



2019 Africa

Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy

17-19 June 2019, Cairo, Egypt

CAIRO COMMUNIQUÉ

THE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 2019 AFRICA REGIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON GREEN ECONOMY

19 June 2019, Cairo, Egypt

1. A clear priority for many developed and developing economies is the need for innovation, productivity, and secure jobs. While different stakeholders might have varying needs, there is an overall need for higher productivity and efficiency, stronger resilience and innovation.
2. Green economy offers vast opportunities in eradicating poverty as well as sustaining economic growth, which is of particular concern for the countries in the Global South, as well as enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare, creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earth's ecosystems.
3. Failure to take a timely action in walking away from unsustainable economic practices threatens to potentially lead to environmental degradation that can have serious negative implications on future human health and welfare, and our entire ecosystem. A number of environmental systems are being pushed beyond sustainable limits through, for example, loss of biodiversity, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, land use change, and climate change.
4. In order to drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor, it is important that implementation of green economy policies would adopt a holistic approach, by linking financing, technology, capacity development and other elements of the enabling environment for the green economy. Considerable advantages and synergies can be derived from enhancing cooperation between public and private sectors in the widespread and effective adoption of green economy principles and practices.
5. Overall, the decisions we make today will determine humanity's future. Our economic activity going forward will determine if we are able to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and maintain stocks of natural capital.
6. The 2019 Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy, that took place during 17-19 June 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, was a result of the success of the annual, since 2014, World Green Economy Summit (WGES) and a direct response to the requests of participating countries and institutional partners to bring green economy solutions closer to the regional contexts and to deepen the impact of transition to a green economy through scaling up and replication of successful practices at the regional level.
7. The Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy was designed as an extension to WGES aiming to raise regional awareness by showcasing and scaling up the impact of successful evidence-based green economy solutions crafted and tested by countries in Africa in addressing sustainable development challenges pertinent to the needs and aspirations of the region.
8. The three thematic focus areas of the 2019 Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy were improving regulatory and policy frameworks for a green economy, promoting innovative green investment through public-private partnerships, and advancing national-level capacities for a holistic green action.



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9. The 2019 Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy, held in Cairo, was organized by the World Green Economy Organization in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the Ministry of Environment of Egypt. Other partners that supported the 2019 Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy include the World Food Programme, UN Climate Change, UNDP, CSR Arabia, and the International Solar Alliance.
10. It brought together high-level government representatives, representatives of international organizations, foundations, as well as relevant private sector players and civil society actors from around Africa and beyond.
11. Participants attending the Conference agreed to produce a joint statement intended to further promote the green economy agenda on the practical aspects related to advancing the transition to a green economy model.
12. More specifically, the participants agreed on the following recommendations:
 - A. While extensive efforts have been made by African countries to develop and implement green and sustainable policies, plans, and programs, it is now recommended that serious measures are taken to adopt an **integrated and holistic approach to transitioning to an inclusive green and sustainable economy**. This includes:
 - a. To develop (involving all the stakeholders, including private sector) and implement integrated economic, social, and environmental policies ensuring vertical and horizontal integration, innovations, as well as ensuring complementarity and supportiveness between sectors;
 - b. To develop short, medium and long-term plans of actions for the implementation of policies;
 - c. To ensure that legislative frameworks, policies, plans and programs are designed and implemented in a coordinated and supportive manner, in order to achieve environmental and sustainable development objectives, adopting an inclusive and participatory approach that ensures that no one is left behind;
 - d. To systematically embed inclusive green economy principles and practices in countries' overarching national visions and strategies;
 - e. To proactively communicate with different stakeholders on the value of promoting Green Economy (GE) as an effective tool to address current and future challenges, as opposed to conventional economic models;
 - f. To adopt green economy as a tool to achieve the sustainable development goals and addressing climate change concerns;
 - g. To promote good governance, including the adoption of an inclusive participatory, transparent and accountable approach in the formulation and implementation of green policies;
 - h. To strengthen a coordinated involvement and implementation of green and sustainable programs, plans and policies of national, regional and international institutions aligned with country priorities and objectives, and in accordance with internationally agreed development frameworks.
 - i. To consider local specifics and different national priorities, vulnerability of the African Continent while transitioning to a Green Economy;
 - j. To enhance the role of innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence in transitioning to a green and sustainable economy.



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B. Principles of sustainability, green practices and social inclusion need to take a lead role in our thinking on sustainable economic development, including through the following measures:

- a. To ensure a strong political will and commitment by governments to support efforts to turn around current negative environmental and social trends and to achieve the SDGs by 2030, to transform our societies and economies to deliver the maximum economic, environmental, and social benefits of the Inclusive Green Economy paradigm;
- b. To translate the political will into action plans including regulatory, institutional and financial requirements; private sector should have their capacity strengthened in green economy in order to recognize the value of investing in green sectors;
- c. To review current regulatory frameworks and policies and introduce a package of rules, regulations, and policy measures that support the transition to a green and sustainable economy;
- d. To work closely with policy makers, in order to facilitate the mainstreaming of green economy in national development and budgetary processes;
- e. To consider the need for developing a package of market-based incentives which are consistent with, and supportive to the regulatory framework, and which promote sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- f. To enhance effective adoption of environmental, social and governance principles in green investment across sectors;
- g. To scale up investments to support the development of renewable energy projects; it is important for all African countries to develop a framework for mobilizing and allocating resources towards climate change concerns through innovative financial mechanisms;
- h. To encourage the engagement of the private sector in supporting government efforts to implement green and sustainable development projects, including through public-private partnerships (PPP).
- i. To enhance the role of small and medium size enterprises in the design and implementation of green and sustainable development projects;
- j. To create an overall business support and promotion structure for entrepreneurs to run economically sound businesses with emphasis on activities that generate social and environmental outcomes, including the creation of decent jobs;
- k. To ensure the engagement and participation of different stakeholders, including youth and women in supporting government efforts in adopting and implementing green and sustainable development policies;
- l. To design trade policies that encourage the import of green and environmentally-friendly technologies and the export of locally produced green technologies, taking into consideration national priorities and capabilities;
- m. To enhance the role of non-governmental organizations and philanthropic organizations in supporting governmental efforts to implement green and sustainable development projects;
- n. To enhance the role of cooperatives in the development and implementation of green and sustainable development projects;
- o. To enhance the role of media in raising awareness and communicating the benefits of transitioning to a green economy for both the public and private sectors.



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C. Adequate, predictable and sustainable provision of financial resources needs to be secured for advancing the transition to an inclusive, green economy. Specific measures include:

- a. To green government budgets to gradually redirect existing financial outlays towards green sectors and sustainable development projects, in accordance with national circumstances and legislation;
- b. To develop the climate finance strategies contributing to mainstreaming green economy in national development planning and budgeting processes;
- c. To diversify sources of funding/partners, with private sector to play a significant role;
- d. To mainstream environmental and sustainable considerations into the financial sector in order to ensure that public and commercial banks integrate sustainability principles in their internal and external operations and incentivize green investments by the finance sector; to ensure private sector engagement by de-risking climate projects;
- e. To ensure comprehensive technical assistance (programs) for green projects in line with creating an enabling environment for investment, aiming to enhance renewable energy integration, policies, and planning;
- f. To allocate resources for innovation, research, and development in green and sustainable technologies, taking into account the important role of international public and private finance in complimenting the efforts of countries to provide public resources domestically;
- g. To facilitate technology transfer and development assistance for enhancing local capacities for developing green and environmentally friendly technologies, investing in green sectors, and developing policy packages for promoting a green and circular economy;
- h. To encourage the development of innovative financial mechanisms for green investments across sectors. To employ successful approaches and tools, such as the Climate Investment Funds (CIF's) concessional resources which have helped to lower high capital costs, absorb risks that other financiers would not bear, and extend repayment rates to better match project cash flows. This in turn has unlocked additional finance from multilateral development banks' (MDBs) own balance sheets and the private sector, to use a variety of available financial products: (i) concessional loans; (ii) subordinated debt; (iii) guarantees; (iv) grants; (v) contingent recovery loans; (vi) equity and lending through MDBs on least concessional terms to the private sector.

D. National capacities need to be enhanced to serve as a foundation for transitioning to a green economy.

Specific measures include:

- a. To elaborate the capacity development strategies for different stakeholders based on a needs assessment, including training for trainers' programs;
- b. To address the issues of gender parity and youth involvement in capacity building;
- c. To strengthen the capabilities of national institutions in the development and implementation of green and sustainable policies, plans and programs;
- d. To address regulatory, institutional, economic and cultural barriers using varies regulatory, legal and other instruments available worldwide for promoting Green Economy;
- e. To involve all stakeholders, especially the youth and private sector;
- f. To focus the national efforts on sustainable water management and renewable energy projects;



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- g. To integrate green and sustainability considerations in the education curricula of the different disciplines at the primary, secondary and university levels; to educate civil society representatives;
- h. To develop public awareness and communication packages targeting different stakeholders, providing clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges for transitioning to a green and sustainable economy; to communicate with different stakeholders, including illiterate people and inhabitants of vulnerable areas;
- i. To promote vocational education and trainings in green sectors, especially where technical capacity is coupled with project financing;
- j. To develop nationwide mentoring and coaching programs to build practical skills needed for transitioning to green economy.

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