

Position Paper for the United Nations Environment Programme Committee

As a nation depending to a large extent on its natural environment and being highly affected by every change in this environment, Mozambique desires to demonstrate her devotion to the work of the *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, contributing decisively to efforts which aim at the maintenance of habitats and lives and guarantees her full support in the spirit of the *Charter of the United Nations* and the *Millennium Declaration*. The topics before the *UNEP Committee* are: I. Mid-term Review of the UN's Water for Life Decade; II. Protecting Biodiversity in a Changing Climate; III. Creating more resource-efficient cities.

I. Mid-term Review of the UN's Water for Life Decade

In view of the fact that over one billion people in the world do not have access to clean water and proper sanitation, Mozambique recognizes the crucial importance of continuing the process initiated by the General Assembly in its Resolution A/RES/58/217. Mozambique welcomes the progress made globally during the first half of the *Water for life decade* in achieving *Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7* to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, as pointed out in the *3rd United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR3)*. However, it must not be ignored, that in the majority of developing countries the situation needs to be considerably improved in terms of financial resources, appropriate technologies and required capacities. Mozambique acclaims the already granted international aid but in accordance with the *Tunis Ministerial Declaration on accelerating Water Security for Africa's Socio-Economic Development* and the *eThekweni Declaration* considers it necessary that financial and technical assistance will be increased and aid co-ordination will be improved by the international community. To be able to transform the enhanced aid into lasting advancements, water programs have to be implemented decentralized under increased involvement of local governments and under intensified concentration on rural areas. The urgency of improvements to be made becomes clear, seeing that about 340 million Africans lack access to safe drinking water, and almost 500 million lack access to adequate sanitation. The government of Mozambique is of the opinion, that privatization of water services, being a promising measure to ensure sustainable funding, will lead to an increased qualitative and quantitative access to water, but only if governmental control of water services remains. In the spirit of *UNEP's Gender Action Plan (GAP)*, the government of Mozambique recognizes the importance of both men and women in the provision, management and safeguarding of water. As Mozambique's economic performance is highly affected by frequent floods and droughts, we attribute high importance to prevent such disasters, particularly given the likely increase of such catastrophes due to the climate change. Mozambique is committed to meeting the targets agreed to in *Agenda 21* and subsequently contained in the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)*. In ensuring regional implementation Mozambique believes that trans-boundary integrated water management should guide its effort to achieve the *MDG's* and the *JPOI*. To this end, Mozambique aims to sign further agreements with its neighboring countries with the objective to improve river management, in the context of the *Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Shared Water Courses*. Mozambique is aware of the inextricable linkage between problems of poverty and those of water and therefore recognizes the crucial importance of solving water problems in order to reach the objectives of the *National Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty II (PARPA II)* and thus simultaneously *MDG 1*.

II. Protecting Biodiversity in a Changing Climate

Mozambique is thoroughly aware that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected; climate change affects biodiversity by modifying the relatively stable conditions ecosystems have adjusted to, and climate change is influenced by changes in the carbon cycle and the water cycle both depending on biodiversity. Given this interlinkage Mozambique regrets particularly the failure of achieving the *Biodiversity Targets 2010 (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20)*. In conformity with the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and the *Aichi Biodiversity Targets (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27)* Mozambique recognizes the crucial importance of increasing the resilience of biodiversity to climate change by reducing non-climatic stresses on ecosystems. In this connection Mozambique attributes particular relevance to progress in the sustainable use of biological resources by changing attitudes and practices that are harmful to biological resources. Thereby, particular attention should be devoted to involving resident communities in the planning, management, enforcement and sharing of the benefits resulting from the sustainable use of biological resources as well as to the recognition of traditional knowledge in the process of managing and using resources. The government of Mozambique is concerned about the destructive effects of ocean acidification on marine habitats, in particular on coral reefs serving as habitat for 25% of marine species and being a crucial source of food for many people and one of the most important attractions in the field of tourism. In the opinion of the government of Mozambique forest conservation and

restoration inhibits not only habitat destruction leading to biodiversity loss but also works to the advantage of the global carbon cycle by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere. Given this interlinkage being only one example among others Mozambique deems cooperations between the three Rio Conventions – *the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)* – in the spirit of *CBD COP Decision IX/16* and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/203 useful and necessary and therefore welcomes explicitly the work of the *Joint Liaison Group* and the *Rio Conventions' Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion*. The government of Mozambique is of the opinion that these cooperations should aim at creating global awareness of climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification being one single complex of themes of immense importance for ecosystem services and therefore for human livelihoods and all life on earth. Thereby, particular attention has to be devoted to the connection between deteriorations in ecosystem services and progress achieved in addressing the goals of the *Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)* because not being able to afford substitutes the poor are often directly dependent on ecosystem services as the basis for their existence. The current extinction rate exceeding the natural background rate by 1.000 times as pointed out by the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* in its *Synthesis Report of 2005* clarifies that the non-climatic stresses on ecosystems have to be reduced expeditiously. However, Mozambique considers it crucial not to disregard the countries' different abilities to implement required measures resulting from different institutional, financial and technical conditions. In accordance with the *Convention on Biological Diversity* Mozambique invokes the economically strong countries to continue bearing the main financial burden of combating ecosystem degradation. Countries whose institutional infrastructures need to be improved are requested to optimize their institutions within a reasonable period of time and within the limits of their capacities. Mozambique appreciates the crucial role of *NGOs* in implementing specific projects and would not be opposed to an even higher commitment. Due to the fact that fertile soil has to be utilized for the production of biofuels, which tends to decrease biodiversity, and in the face of the connection between biodiversity and climate change the government of Mozambique doubts the sustainability of the usage of biofuels. Considering the interconnection between biodiversity and climate change the instrument of international emissions trading stipulated in the *Kyoto-Protocol (FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1)* should be extended to that effect that Annex I states can generate tradable carbon credits not only by sponsoring carbon projects in developing countries but also by sponsoring biodiversity projects.

III. Creating more resource-efficient cities

In Mozambique a large proportion of the population is heavily dependent on the environment for their daily livelihoods. The context of extreme poverty in Mozambique puts strong pressures on natural resources, since these represent the main source of subsistence for the majority of households. Moreover, uncontrolled urban expansion and widespread environmental degradation tends to harm biodiversity, the quality of soils and water, which are essential for human life. The result is a steady decline in well-being among poor and vulnerable groups throughout Mozambique. It is thus fundamental to improve the environmental management of natural resources in Mozambique. Seeing that, Mozambique is aware that the future development of this situation depends on the way the cities are able to exploit its resources, explore synergies and internal partnerships, as well as, on the ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that regional integration and globalization offer in terms of services and businesses. Mozambique wants to stress that proper co-ordination in the implementation of key programs such as *African 10YFP, NEPAD, PARPA, Agenda 2025, the MDG*, constitutes a unique opportunity to launch sustainable consumption and production program for development in the Cities. Mozambique, being one of the nine countries assisted by the global *UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI)*, fully supports *PEI's* overall goal to contribute to poverty reduction through mainstreaming of poverty environment linkages into national development processes. Mozambique believes that this goal can only be achieved by including environmental sustainability as a central objective in national development strategies. The ultimate objective is to assist in the implementation of the *National Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA)*, given the crucial linkages between environment, sustainable resource use, and poverty reduction. Mozambique envisages that the use of natural resources in the cities and urban areas has to fulfill the basic needs of the people and development of the nation in equilibrium with economic growth, technology development, environmental protection and social equity. In this context, Mozambique welcomes the work of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)* which has the objective to promote the sustainable use of Africa's natural resources and strengthen public and political support to subregional and regional environmental initiatives and to support the implementation by African countries of their commitments under the global and regional environmental conventions and other legal instruments to which they are party. Mozambique sees *NEPAD* as a unique opportunity for Africa to address the critical challenges facing the continent, including the attainment of the *MDGs*. To make *NEPAD* even more efficient, Mozambique urges all partners to improve the relatively poorly resourced and often cumbersome implementing framework because only an established and concrete program can lead to the achievement of the ambitious goals.