



# AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

## APU

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R.139/38/15

### **AFRICAN COUNTRIES DEAL WITH THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AND ROLE OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS**

*Resolution adopted by the 38<sup>th</sup> Conference (Bissau, 6 December 2015)*

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 38<sup>th</sup> Conference in Bissau, Guinea Bissau on 5 and 6 December 2015,

*Referring* to the conventions and declarations adopted at international meetings on the environment and climate, and the African Union Strategy on Climate Change (May 2014) calling for building the adaptation and resilience capacities of member States and regional economic communities, with a view to reducing vulnerability, pursuing a low-carbon growth path, driven by the principles of the green economy, sustainable development and poverty reduction,

*Recalling* the relevant resolutions on the environment, the climate and development adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the African Parliamentary Union at their successive assemblies and conferences,

*Considering* that climate change, whose effects are already visible, is one of the worst threats to prosperity and development in the world, and of prime concern to the international community, which recognizes that the increase in greenhouse gas emissions is the major source of global warming,

*Also considering* that global warming could trigger an uncontrollable rise in sea levels, catastrophic heat waves, persistent drought and unprecedented flooding, threatening the very fabric of our society, in terms of food security and health, infrastructures, and the integrity of our ecosystems,

*Deploring* the fact that despite the seriousness of the challenge and the many initiatives taken on climate change at international conferences and summits, the historical polluters have not fulfilled their funding commitments and promises, as part of joint but differentiated responsibilities,

*Concerned* by the fact that although Africa contributes very little to greenhouse gas emissions, the combination of certain geographical and economic factors and its dependence on natural resources make it vulnerable to the effects of climate change,

*Noting* that the most vulnerable sectors include agriculture, food and water, and that sub-Saharan Africa will suffer the most from reduced agricultural production and increased water insecurity; and also exposure to coastal flooding, extreme climate events and heightened risks for human health,

*Recognizing* that Africa's vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by current developmental challenges, such as the strong dependency on primary commodities, the continent's rapid growth, which puts pressure on already degraded land, endemic poverty and hunger, high prevalence of disease, the weak governance of institutions, prevalence of conflicts, limited access to capital, information and technology, inadequate infrastructures, degraded ecosystems and catastrophes,

*Deeply concerned* by the fact that this vulnerability to climate change could undermine the development of the continent, endangering millions of Africans and their means of subsistence,

*Aware* that when they occur, climate change-related catastrophes affect primarily the poorest and most vulnerable populations, especially women, who are often not included in the environmental discourse and planning process, although they could often be in the best position to provide solutions,

*Noting* that habitats and ecosystems in Africa are currently threatened by factors such as deforestation, land degradation and high dependence on biomass to produce energy,

*Recognizing* that as part of the sustainable response to climate change, countries must share their experiences and innovative technologies in new and renewable energies and cooperate in the training and development of human and technical capacities,

*Aware* of the important role played by parliaments in organizing and strengthening the response to climate change and their responsibility for its implementation, in order to ensure sustainable development and peace and stability in Africa,

1. *Commits* African parliaments to deal with climate change as a development imperative, *and reaffirms* the need for an integrated and sustainable approach to natural resource management, agricultural production and population growth, backed by measures to reduce vulnerability and the risk of catastrophes, as an integral part of the planning and development process;
2. *Calls upon* African parliaments and governments to adopt public policies to strengthen the transition to a more climate change-resilient and low-carbon development path and aimed at promoting environmental protection, including tree planting, efficient waste management, efficient public transport systems, and control and limit the level of emissions of motorized vehicles and rather promote energy-efficient vehicles;

3. *Urges* African parliaments to do all in their power to reflect international climate change agreements in national legislation by providing, at the time of adopting the budget, suitable budget resources, and take appropriate measures to enhance the monitoring and control of government action;
4. *Stresses* the need to ensure that all public policies on the adverse effects of climate change contain concrete objectives with firm implementation timetables, to ensure that action is truly taken to produce tangible outcomes;
5. *Welcomes* the adoption by the United Nations of the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and *Urges* African parliaments to ensure that implementation of their climate commitments does not affect their achievement, such as reduction of poverty and risks of catastrophe, access to energy and gender equality;
6. *Encourages* parliaments to support investments in research, education, training and awareness-raising to build the capacities of African countries to generate reliable information on climate, on the one hand, and the efficient use of such information in decision-making and policy formulation, on the other;
7. *Calls upon* parliaments and parliamentarians to strengthen their ties with civil society organizations concerned by climate change and sustainable development, including non-governmental organizations specialized in development and environmental issues, university campuses, youth groups, the business world, and sectoral associations, trade unions and think tanks, in an effort to enhance the efficiency of climate change legislation and policies;
8. *Urges* African parliaments to support the periodic and regular organization of information and awareness campaigns on knowledge on climate-change resilient and low carbon development;
9. *Recommends* the setting up of an efficient management tool at the continental level, with branches in every African country, of an efficient management tool to quantify and track all initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
10. *Urges* parliaments to promote, everywhere on the continent, the principles of good governance as an indispensable tool in combating the adverse effects of climate change, and introducing an enabling environment for access to diverse funds for mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes designed to help African countries to transition toward green growth and low-carbon emission development;
11. *Urges* the parliaments of developed countries and other polluter countries to lobby their governments to ensure that the financing for adaptation measures, including technology transfer to African countries by their countries are commensurate with their responsibility for climate change-related economic and social damages, because of the historical contribution of these countries to greenhouse gas emissions and the current climate change;

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12. *Calls for* increased cooperation, among African parliaments, on the one hand, and between African parliaments and those of the rest of the world, on the other, as a means of building parliamentary capacities to implement legislation on climate and disseminate best practices to combat the adverse effects of climate change, which should be scaled up continent wide;
  13. *Requests* African parliaments to encourage subregional and regional initiatives to bring consistency in national legislations and policies, in order to facilitate, among others, the common management of natural resources, and reinforce the fight against deforestation, desertification and soil degradation, and the illicit trade in wood, and support initiatives that safeguard and promote forest conservation;
  14. *Commits* African parliaments to strive to promote adaptation measures to impacts of climate change for women, young people and vulnerable persons, designed to empower women and integrate them, with a view to ensuring sustainable development for all;
  15. *Recommends* the periodic organization of capacity building workshops for African parliamentarians, in terms of climate change and sustainable development, to ensure efficient implementation and monitoring of climate legislation and dissemination of best practices;
  16. *Requests* States to do all in their power to monitor the universal and binding agreement expected at COP 21;
  17. *Recommends* the establishment in each parliament, of a follow-up mechanism to this resolution.