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African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

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Fourteenth session

Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 10–14 September 2012

Information note on the fourteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Introduction

1. The meetings of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) provide guidance with respect to key regional policies and initiatives related to the environment. Pursuant to paragraph 1 of article 9 of its Constitution, AMCEN holds its ordinary sessions once every two or three years. In view of this, and in response to the kind offer by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania at the thirteenth session, held in Bamako from 20 to 25 June 2010, the fourteenth session of AMCEN will be held from 10 to 14 September 2012 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania.
2. The session will consist of a meeting of the expert group, to be held from 10 to 12 September, and a ministerial segment, to be held on 13 and 14 September. The opening ceremony for the ministerial segment will take place on the afternoon of Wednesday, 12 September.
3. Given that the fourteenth session of AMCEN is being held soon after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), it will be of great significance in providing guidance to Africa with respect to the implementation of key outcomes of Rio+20. Therefore, the main objective of the session is to provide a platform for African ministers of the environment to deliberate on substantive issues of importance to Africa as a follow-up to the key outcomes of the Rio+20 summit. The session will be held under the theme “Africa’s post Rio+20 strategy for sustainable development”.
4. In addition, the session will offer an opportunity for deliberation on Africa’s strategies for a common approach to engaging with the international community in the climate change negotiation process and in preparation for the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Qatar in December 2012.
5. At the session, ministers will review progress made in the implementation of the decisions adopted at the thirteenth session, as well as considering emerging issues of interest to the region. Finally, ministers will adopt a declaration, a set of decisions and key messages relating to the main issues on the agenda.

Associated meetings

6. The following associated meetings will be held:
 - (a) 7–9 September 2012: pre-AMCEN major groups and stakeholders forum (civil society) meeting;
 - (b) 9 September 2012: technical meeting on sustainable consumption and production, the green economy and eco-labelling. UNEP has been implementing projects and programmes on these issues in Africa in collaboration with various stakeholders. The technical meeting will assist participants from the member States in internalizing these important programmes in Africa;

(c) 12 September 2012: half-day Africa regional capacity-building and outreach event on the Fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5);

Side events

7. A number of side events and exhibitions will be held during the session. Details of those events will be published as soon as they become available.

Venue

8. The fourteenth session of AMCEN will be held at the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania.

9. AICC lies in the heart of Arusha city, which is the safari base of the world-renowned “northern tourist circuit” that includes Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru, Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Tarangire National Park and Arusha National Park.

10. With a total room capacity of about 2,200 within a radius of 0.5 km to 25 km from the centre, Arusha provides accommodation and restaurants at international tourist standards with varying rates.

Services to delegates

11. Arusha International Conference Centre offers a variety of services to delegates. The Centre has various conference halls and rooms, most of which are equipped with simultaneous interpretation systems. Audiovisual equipment is also provided, along with an exhibition area and document reproduction and catering facilities.

12. International telephone, telefax, e-mail and wireless Internet are readily available within the Centre complex. LAN is also available to connect all conference halls.

13. Medical services, recreation facilities, snack bars, international courier services, postal and banking services, bureaux de change, shopping arcades and many other important amenities are available within the Centre complex or in town. Other facilities include secretarial services and a copy centre, transport/hotel booking facilities, pre- and post-conference tours/excursions and a ticket reconfirmation service.

Registration

14. All participants are requested to register on arrival at Arusha International Conference Centre. Participants will be able to register on Sunday, 9 September, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Monday, 10 September, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

15. Badges will be issued to participants upon registration. For identification and security reasons, participants are reminded that they should wear their name badges at all times during the meeting.

Documents

16. The main pre-session documents for the meeting will be dispatched to AMCEN national focal points in advance of the meeting. The documents will also be available on the AMCEN website (<http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen>). Delegates are kindly reminded to bring the pre-session documents with them to the meeting, as the documents will be available in Arusha in limited quantities only.

Hotel reservations, airport transfers and transport for delegates

17. Participants are kindly requested to make their own hotel reservations. A recommended list of hotels and their contact details can be found on the AMCEN website (<http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen>). Please check the website periodically, since some hotels have given prior notification about their willingness to provide negotiated rates for the duration of the fourteenth session.

18. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania will set up a desk at the arrivals section of Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA). Transfers from the airport to hotels might be at a cost. However, transport from the recommended hotels to the meeting venue and back to the hotels will be provided by the Government.

19. With regard to logistical arrangements, participants should send information on flights, dates of arrival and departure and the name of hotel where they intend to stay to Ms. Esther Njenga (tel: +254 20 762 4287; e-mail: amcensec@unep.org or esther.njenga@unep.org), with a copy to Ms. Teresa Khasakhala (tel: +254 20 762 4282; e-mail: teresa.khasakhala@unep.org) and Mr. David Ombisi (tel: +254 20 762 4221; e-mail: david.ombisi@unep.org).

Field trip

20. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is organizing a field excursion to the Ngorongoro crater (commonly known as the eighth wonder of the world) for delegates on Saturday, 15 September 2012. The Government will provide transport and lunch for the field trip. However, delegates may be required to pay an entry fee of \$50 to gain access to the crater.

General information on the United Republic of Tanzania

Visas

21. Participants from countries that are not exempted from visas to the United Republic of Tanzania must acquire valid visas before leaving their home countries, although the United Republic of Tanzania endeavours to issue visas upon arrival at the ports of entry for most countries. Participants are requested to take special care to check which category their country falls under. Participants are advised to obtain a valid visa before leaving their home countries. Visas can be obtained at any diplomatic or consular mission of the United Republic of Tanzania at a cost of \$50, possibly within one business day. There are some countries which require referral visas, which have to be applied for at least three (3) weeks in advance. Details on all visa requirements, including referral visas, are available at the following website: <http://www.immigration.go.tz>.

Health

22. Yellow fever certificates are required if the journey starts or entails passing through the designated yellow fever belt. Yellow fever vaccination is required for **all** persons from yellow fever endemic countries/regions. All individuals in transit for 12 hours or more and/or who leave the immediate airport vicinity in a yellow fever endemic area are required to get vaccinated. Malaria is not prevalent in the Arusha area. However, delegates are advised to take measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

Some facts and figures

23. The United Republic of Tanzania was formed out of the union of two sovereign States, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, on 26 April 1964. The United Republic of Tanzania, home of the world famous Mount Kilimanjaro, has a surface area of 94.3 million hectares and has the biggest land area among the East African countries. It has a population of 45 million people (United Nations, 2010) and the official languages are Swahili and English. The major cities are Dar es Salaam (executive capital) and Dodoma (legislative capital). Other cities include Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya, Mtwara and Stone Town (in Zanzibar).

Arusha city

24. Arusha, situated at the foot of Mount Meru in the north-eastern part of the United Republic of Tanzania, is a city of approximately 400,000 people. It is regarded as the gateway to the popular northern safari circuit. Arusha is served by two airports, Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), which is approximately 60 km (45 minutes) from the city centre, and Arusha Municipal Airport (ARK), which runs domestic flights. Arusha is the headquarters of the East African Community; the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is also based there. There are two rainy seasons – the long rains from March to May, and the short rains from November to January. June to October are the coolest months; September is generally dry and cool.

Currency

25. The currency is the Tanzanian shilling (TSh) (\$1 is worth approximately TSh 1,581). The United States dollar is widely accepted.

Electricity

26. The voltage in the United Republic of Tanzania is 240 volts. Travellers are advised to bring a power converter and an adapter for three-pin square plugs.

Contacts and further information

27. For further information on the special session of AMCEN, please do not hesitate to contact the AMCEN secretariat (tel: +254 20 762 4287/4279; fax: 254 20 762 3928; e-mail: amcensec@unep.org, with a copy to esther.njenga@unep.org and david.ombisi@unep.org).

28. For further information on the United Republic of Tanzania, please contact Mr. Ladslaus Kyaruzi (e-mail: leoky2009@googlemail.com), Ms. Adelaide Tillya (email: adetillya@yahoo.com) or Ms. Zainab Kuhanwa (e-mail: zaikuhanwa@yahoo.com).
