

NGOS STATEMENT TO THE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We join others to congratulate you and the Bureau for your election, and also congratulate the Secretariat for efficiently organizing this meeting.

As representatives of civil society, we are here on behalf the people and communities that will ultimately be impacted by the decisions made during this meeting. We are all here for one reason – and that is to come up with clear ambitious recommendations that will help to guide the future sustainable development of our continent and improve the lives of the most vulnerable people. As we continue with our discussions, we would like to remind delegates to put citizens at the heart of development.

To start a constructive and forward-looking dialogue on civil society's role in the region's future development agenda, we propose that engagement with AU, UN, its Commissions and thematic Committees in the region in sustainable development processes be guided by following parameters:

- a) The diversity of civil society and social movements and the diverse means for outreach to their respective constituencies should be respected and acknowledged to enable them to effectively participate in all levels of policy formulation and implementation.
- b) Full access and participation to all meetings, access to all relevant official documents and information within a reasonable time period prior to official meetings should be provided, ideally with translation to different languages widely used in the region in order to reach out to broader constituencies.
- c) Meaningful policy dialogue, national and local consultations in form of Pre-meetings and engagement at the local and national level between government and civil society to broaden and build ownership of the process.

To enhance meaningful civil society engagement in sustainable development processes in this region, we commit to continue coordinating among ourselves to ensure the outcomes of this meeting translate into tangible actions, not just words. To this end, we will hold an African-wide,, multi-sectoral Civil society meeting ahead next year's AU heads of states and governments Summit, and we recommend that the decisions of this meeting should be considered as part of the agenda.

This statement was done by:

- Pan-African Alliance for Climate Justice Alliance
- Millennium Institute

- Ibon International - Africa
- Save the Children
- Namibia NGO Forum (NANGOF)