



Resolution

on

“Achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions, as a major goal for peace, security and social and economic progress in African countries”

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 37th Conference on 1 and 2 November 2014, in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco,

- (a) *Recalling* that if sustainable development is to address current needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, it has to be rooted in three interdependent and synergistic pillars, namely economic development, social equity and environmental sustainability,
- (b) *Noting* that in the past decade, Africa achieved an average sustained growth rate of over 5% per annum, positioning it among the most dynamic regions in the world, and *concerned* by the fact that despite the great strides made to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, this growth has not been inclusive enough to wipe out the inequalities, poverty and hunger besetting the continent, or to improve access to energy,
- (c) *Aware* that economic marginalization, illiteracy, poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, particularly among the youth and women, inequalities and the feeling of unfair distribution of wealth are sources of conflict and a serious threat to peace, security and social progress,
- (d) *Concerned* by signs indicating that the manner in which the continent’s economy is growing cannot be sustained in the medium and long term, because it is based on exports of natural resources, which are not inexhaustible, and is not enough to create jobs, as the value added to the basic commodities being exported is woefully inadequate,
- (e) *Noting* that in spite of efforts made over the past few years in the area of governance, democracy and improvement of the management of their economic policies, which partly explain these growth outcomes, African countries continue to rely on their natural resources, and also *noting* that:
 - The environmental resources on which growth and poverty reduction depend are gradually depleting;
 - The majority of the poor in Africa live on natural resources;
 - The agricultural sector employs over 60% of Africa’s total population and accounts for over one-third of the region’s GDP;
 - Cultivated areas are spreading, to the detriment of forest areas and fragile ecosystems;

- About 70% of African households use wood fuel for cooking and heating;
 - Desertification is gaining ground, following long periods of drought and poor land use practices;
 - Certain regions have difficulties in meeting their water needs, thereby increasing the risk of conflict for access to water,
- (f) *Aware* that climate change, which is a major obstacle to poverty reduction and a threat to decades of development efforts made by Africa, global population growth and developments in ways of consumption, putting additional strain on natural resources, is bringing about new challenges on the continent,
- (g) *Also aware* that although Africa contributes only about 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, owing to the high sensitivity of the climate and its poor capacity of adaptation, it is generally considered as particularly vulnerable to the resultant high temperatures,
- (h) *Expressing its deep concern* over disasters, which have been seriously hampering development investment outcomes, and the survival, dignity, resources and security of populations and communities, in particular the poor, and are a major obstacle to sustainable development and poverty reduction,
- (i) *Aware* that “Viable solutions to these current and future challenges depend on models of growth that would promote efficient and lasting management of natural assets, reduce carbon emissions and guarantee equitable distribution of the benefits of growth to reduce poverty and income inequalities and improve livelihoods,
- (j) *Considering* that the new African Development Bank 10-year strategy (2013 – 2022) proposing the transition to green growth in Africa, in an effort to achieve development goals, while seeking to maximize the efficient use of natural resources and reduce wastage and pollution, as well as reinforce resilience to means of subsistence, is a source of hope,
- (k) *Adopting* the conclusion of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which states that green economy is one of the main tools available for achieving sustainable development,
- (l) *Considering* that transition to the green economy will not yield results unless it is based on a consistent set of policy decisions on financial incentives for smallholder farmers, communication and education policies as well as regulation aimed at reforming land management,
- (m) *Noting* that sustainable land management practices improve resilience and adaptation capacities, while increasing average agricultural production, and *aware* of the benefits of adopting more ecological agricultural practices through agro-forestry and biological agriculture to short- and long-term development,
- (n) *Aware* of the role played by education and knowledge in awareness, social behavioral changes and methods of production and professional ethics of individuals, and *convinced* that investing in the environment and human resources is the key to a prosperous economy that will meet the needs of current and future generations,

- (o) *Noting* the importance of the following factors, which are potentially a source of both opportunities and risks for the African continent:
- Population growth;
 - Rapid urbanization and rising youth unemployment;
 - Growing disparities in poverty levels within the same country and among countries in the same region;
 - High and sustained demand for energy, minerals and basic commodities;
 - Emergence of South-South trade and investments;
 - Developments in political and economic governance;
 - Green growth opportunities resulting in climate change;
 - Deployment of ICTs on the entire continent;
 - Mobilizing funding, against a backdrop of serious global budget constraints,
- (p) *Believing* that peace and security, on the one hand, and development, on the other, are interdependent and complement each other, and *aware* that while peace and security are overarching sustainable development goals, they are, at the same time, the prerequisites for those goals,
1. *Underlines* the importance of good governance as an efficient means of guaranteeing sustainable development and building or restoring peace and stability to end conflict in our countries, sub regions and regions;
 2. *Affirms* that for African countries to consolidate their growth potential without excluding sustainable development, resources and appropriate policies, there should be good governance, transparent and responsible institutions, sound management of public finances and development of human capital, particularly in education and training;
 3. *Reaffirms* the importance of the role played by parliaments in formulating government policy and *calls* for all government policies on sustainable development to have concrete time-bound goals to ensure effective action and tangible outcomes;
 4. *Recognizes* that robust and sustained growth alone cannot substantially reduce poverty levels and inequalities, unless they are inclusive and broad-based, create employment and foster trust and hope, and thereby sustainability;
 5. *Underlines* the need for an integrated and sustainable approach to natural resource management, agricultural production and population growth, entailing the sound application of research findings, coupled with traditional knowledge, modern technologies and the most recent knowledge in sustainable agricultural production;
 6. *Commits* parliaments to support commitments made recently by some African countries to promote a green economy and re-channel existing development models to a more efficient, sustainable and inclusive economy, while focusing on improving resource efficiency in the national economy, so as to achieve Africa's sustainable development goals through economic growth, job creation and reduction of poverty and inequalities;

7. *Calls upon* African countries to adopt green low-carbon growth policies, through efficient and sustainable use of natural capital and ecological systems, and sharing the growth benefits in an effort to reduce poverty and inequalities and improve livelihoods;
8. *Stresses* the need to build the capacities of African Governments to formulate, plan, budget and implement their own human development policies, by promoting Millennium Development Goals macroeconomic and fiscal policies, and underlining the importance of public investments in infrastructure and social services;
9. *Urges* African countries to process their raw materials in an efficient and ecological manner, in the areas of energy, industry and agriculture, by devising strategies and policies which promote the use of renewable forms of energy such as wind, solar and hydroelectric, as a way of reversing the trend of dwindling resources;
10. *Reaffirms* that Governments, in partnership with civil society and the productive sector, must promote sustainable development by ensuring that their strategies to reduce poverty factor in basic goods and services such as potable water, sanitation systems, decent housing, energy, health care, food security and protection of the biological diversity for the growing population;
11. *Believes* that environmental issues such as the sustainable use of natural resources and the management and control of climate change go beyond national borders, and *calls upon* African countries to join efforts to obtain a uniform framework, and *commends* the efforts made by NEPAD in this respect;
12. *Calls upon* Governments and African parliaments to encourage sub regional initiatives aimed at pooling national policies and legislations in an effort to facilitate the joint management of shared natural resources and strengthen the fight against deforestation, desertification and soil degradation, and the illicit trade in wood;
13. *Calls upon* African Governments and parliaments, in formulating and implementing their development policies, to maintain the balance between the environmental, social and economic dimensions, particularly conservation of the biodiversity and sustainable use of the ecosystem, including the protection and sustainable management of forests, through reforestation and by combating deforestation and illicit felling of trees, and take measures to reduce climate risks and enhance their adaptation capacities, while reconciling the rights of current and future generations;
14. *Calls upon* African Governments and parliaments to take legislative and regulatory measures to strengthen the role of traditional leaders, local communities and civil society in the management of natural resources and also encourage decentralized management, by building the capacities of the major stakeholders involved in activities on the ground and ensure efficient follow up on national policies and legislation;
15. *Calls upon* African Governments to table before their parliaments, an annual report on the measures taken to follow up on socioeconomic and environmental objectives, and *commits* parliaments to ensure that society forges gradually ahead toward the achievement of sustainable development;

16. *Commits* parliamentarians to undertake systematic reviews, in their respective parliaments, of the implementation of regional and international agreements on sustainable development and apply all relevant provisions within their remit;
17. *Calls upon* developed countries and development partners to keep to their commitments by providing technical and financial support to African countries, as well as transfer of existing technologies, to enable them to adapt to climate change; and also by facilitating access to various environment and climate funds;
18. *Requests* developed countries and their development partners to increase aid to African countries, in order to create an enabling environment for devising and implementing strategies for sustainable structural transformation in Africa, by:
 - Enhancing innovation and technology to add value to resources;
 - Diversifying the economy;
 - Receiving foreign direct investment as a way of diversifying the economy;
 - Carrying out investments in infrastructure and institutional and productive capacity building,
19. *Requests African Governments* to continue to take appropriate measures to attract and sustain investments, mobilize domestic private and public savings, and promote a dynamic private sector capable of creating economic activities;
20. *Appeals* to African countries to develop financial systems that encourage savings and investments and improve access by small enterprises, the poor and disadvantaged, especially women and youth, to financial services, such as microcredit and micro-insurance;
21. *Commits* parliaments to adopt appropriate national legislations that would guarantee equal opportunities for health, education, employment and other civic rights, to all citizens, including vulnerable persons, refugees, especially women and the girl child;
22. *Encourages* the adoption, with assistance from the international community, of policies which provide compensation for farmers and land owners who engage in environmentally friendly practices;
23. *Requests African Governments* to introduce sustained policies on processing their export produce to add value to them;
24. *Recommends* that African Governments should strive to promote and build capacities and participation of civil society organizations, as they can help to improve the level and quality of life of citizens through their actions in environmental preservation, assistance to the underprivileged and development of human resources;
25. *Urges* African Governments and parliaments to include educational programmes on the environment and sustainable development in their curricula, and raise awareness among the people about climate change and its impact, and measures for coping with it; and mobilize citizens, civil society, the private sector and the scientific circles around issues of sustainable development.