



**Regional Programme Energy Security and
Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa**

UNEA-6 Sparks Environmental Transformation, highlighting a Collective Global Action



Photo Credit: United Nations Environment Programme

The upcoming sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) marks a crucial milestone in the global commitment to addressing environmental challenges facing our planet. Scheduled from 26 February to 1 March 2024 at the United Nations Environment Programme headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, UNEA-6 stands as the leading decision-making body on environmental matters globally.

With a focus on the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss and pollution and waste, UNEA-6 holds the promise of re-establishing harmony between humanity and nature. In an era where the impacts of environmental degradation disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities, the assembly serves as a possible ray of hope aiming to improve lives through strategic, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions.

The theme for UNEA-6 serves as a guiding principle that not only addresses the immediate environmental issues but also promotes collaboration, equity and sustainability on a global

scale. It provides a framework for discussions and actions that are responsive to the urgency of environmental challenges, laying the groundwork for a collective and impactful response.

The importance of UNEA-6 lies not only in its ambitious agenda but also in the collaborative spirit it seeks to foster. Supported by robust scientific insights, political determination and engagement from a diverse group of stakeholders including world governments, civil society groups, the scientific community and the private sector, the assembly provides a unique platform for shaping global environmental policy.

In the midst of the global environmental challenges highlighted by the triple planetary crisis, Africa faces acute threats amplified by climate change, jeopardizing its developmental progress and necessitating a fundamental shift in traditional approaches across all sectors. Establishing effective environmental governance stands as a pivotal task in navigating these challenges, one that presents significant hurdles for many African countries. However, amidst these difficulties lies an opportunity: the increasing significance of critical minerals and metals in the global energy transition. These resources not only hold the potential to bolster economic growth but also to serve as catalysts for environmental governance improvement across the region, facilitating export revenue, job creation, and infrastructure development. Until now, realizing these benefits hinges on implementing inclusive and transparent regulatory frameworks. By ensuring citizen participation, protecting legal rights, and resolving disputes, such governance mechanisms can enhance both socio-economic and environmental outcomes. UNEA, as the global membership forum for the environment, offers an opportunity for major decisions and innovative ideas to formulate a collective plan of action. By doing so, UNEA-6 contributes significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental health with broader development objectives.

A precursor to this pivotal assembly is the strategic meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, setting the stage for deliberations that echo the assembly's core theme of effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions. At the forefront of the agenda is a dedicated focus on propelling the 'Decade of Action' forward, emphasizing the urgent need to address the intricate interlinkages among the three planetary environmental crises. This prelude highlights the assembly's commitment to translating dialogue into impactful initiatives.

With a series of leadership and multi-stakeholder dialogues, complemented by over 30 official side events, these platforms are poised to set the stage for future global and regional coordinated efforts by the United Nations, Member States and partners, aiming to deliver high-impact planetary action.

In aligning with the decisions laid out in paragraph 9 of decision 5/4 of the UNEA; Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, the President of UNEA-6 has defined a theme that features its commitment to addressing pressing environmental challenges. This theme was communicated to Ministers of Environment, signifying a resolute step towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

As we anticipate the outcomes of UNEA-6, it is evident that this assembly stands as a crucial moment for global environmental action. The decisions made during this gathering will not only shape the trajectory of environmental policies development but will also resonate across nations, influencing our shared commitment to a healthier, more sustainable planet.

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