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AFRICAN LEADERS GABORONE DECLARATION ON BIODIVERSITY

1. *We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union*, together with representatives of regional and international organizations, convened in Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, on 5 November 2025 for the First Africa Biodiversity Summit:
2. *Recalling* the decisions of the Assembly (AU/Dec.15(XVI) Add.3 and Assembly/AU/Dec.926(XXXVIII)), which respectively made biodiversity one of the priorities of the AU, decided to convene the First Africa Biodiversity Summit and requested the African Union Commission to organize the First African Biodiversity Summit.
3. *Commending* the Republic of Botswana, under the visionary leadership of President Advocate Duma Gideon Boko for hosting the first Africa Biodiversity Summit.
4. *Recalling* the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its vision of an Africa where nature endowment and ecosystem services are healthy, valued and protected and the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa adopted in 2012 and its ideal to "ensure the contributions of natural capital to sustainable economic growth".
5. *Further* recalling the decision Assembly/AU/15(XVI) Add. 3 on the Pan African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience.
6. *Recognizing* that the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan of African Union Agenda 2063 includes biodiversity through sustainable Environment and climate resilient economies and communities as a key part of attaining the overall goal of achieving 'A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.'
7. *Recognizing* that Africa is home to more than a quarter of global biodiversity, with immense forests, savannas, woodlands, wetlands, freshwater and marine ecosystems that underpin agriculture, fisheries, tourism, climate resilience and the livelihoods of millions.
8. *Affirming* that biodiversity is the backbone of Africa's economies and a strategic asset for economic development and poverty reduction.
9. *Recognizing* the urgent need to safeguard Africa's rich and diverse ecosystems amid escalating environmental pressures, agree to hold the Africa Biodiversity Summit every four years.
10. *Recognizing* the vital role of transboundary conservation areas in Africa as models for safeguarding biodiversity at scale while fostering regional integration.
11. *Recalling* the Africa Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa, Africa Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild fauna and Flora in Africa, Africa Union Great Green Wall, Initiative



Strategy and Ten Year, Implementation Framework: Ecosystem restoration and livelihoods, resilience (2024-2034).

12. *Welcoming* the adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and related international agreements, including the landmark Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction made under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and *welcoming* the establishment of African Groups of Negotiators on biodiversity related matters and other coordination mechanisms for contributing to shaping global environmental outcomes through common positions.
13. *Acknowledging* the role of African Ministerial Conference on Environment in providing strategic and policy direction on environment priorities including those related to biodiversity.
14. *Expressing deep concern* that Africa's rich biodiversity is under severe threat, undermining food security, health, economic prospects and resilience.
15. *Emphasizing* that biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, desertification and pollution, constitute interlinked crises that pose escalating risks to Africa's development.
16. Further *emphasizing* the critical role of Africa-led financing through the continent's own financial institutions and *urge* Member States to accelerate the ratification of their founding agreements. Strengthening these institutions will improve their ability to mobilize resources and fund biodiversity financing in Africa, advancing the continent's development and sustainability goals.
17. *Recognizing* the role of one health approaches in protecting biodiversity and securing human health and wellbeing.

Noting that although there are significant efforts and frameworks in Africa on biodiversity, these are not effectively and efficiently implemented resulting in continued biodiversity loss.
18. *Concerned* that biodiversity financing is grossly inadequate to meet Africa's needs and noting with urgency that innovative and increased financing from both domestic and international sources is critical to implement our biodiversity goals.
19. *Affirming* that people are at the center of biodiversity action and recognizing the traditional knowledge, custodianship and sustainable practices of local communities, and the indispensable contributions of women and youth in safeguarding Africa's biodiversity.
20. *Reiterating* that conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits of nature offer tremendous opportunities for socio-economic development in Africa.



Determined to act decisively, in unity and urgency, to reverse biodiversity loss and ensure the benefits of Africa's natural heritage are secured for present and future generations.

Recognizing that the unity of Africa's voice on biodiversity must be grounded in shared values, ethical stewardship, and the principle of ecological justice, and reaffirming our collective duty to safeguard the continent's natural heritage as the moral foundation of Africa's renaissance.

Hereby declare and commit as follows:

21. To strengthen biodiversity governance at all levels in Africa ensuring clarity, coherence and accountability across institutions, including updating and harmonizing policies, laws and institutions to implement the African Union's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Africa Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, Africa Blue Economy Strategy, Pan African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience. and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework effectively.

To urge all Member States to update and implement their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in alignment with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and to integrate these strategies into national development plans, sectoral policies and budgets.

22. To mainstream biodiversity considerations into agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, tourism, biotechnology and other sectors, so that conservation and development objectives are mutually reinforcing.
23. To promote ecological justice and the fair distribution of biodiversity benefits, ensuring that local communities and Indigenous Peoples are adequately compensated for conservation costs, ecosystem services, and loss of access to natural resources resulting from global environmental policies.
24. To strengthen institutional coordination through whole-of-government approaches for coherent implementation of biodiversity commitments by establishing or reinforcing inter-ministerial committees at national level to oversee policy integration and implementation.
25. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with partners, to enhance continental coordination, including through establishment of an Africa Biodiversity Coordination Mechanism, to promote synergy of efforts across Member States and Regional Economic Communities and initiatives.
26. To encourage those Members States that have not yet done so to ratify and effectively implement the revised 2003 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources as well as relevant global and regional environmental treaties and protocols on biodiversity.



27. To urge all Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Agreement under the United Nation Convention on the Law and Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction to jointly seek the designation of high-quality, effectively managed high-seas marine protected areas.
28. To reiterate the importance of developing accountability mechanisms to deliver on the commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and Land degradation by 2030, as provided in the Addis Ababa Declaration adopted at the 19th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, thereby driving the global progress and promoting greater equity between forest protection standards.
29. To review and update national and regional biodiversity-related laws and policies to address current challenges, and to create an enabling environment for green economic growth, and strengthen the capacity for compliance, enforcement and implementation of these laws and policies.
30. To ensure whole of society approach and the full and effective participation of local communities, civil society, women and youth in biodiversity decision-making and action.
31. [To jointly work to ensure all wild species threatened by unsustainable direct exploitations are identified, monitored, adequately protected under international multilateral Environmental agreements, as well as domestic law, and restored through effective recovery interventions].
32. To enhance cross-community cooperation and regional solidarity through participatory platforms connecting scientists, traditional custodians, youth, and policymakers, ensuring that Africa's biodiversity knowledge is shared, protected, and applied for collective prosperity.
33. To strengthen and expand transboundary conservation areas and protected areas, thereby contributing to the implementation of the global commitment to protect 30% of the planet by 2030 as enshrined in target 3 of Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as flagship initiatives for safeguarding Africa's shared ecosystems and species.
34. To invest in harnessing the full potential of biodiversity and traditional knowledge to drive sustainable economic growth, diversification, and resilience in Africa including nature based economic opportunities, sustainable bio trade and bio industries, fairly shared with resource custodians to unlock regional and international markets for biodiversity-based products to enhance Africa's competitiveness in the global bioeconomy.
35. To call upon Member States to develop bioeconomy strategies and action plans in order to sustainably harness the full economic potential of Africa's natural capital and request the AUC and partners to mobilize financial resources for this initiative.



36. To integrate the value of biodiversity into national accounting and planning processes so as to make nature's contributions visible in our economic decisions and attract investments and development finance into biodiversity conservation.
37. To enhance data and information capabilities in order to guide the management and financing mechanisms on Africa's biodiversity.
38. To strengthen and empower a network of Technical Regional Centres (TRCs) as the backbone of Africa's biodiversity knowledge infrastructure and Integrate TRCs into Continental Governance to promote science policy interface.
39. To scale up ecosystem-based approaches and ecosystem restoration to contribute to climate mitigation while safeguarding biodiversity.
40. To foster greater synergy in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United National Convention on Combating Desertification (Rio Conventions) and other relevant environment related conventions at national level, ensuring that climate finance and adaptation plan incorporate biodiversity goals as a cost-effective means to achieve both biodiversity and climate objectives.
41. To improve and enhance Wetlands Management as a tool to broader biodiversity conservation.
42. To significantly increase domestic finance and mobilize international financing for biodiversity and aspire to allocate at least - 1% of our GDP progressively towards biodiversity, as an investment in our economies and well-being.
43. To reaffirm Africa's leadership in shaping the global biodiversity agenda and to demand fair representation in international decision-making bodies related to the environment and natural resources. Africa must no longer be the object but the subject of biodiversity governance.
44. To endorse the Wildlife for Climate Action Agenda and Declaration and call upon the rest of the world to support Africa and Africa's wildlife resources on this cause.
45. To develop and implement national biodiversity finance plans to close the funding gap.
46. To promote biodiversity opportunities by attracting private investments and stimulate regular trade to ensure sustainability of Africa's biodiversity.
47. To urge member states to implement the US\$1.2bn per year Africa Keystone Protected Areas Partnership Initiative and mobilize additional resources for other landscape ecosystems.



48. To call upon strategic development partners to honor their commitments to provide at least US\$30 billion per year by 2030 in biodiversity finance to developing countries as agreed in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and call for the establishment of accountability mechanisms to track the delivery of the global commitments and promises by 2027.
49. To urge the Global Environment Facility and the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and other multilateral funding mechanisms including Kunming Biodiversity Fund, Cali Fund and the Green Climate Fund to prioritize equitable access for African countries, and invite philanthropies, the private sector, and multilateral development banks to significantly scale up and ease access to funding for Africa's biodiversity management efforts.
50. To request the creation of African platforms for sharing best practices on innovative financial instruments, such as biodiversity credits, green and blue bonds, and payments for ecosystem services.
51. To call for the establishment an African Biodiversity Fund to serve as a dedicated, equitable and accessible financing mechanism for biodiversity in Africa and request the African Union Commission and African Development Bank to develop the modalities for operationalizing the Fund.
52. To invite African Development Bank, Regional African financial institutions and member states to create complementary financing initiatives, including blended finance such as biodiversity credits and offsets, green and blue bonds, and payment for ecosystem services schemes that leverage public and private capital.
53. To re-emphasize Africa's call for reform of global financial mechanisms and architecture to give developing countries better access to biodiversity-related financing to meet their needs.
54. To speak with one voice to champion our common priorities in global biodiversity forums by enhancing continental coordination and leadership in international environmental engagements, strengthening the African Groups of Negotiators on biodiversity-related negotiations, and engaging local communities, women, youth, civil society, academia and the private sector.
55. To promote cross-sectoral partnerships among governments, civil society, and the private sector, to foster innovative approaches and nature-positive investments that support the transition to sustainable economies while conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem resilience across the continent, in line with the Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa.
56. To integrate biodiversity education in national curricula and civic programs, cultivating an African ecological consciousness that values harmony with nature, self-reliance, and stewardship as essential virtues for sustainable prosperity.



57. To champion capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer, including the removal of barriers to access appropriate technologies for biodiversity monitoring, sustainable management and use, as well as nature based economic development.
58. To increase investment to bridge science, technology and innovation gaps so that African institutions and enterprises are equipped to implement advanced biodiversity tools including digital technologies, for research and development.
59. To entrust the African Union Commission in collaboration with Member States, Regional Economic Communities, UN agencies and relevant partners, with the task of tracking and facilitating the implementation of the commitments made in this Declaration.
60. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to prepare a quadrennial report on the progress achieved in the implementation of this declaration, for presentation at each African Biodiversity Summit.
61. To recognise that biodiversity is the key to Africa's ecological and economic sovereignty, we are uniting our forces to build a green, clean, and resilient continent by 2063.
62. Resolve that this Gaborone Declaration on the First Africa Biodiversity Summit shall serve as the cornerstone of Africa's collective roadmap to restore the sacred balance between people and nature, to harness biodiversity for shared prosperity, and to uphold Africa's sovereign right to determine its environmental destiny, and its commitments will serve as the foundation of Africa's roadmap on leveraging biodiversity for Africa's prosperity.

(Adopted in Gaborone, Botswana, on 5th November 2025 by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union.)