



REFLECTION ON THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY OUTCOMES ON AGRICULTURE, WILDLIFE AND CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH A MULTI STAKEHOLDER APPROACH:

Policy Brief*

BACKGROUND

In the recent past, there has been a perception change with respect to climate change and development discussions in various world forums. This resulted in the world embarking on a common global objective of achieving 17 sustainable development goals (SDG). In the same way all objectives have strategies that are to be used to achieve them, there have been a number of global agreements made, that contribute to the achievement of one or more of the 17 goals.

Recently, governments all over the world passed a number of resolutions during the second session of the [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA\) 2](#) that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Additionally, about [61 parties](#) have signed and ratified the Paris agreement that is the engine of climate change reforms in the world.

Against this background, that the resolutions passed at the UNEA 2 are of interest to African nations who pay the highest price of climate change, despite their almost negligible contribution to climate change. This calls for a multi-stakeholder approach in combating climate change and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.

OBJECTIVE

The brief highlights the outcomes of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, particularly those on climate change, food security and wildlife conservation and their linkage to the sustainable development goals in the African context. It further highlights brief recommendations on the possible solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change and the preservation of wildlife made during the civil society stakeholders meeting on [September](#)

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SECOND SESSION UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY RELEVANT OUTCOMES LINKAGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Role and functions of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities (R2): This resolution is linked to the SDG 17 that is focused on promoting global partnerships in the achievements of sustainable development. In this resolution member states are urged to identify national environmental priorities that are cross cutting between regions that would facilitate the formation of a regional programme of action to deal with serious environmental problems in Regions.

Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training (R3): It focuses on Environmental Education & Training Recognizes a critical role of environmental education and training in achieving the 2030 Agenda. This is linked to the SDG 4.7 which is focused on ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development by 2030. Countries resolved to Increase the level of awareness and capacity and Increased Global University partnerships

Role, functions and modalities for UNEP implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (R4): SAMOA Pathway Encourages Member States to support Small Island developing States with multiple challenges in achieving sustainable development. This is in line with the SDG 14.7 which is aims at increasing the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism. SDG 14.a which aims at Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology,



taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries. Finally SDG 15 which aims at Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (R5): 2030 Agenda Commits to contributing to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda

Supporting the Paris Agreement (R6): This is focused on supporting the implementation of the Paris agreement is linked to SDGs: 13 in climate action. Paris Agreement Welcomes the adoption of the Paris Agreement and acknowledges UN Environment's contribution to addressing climate change. Countries resolved to promote the implementation of policies, strategies, regulations, action plans and climate change actions with regard to its mandate, both for mitigation and adaptation, to contribute to the achievement of the purpose of the Paris through: Limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 °C, Increasing Resilience, Reducing GHG emissions, Increased finance for Adaptation and Mitigation, Provide appropriate technology and capacity-building support.

Sound management of chemicals and waste (R7): It recognizes that Sound Management of Chemical Wastes is one of the key requirements for achieving the 2030 Agenda. This contributes to SDG 3.9 which seeks to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination, SDG 6.3 which focuses on improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally and SDG 12.4, which seeks to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes



throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

Sustainable consumption and production (R8): Recognizes that promoting SCP is essential for achieving sustainable development and notes that all countries should take actions, THOs contributes to SDGs 8.4 which aims at Improving progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead and SDG 12 which seeks to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste (R9). Recognizes the negative impacts of food waste and fundamental priority of achieving food security and nutrition. This links with SDGs 12.3 which aims at halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses

Oceans and seas (R10). Recognizes that the marine environment is an essential asset for sustainable development and the contribution to achieving SDG 14 through regional seas convention or multilateral Environmental Agreements and **marine plastic litter and micro-plastics (R11).** Recognizes the importance of cooperation between UN Environment and conventions and international instruments so as to prevent marine pollution. These resolutions are linked to SDGs 14 which seeks to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication (R13). Natural Capital Notes that sustainable management of natural capital contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda and natural capital accounting mechanisms can help assess value of natural capital. This is linked to SDGs 12.2 which seeks to achieve the



sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products (R14). Illegal Trade in Wildlife Recognizes the important role that the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife can play in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and in addressing illegal trade and trafficking in wildlife. This contributes to SDG 15.7 that seeks to take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products as well as SDG 15.c which is geared towards enhancing global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

Mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being (R16): Mainstreaming Biodiversity wellbeing Notes that conservation of biodiversity promotes sustainable development by advancing social well-being, economic growth and environmental protection. **Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands (R24)** Recognizes that healthy grassland and rangeland ecosystems are essential for contributing to economic growth and sustainable development of pastoralism. These two link to SDGs 15 which aims to Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

THE REFLECTIONS OF THE RESOLUTIONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

Climate Change and Agriculture

1. UNEP projects that Africa is likely to have a 40 percent reduction in agricultural yield which has an overall effect on incidence of undernourishment, unemployment and national gross domestic product. (GDP)
2. Agro-industrialization, trade, and development policies in east Africa have not adequately integrated climate change and sustainable production to combat the effects of climate change About 70% of East Africans are farmers, mostly smallholders and



women are vulnerable to climate change, and often unable to leverage the trade opportunities that could help them cope with food shortages. Part of the solution should be better coherence of government's policy efforts across trade, climate change, and agriculture and food security issues.

3. There is need to Link Ecosystem Based Adaptation driven agriculture to clean energy as a mode of increasing the productivity of Africa's agriculture and agro-industrialization. This will ensure Africa's agriculture is in line with the objectives of the Paris agreement and will hence allow for the agriculture sector in Africa to tap into the opportunities presented by the agreement. This calls for African countries to explore their networks in the already existing frameworks such as the Ecosystem based Adaptation for food security in Africa Assembly (EBAFOSA), that convene a cross breed of stakeholders who can form synergies in establishing practical means of actualising the sustainable agro industrialisation in Africa. Africa can leverage implementation of the Paris deal for structural transformation and inclusive poverty reducing growth
4. Africa's industrial emissions are negligible as opposed to land-based emissions as a result of agricultural practices, land use change and deforestation. Degradation is prevalent and costing Africa up-to \$68 billion annually. Consequently, a majority 60% of Africa's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions are land based on reversing degradation and emissions from land degradation and on leveraging the continents significant renewable energy potential to bridge the energy divide and actualize clean inclusive development.
5. Current financing of the green climate fund needs to be enhanced. The Paris agreement bestowed the onus of ensuring adequate funds for supporting climate change initiatives for developing countries was on the developed countries. Currently, the contributions only amount to USD 10 billion which falls short of the annual target of USD 100 Billion by 2020.

Climate Change and Wildlife

1. In the fight against Illegal trade of wildlife and wild life products, there is a need to



emphasise to all stakeholders that the relations with wildlife need to be balance because of the symbiotic relationship that we have. Lack of political will and corruption, lack of legislative measures, lack of awareness amongst communities, limited resources, ignorance that is related to cultural practice, have been an impediment to the eradication for illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife products.

2. Given the increased human wildlife conflict, there have been efforts by wildlife authorities to accelerate spatial planning by mapping out animal and human settlement areas. Getting the consensus on allocating spaces has not yet been reached by relevant stakeholders.
3. Currently there are no harmonised approaches to addressing illegal wildlife trade in Africa. Kenya just passed legislation curbing illegal wildlife but in the neighbouring countries the penalties for engaging in this are not as deterrent. Given the cross border nature of wildlife, the transit destinations aspect of animal migration is in different jurisdictions. There is need to have harmonised regional legislations. This therefore calls for harmonise existing legislative provisions in Africa so that there can be mutual legal assistance and international corporation in the curbing of illegal wildlife trade.
4. There has been a lot of focus on scientific aspects of climate change and wildlife and the social aspect has been neglected. There is need to bring the communities on board and to draw their attention on the importance to wildlife conservation. This calls for capacity building of the communities.
5. Climate change has a very adverse effect on biological diversity which rural communities are dependent on, this by transitivity implies that the livelihoods of the communities are at stake. The communities therefore have to be involved as part of the solution. In the case of Kenya most conservancies have been initiatives by the communities. This makes the enforcement of wildlife protection legislations holistic.
6. The judiciary calls for better investigations on wildlife related cases. Most litigators do not have the intricates relating to wildlife cases and hence may not present the case as strongly as it should for the case to be won. There is need to partner with the wildlife service's authorities who are more skilled in evidence generation. It is also



important to build the capacity judges to better understand cases on wildlife. Joint collaborative prosecutions by legislators and the Kenya wildlife service's investigators has proved useful in building cases in court. There is also a need to have legislations that give the authorities the muscle to recover properties acquired illegally.

7. It is important to incorporate biodiversity linkages with the management of natural capital to benefit national focal points who need resources. To operationalize this, there is need to have strategic funds for wildlife conservancy in Africa.
8. Information sharing is also important in the campaign against illegal wildlife trade. It is important to channel information from grass root levels to focal point of wildlife conservation and this will enable the better understanding of the community needs as well. The messages to the communities also need to be packaged in their local languages to reduce any communication barriers that may arise.
9. There needs to be concerted efforts in dealing with the demand side of illegal wild life and wildlife products consumption. This calls for capacity building that goes beyond the training and equipping of rangers, it calls for stakeholders to engage the wildlife consumer countries in the discourse.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to enhance policy coherence and implementation by countries ensuring that agriculture, trade, climate change, food security are interlinked to break the silo effect. Women and marginalized smallholder farmers, stand to benefit most from coherent development of agro-processing, by creating new livelihood opportunities
- The judiciary , the litigation issues on climate change and environmental protection and illegal trade in wildlife need to be made sensitise the judicial system to be aware of climate change and the existing legislations that can be used to address the challenges face by Africa
- There is need for Coordination, communication and collaboration of stakeholders to understand that all partners have a role to play in the implementation of these global agreements that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. To create awareness



programmes to the Paris agreement to be recognised by all stakeholders

- Community based organisations need to collaborate and network in engaging the communities in sharing information to the community to discuss matters relating to wildlife, packaging the messages to ensure community buy in and at the same time promote the involvement of the youth in the awareness creation process.