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Gabonese Government (Libreville)

Africa: Libreville Declaration - African Ministers in Bid to Alleviate Poverty Through Environment

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PRESS RELEASE

After two days of deliberations on the findings of international experts, ministers of environment and of economy at the continent's first pan-African conference on biodiversity, entitled 'Biodiversity and the fight against poverty: what opportunities for Africa?', have concluded their work with the adoption of the Libreville Declaration. 28 African countries were represented, 11 at ministerial level.

Having discussed the findings of the technical segment and exchanged views on how Africa can position itself in respect of the forthcoming 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly next week, the 10th Conference of Parties Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in October, and the new biodiversity strategic plan for 2011-2020, ministers signed the Declaration outlining the continental standpoint on the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, access to and sharing of genetic resources, and the development of a green economy.

Recognising the economic value inherent in biodiversity and in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems services, and their inextricable linkage to sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty, the Declaration reaffirms the need for Africa to safeguard its ecosystems and to ensure equitable access to those services, especially for poor populations directly dependent on them. To this effect, the ministers confirmed the need to integrate ecosystem services into inter-sectoral strategies and policies at all levels, both nationally and regionally. This includes developing systems to monitor and assess biodiversity and ecosystems, and incorporating systems of risk management.

The ministers present, of both environmental and economic affairs, highlighted the importance to view the protection of the environment and economic development and growth as interrelated and mutually supporting issues, rather than opposing ones. Consequently, the Libreville Declaration commits African governments to working towards the valuation of ecosystem services and biodiversity resources and to establish environmental accounting systems which take them into account in development planning and in economic indicators.

The Libreville Declaration commits African leaders to developing knowledge, capacity and strategy: Greater knowledge of the continent's biodiversity, its vulnerabilities and the quantifying of the impact of human activity, including climate change, on ecosystems, will be achieved by increasing institutional, scientific, technical and legal capacity and allocating greater human and financial resources to support national and regional strategies that will be reviewed and updated in light of the coming international meetings. The Declaration points to the importance of synergy between strategies conceived for the protection of biodiversity and those relating to climate change and to deforestation, and also of the need for South-South cooperation.

The Declaration affirms the need for inter-governmental and inter-sectoral cooperation and includes draft roadmaps for:

The creation of an African Committee for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IpBES) that will work on a continual basis to identify and prioritise key scientific information for the continent's policy makers and facilitate dialogue between scientific organisations, policy makers and funding organisations.

The development of Africa's green economy, including clean technologies, renewable energies, water services, green transportation, waste management, green buildings and sustainable agriculture and forests.

However, the Libreville Declaration not only communicates the commitments that the continent's leaders are willing to make, but is also an appeal to others. In formulating their common positions, the African ministers call upon civil society, the private sector and community organisations to step up their efforts to work with governments to achieve the continent's objectives. They also appeal to the international community to ensure adequate funding mechanisms and technology transfer to the African continent.

[The East African](#)

In adopting the Declaration, the ministers called upon Gabon's President Ali Bongo Ondimba, as host of the pan-African conference on biodiversity, to deliver Africa's common position at the United National General Session in New York next week, which for the first time takes the theme of biodiversity, and at COP10 which takes place in Nagoya from 18 to 29 October. Gabon is playing a key role in protecting the forests of the Congo Basin – the planet's second 'green lung' after the Amazon. With 11% of Gabon's national territory protected within 13 national parks, the launch of a National Climate Council and the creation of a satellite-imaging station to observe the forest cover, Gabon's Head of State is leading the country and the continent on a path towards green, sustainable development.



East African Community member states have made good progress in increasing access to primary education.

Addressing the delegation at the adoption of the Libreville Declaration, Chantal Jouanno, France's Secretary of State for Ecology, said she "would like to thank the Gabonese Government and in particular the President, for the depth of their commitment to biodiversity, a commitment incarnated personally by President Ali Bongo Ondimba and his 'Green Gabon' project."

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