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Regional dialogue for African parliaments on combating land degradation, desertification and drought: Insights from AMCEN

Online, 2 October 2024, 14:00-15:00 CEST

Concept note

Background

Land is one of the most important assets in Africa. It plays a critical role in the continent's efforts to boost economic development and reduce poverty. However, land degradation, desertification and drought are increasing at an alarming pace in many countries in the region, posing a major threat to sustainability. At present, an estimated 65% of land in Africa is degraded, and in sub-Saharan Africa, over 160 million hectares have experienced land degradation since 2015 alone.¹ As a result, agricultural productivity has declined and over 68 million people now face undernourishment in Africa.²

In recognition of the urgency of this crisis, the Tenth Special Session of the [African Ministerial Conference on the Environment](#) (AMCEN), which will be held on 3-6 September 2024 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, will convene high-level representatives from the region to raise ambition and renew commitments on tackling the causes and effects of drought, land degradation and desertification. It will also focus on strengthening partnerships and mobilizing resources to enhance the implementation of agreed targets.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are co-organizing a virtual meeting for parliaments in Africa to provide a briefing on the main outcomes of the tenth special session of AMCEN, and to explore opportunities for enhancing parliamentary engagement in the implementation of goals set out at the Conference.

Focus and objectives

This virtual meeting will bring together parliamentarians from across Africa to share the main developments, challenges and opportunities that were highlighted at AMCEN. It will aim to equip parliamentarians with a good understanding of the major outcomes of the Conference and to help identify what actions parliaments can take to support national and regional goals on addressing land degradation, desertification and drought.

In particular, the event intends to support parliaments to better understand how they can:

- Support efforts to mitigate droughts and reduce land degradation and desertification;
- Support the achievement of land degradation neutrality targets;
- Enhance opportunities for land and ecosystem restoration;
- Ensure the adequate allocation of resources for land conservation and ecosystem restoration issues; and
- Strengthen transboundary cooperation on land conservation and ecosystem restoration issues.

¹ www.unccd.int/news-stories/press-releases/least-100-million-hectares-healthy-land-now-lost-each-year

² www.unep.org/events/conference/tenth-special-session-amcen-and-unccd-cop16-regional-consultations

The event will also provide a platform for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to exchange national experiences in tackling land degradation, desertification and drought, and to explore opportunities for enhancing inter-parliamentary partnerships across the region in order to address this shared challenge.

Parliaments are encouraged to exchange information with the relevant ministries, national environmental management agencies and environmental protection agencies that attended AMCEN to share reflections on the outcomes and support implementation.

The expected outcomes of the meeting are:

1. A clearer understanding among parliamentarians of the actions they can take to support action, particularly legislation, on mitigation of drought and combating land degradation and desertification.
2. Enhanced capacity of parliamentarians on issues related to desertification, land degradation and drought.
3. Strengthened regional cooperation and partnerships on environmental issues.

Participants and format

This event is open to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from parliaments in Africa, in particular those working on climate change, sustainable development and agricultural issues. Environmental focal points that attended AMCEN are also welcome to attend.

The event will take place on the Zoom platform. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French will be provided.