the merits of green energy solutions.

84. The African Development Bank was supporting a host of projects in such areas as the green economy, green energy, transport and water infrastructure, and health – dealing with climate change-related diseases. It was also working to set up a green fund designed to mobilize private sector funding for green development projects. A new global architecture was needed and the conferences in Rio de Janeiro and Durban should identify and seize opportunities to promote a more integrated approach that would enable Africa to make better use of its resources.
85. In his presentation, Hon. Minister Dlamini, noted that while many African countries had significantly improved their performance in terms of development and sustainability since 1992, several smaller and more vulnerable ones had not and were in need of further attention. Although the global crisis had serious implications for Africa, it should nonetheless indicate what it considered essential, namely improving the investment climate which would, in turn, encourage foreign direct investment.
86. Radically improved education, especially science and technology education, was vital for Africa. Measures were needed to ensure quality primary and tertiary education; and the countries that had introduced information and communication technology classes in primary schools were to be commended. Vocational training was important, too, and children should be encouraged to pursue it after finishing school. Africans often complained that their wealth of natural resources was exploited by – and for the benefit of – others, but where were the African engineers capable of managing them for Africans?
87. Good governance was key to achieving sustainable development and African governments should step up their efforts in that area. It was important to improve the investment climate, with better reporting of public resource flows into cross-border development initiatives, for example, making them transparent and fully accountable, leaving no room for corruption and helping, in the process, to boost foreign direct investment. Emphasis was also needed on policies to improve aid effectiveness: donor funding usually came with conditionalities, which could constrain future development, and a lack of coordination among donors led to duplication and waste. Meanwhile, African countries had to have their classification reassessed, preferably by Africans, who

had a better understanding of the issues, because those that had been misclassified were denied aid.

88. Mr. Mwakasonda began his presentation by saying that the gaps to be bridged to create an enabling environment for poverty eradication, sustainable development and transition to a green economy were far wider than in 1992. One of biggest challenges was to change conventional thinking: the prevailing view in the private sector was that the public regarded it as nothing but a source of tax revenues, while the public sector regarded the private as having no other purpose than to make enormous profits. Neither view was true. Both sectors recognized the gravity of the situation, and they were both committed to eradicating poverty. The private sector needed to improve communication with the general public in order to raise awareness of its contribution to sustainable development.

89. Another gap to bridge was the absence of private-sector participation at any level of policy-making, even though public-sector actors often lacked practical experience in the issue areas under discussion. The private sector, for its part, lacked experience in mainstreaming sustainability into water or energy management, for example. Corporate social responsibility had to be enhanced in order to promote ethical and transparent practices, and public procurement contracts, for instance, should no longer be signed behind closed doors.

90. Governments had to do more to encourage private-sector investment in deprived rural areas by hitherto reluctant and largely ignored domestic businesses. They should also promote greater regional and subregional harmonization, the gradual development of common quality standards and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in green economy initiatives, for instance. Models that had worked in one country should be reproduced in others, thereby enabling them to avoid mistakes made and paths that had proved unsustainable elsewhere. The way forward was to ensure that each country had a clear grasp of the green economy and how it could be adapted to its own particular conditions; and to show the private sector that it could provide a framework that made good business sense.

91. In her presentation, Dr. Madela-Mntla said that bridging the implementation gaps would remain essential to Africa's success in fulfilling its sustainable development commitments

beyond Rio+20. The report had talked about the NEPAD Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) but did not adequately cover the extent to which it had been implemented. Coordinated capacity-building was needed to ensure the core skills required for sustainable development. The report did not highlight in detail the role of regional economic communities (RECs) in delivering on sustainable development commitments. Other implementation gaps in need of attention included the underinvolvement of women, people with disabilities and other marginalized population groups; and the need to promote information-sharing with indigenous knowledge systems.

92. Among the key policy recommendations, the Africa Consensus Statement should state that African countries would take steps to ensure the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the NEPAD CPA, and that they would put safeguards in place to prevent transfers of potentially unsafe technologies likely to add to the economic insecurity of the population. Science, technology, innovation and engineering should be presented as pillars of sustainable development in view of Africa's need to find new ways to mobilize and make better use of its own resources. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an African development fund; to robust monitoring and evaluation strategies, with country-level performance indicators; and to inclusive stakeholder participation in capacity-building and planning for implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes. Implementation of commitments made at the national and international levels called for stronger legal, political and diplomatic frameworks; for African countries to invest in capacity-building and developing the core skills to pursue harmonized, coordinated and, hence, more efficient sustainable development strategies.

Questions and answers

93. Responding to a request for her view about the importance of education, Dr. Madela-Mntla drew attention to the fact that the Science and Technology major group lobbied consistently for proper public investment in science and technology education; as well as for education for young girls, given the key role of women and girls in social development.
94. In reply to a question on what a development bank should do if a country requested funds to invest in non-renewable energy sources, Mr. Sabaa said that African countries had to have their development rights respected. A balance had to be struck between traditional

sources and renewables but, while the bank could recommend they adopt greener forms of energy, the initial set-up costs were far higher than for conventional energy production.

95. Further to the suggestion that concerns about the bulk of foreign direct investment going to the extractive industries could be addressed by tying mining concessions to the payment of some form of “development contribution”, Hon. Minister Dlamini stressed that the answer lay with Africans themselves. Capacity-building in education was crucial in view of the fundamental need to have competent people at the helm. Everyone, including grass-roots communities, had to understand all the implications before any mining took place.

Comments from the floor

96. In the ensuing discussions, attention was drawn to the urgent need for a new development model in Africa, given that economic growth since 1992 had been limited and that the international community had not delivered on certain promises. At the national level, African countries had to ensure that development programmes were guided by strategic plans and goals to implement the sustainable development agenda; that they took into account assessments of national and regional action plans; and that they encouraged network-building for the sharing of best practices. A strong institutional framework was required in order to tackle every aspect of sustainable development, including the human and social aspects of economic growth, while also eliminating corruption. Implementation gaps were attributed to incapacity to mobilize local, national and regional resources, inadequate access to funding, and the slow pace of technology transfer.
97. Clarification was requested on the machinery and costs of transition to a green economy, and whether the tools could be used to develop a low-carbon economy. Caution was prevent it from undermining food security, education and justice in favour of strictly corporate interests. Governments were urged to strengthen public-private partnerships; to introduce targeted, transparent and accountable employment policies, with a particular emphasis on jobs for vulnerable groups; to provide training for green jobs; and to mainstream gender sensitivity, with a particular emphasis on the role of women, into green growth policy-making. One speaker called for a specific focus on urban waste management and youth employment opportunities in the green economy debate.

98. Other speakers stressed the need to address the issues of agricultural productivity, the priority areas of desertification, water resource management and poverty eradication, and the deterioration of natural resources due to inaction in the face of climate change. Questions were raised on such issues as youth support in agriculture, the potential for intergenerational youth preparedness programmes to help young people contend with the effects of climate change, and efforts to tackle the matter of the brain drain and African diaspora.

B. AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION AT RIO+20

99. A representative of the African Union Commission presented a proposal on Africa's effective participation at Rio+20, including the organization of side events on topics relevant to Africa's sustainable development agenda.

C. ADOPTION OF THE AFRICA CONSENSUS STATEMENT

100. After lengthy discussions on the content of the document, moderated by H.E., Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and Environment of the Republic of Congo, the Africa Consensus Statement, as amended, was adopted.

D OTHER MATTERS

101. No other matters were discussed.

E CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

102. In her closing remarks, Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA acknowledged the very useful results accomplished by conference and in particular, the adoption of the Consensus Statement. This she said was a clear affirmation of Africa's resolve to speak with one voice at Rio+20. She expressed satisfaction at the effective mainstreaming of the social pillar of sustainable development in the conference deliberations. She called for continued leadership and engagement to ensure that Africa's concerns and priorities were reflected in the Rio+20 outcomes. She reaffirmed the commitment of ECA and its partners to providing continued support to the Africa preparatory process for Rio+20. In concluding, she thanked the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of Congo, member States, representatives of major groups, development partners and all participants for their exemplary leadership and valuable contributions to the conference.

103. The representative of the AUC reaffirmed the commitment of her organization to its continued leadership in moving the process forward and ensuring Africa's effective participation at Rio+20.

104. In closing the conference, Her Excellency, Emilienne Raoul, the Minister for Social Affairs of the Republic of Congo thanked ECA and its partners for organizing the conference and all participants for contributing to the resounding success of the conference. On this noted, she declared the Conference closed.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.

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