



African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 13 November 2018

African Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity

We, the ministers and other heads of delegation from the 54 African countries, having met on the occasion of the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity hosted by the Government of Egypt in collaboration with the African Union Commission in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 November 2018 under the theme “Land and ecosystem degradation and restoration: Priorities for increased investments in biodiversity and resilience in Africa”,

Recalling decision Assembly/AU/Dec.352(XVI) of the Assembly of the African Union which, inter alia, called for the inclusion of biodiversity among the priorities of the African Union,

Recognizing the critical importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services in supporting economic growth, sustainable development, livelihoods and human well-being in Africa and its contribution to achieving the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling decision 16/2(V) adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its sixteenth session which, inter alia, endorsed and supported the proposal of the Government of Egypt to host a high-level event on African biodiversity in conjunction with the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide policy and strategic guidance on Africa’s biodiversity priorities for inclusion in future work programmes of the Convention and its Protocols,

Recalling also decision SS.7/1 on biological diversity adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its seventh special session,

Welcoming the reports and the key messages from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) global assessment on land degradation and restoration and the regional assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa,

Noting with concern the significant impact of land and ecosystem degradation on biological diversity, land productivity and human well-being in Africa, affecting over 485 million people and leading to an estimated annual cost of US\$ 9.3 billion,

Recognizing the urgent need for action to prevent further land and ecosystem degradation and to restore degraded ecosystems to protect biological diversity and ecosystem services vital to safeguarding life on Earth, increasing food and water security, ensuring human well-being and achieving other Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling relevant decisions of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including decision XIII/5 whereby the Parties adopted a Short-Term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration,

Welcoming the commitments already made by African countries on land and ecosystem restoration within the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (including Aichi Targets 5, 14 and 15), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (including on land degradation neutrality targets), the

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (particularly Sustainable Development Goal 15),

Noting the progress made by some African countries in promoting land and ecosystem restoration through various initiatives and programmes, such as the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) which seeks to restore 100 million hectares of degraded and deforested land in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 and the Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative,

Underlining the importance of integrating ecosystem restoration into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes to address challenges of land degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change vulnerability,

Declare and resolve to:

1. *Express* sincere gratitude to the Government of Egypt for successfully organizing the African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity;

2. *Endorse* the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience contained in annex II to the report of the Summit as a basis for future work on land and ecosystem restoration in the region;

3. *Submit* the above-mentioned Pan-African Action Agenda for adoption by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government;

4. *Invite* all member States of the African Union to support and implement the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience and to mobilize resources locally and through bilateral, regional and global funding sources, such as the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, to support its implementation;

5. *Invite* the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union Commission, in close collaboration with regional economic communities and with the support of relevant financial and technical partners, to provide support to African countries in implementing the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience in a coherent and coordinated manner;

6. *Invite* the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, other United Nations agencies, development partners and the international community to provide support to African countries to implement the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience in order to:

- (a) Combat land degradation and enhance ecosystem restoration in the region;
- (b) Facilitate strengthening of biodiversity mainstreaming initiatives to address the sectoral drivers of land degradation and biodiversity loss;
- (c) Work towards implementation of sustainable food systems for well-being of people and nature;

7. *Encourage* member States to link and synergize the implementation of the above Pan-African Action with the African Union Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its follow-up after 2020, the Convention on Biological Diversity Short-Term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration and with the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, land degradation neutrality targets, national adaptation plans, and nationally determined contributions;

8. *Support* the proposal calling upon the General Assembly at its seventy-third session to designate the decade 2021–2030 as “the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration”;

9. *Support also* the proposal of Egypt to launch a global initiative to promote the use of nature-based ecosystem approaches to coherently address biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation;

10. *Urge* member States to take note of the important role of protected areas in conserving biodiversity and to develop sustainable and innovative conservation finance mechanisms to enhance the role of protected areas in contributing to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development;

11. *Endorse* Africa's biodiversity priorities as contained in annex III to the report of the Summit and request the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols to consider these in the development and adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

12. *Urge* member States and relevant regional bodies to undertake cross-sectoral consultations, as appropriate, and proactively contribute to the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and support its implementation;

13. *Emphasize* the need to promote financing and investment in biodiversity for people and the planet at a scale that is commensurate with the magnitude of the funding and investment needs assessed under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international processes;

14. *Urge* member States to continue to promote synergy in the implementation of the Rio Conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions and processes to address in a coherent manner the interrelated issues of biodiversity loss, land and ecosystem degradation, desertification and climate change;

15. *Agree* to convene future African ministerial summits on biodiversity to review progress with the implementation of the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience and to consider other priority issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity across the African continent.
