

# **Third Inter-Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment (IMCHE3)**

**Libreville, Gabon, 6 – 9 November 2018**

**Meeting of Experts, 6 – 7 November  
Overview of plenary discussions and side events**

**Chairperson:** Jacques Denis Tsanga, Minister of Environment and Forest

**Reporters:** Angola, Eswatini and Morocco

## **Topics covered in plenary presentations and side events**

- The Libreville Declaration: Outcomes and impacts after ten years of implementation
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Libreville Declaration: What can we learn?
- The Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa: Ten Years on 2008-2018
- Framework for scaling up investments on health and environment interventions
- The Health Environment Strategic Alliance as a spearhead for the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Africa Union Agenda 2063
- Draft decision for scaling up investments on health and environment interventions
- Lead in paint
- Artisanal Small Scale Gold Mining and Health
- Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (SAICM) beyond 2020 and capacity building tools: The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) toolbox and Chemicals observatories (ChemObs) projects
- National adaptation plan to climate change

## **Key Issues and Challenges**

The Libreville Declaration was adopted in 2008 by 52 countries in Africa. Progress has been made towards implementing the 11 priority actions that countries have committed to accomplish including establishing health and environment strategic alliance and integrating health and environment interlinked priorities into their national plans of joint actions. However, actual implementation of actions to change peoples' lives at the grass root level remains a challenge. There is a critical need to step up investments and efforts to mitigate the increasing environmental risks affecting the human health and the economy in Africa.

The two days sessions focused on the above-mentioned topics in view of examining the progress made on the implementation of the Declaration, identifying the challenges and opportunities for scaling up investments on health and environment interventions.

key issues that emerged include:

- The need for improved monitoring and evaluation systems to assess activities and impact of the implementation of actions. In many cases how the Declaration is impacting populations at the grass root level and improving their quality of life is still to be understood.
- Funding at the national and regional levels for implementation remains limited. There are inadequate resources available to implement multilateral environmental conventions to address global environmental challenges including the Paris Agreement on climate change among others.
- Intersectoral coordination and linkages are very weak or absent in some cases due to among others, absence of coordination mechanisms. There is a need to establish coordination mechanisms at all levels all stakeholders including WHO, governmental institutions, FAO, private sector partners, NGOs etc. More open dialogue and exchange of information among these parties are required for resource mobilisation and expertise, which will accelerate progress towards implementation of the priority actions (south-south and north-south cooperation).
- Sharing information and experiences among countries on how to better integrate environment and health linkages is critical. There is a dearth of data and case studies of best practices to support countries.
- Commitment from political leaders remains limited despite ratification of declarations and conventions. There is need to walk the talk. Business as usual cannot bring about the change required on health and environment.
- There is a lack of coordination among the line ministries in charge of health and environment in resource mobilization. An integrated health-care approach in environmental programmes and vice-versa can maximize resources and impact
- Fragmentation of interventions due to inadequate coordination of partners in health and environment issues does not allow optimization of available resources.

## **Opportunities and way forward**

To accelerate progress toward the implementation of the Libreville Declaration, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 as well as the Africa Agenda 2063, countries discussed and proposed the following:

### **Funding**

- Developing innovative mechanisms for funding intersectoral actions and activities in health and environment. Countries should focus on mobilising resources internally rather than relying largely on funding from international sources.
- Apply innovative financing including taxes, corporate social responsibility as well as public private partnerships in view of mobilizing greater domestic resources for environment and health joint interventions
- Apply an integrated approach to maximise resources: for any health project, include the environmental dimension and vice versa

### **Capacity building**

- Reinforcing national, regional and sub-regional capacities to respond to health issues related to environmental risk factors and impacts.

- Building and strengthening collaborations among countries, particularly in the area of knowledge sharing. Communications and reporting on impacts and results from current activities in place should be enhanced among countries. Sharing lessons learnt will allow countries to learn which actions have been effective in the implementation process.

#### **Intersectoral collaboration and coordination**

- Encouraging high level political commitment across relevant sectors, focused action and shared responsibilities between sectors.
- Implementation of the Declaration should take into consideration strengthening systems for monitoring and evaluation of progress, mitigation of phenomena of major climatic events such as flooding, tsunamis
- Implementation of the Declaration also should consider the various national, regional and global declarations, agreements and conventions such Paris Agreement, the Minamata Convention, Basel Convention, Bamako Initiative etc
- Strengthen environmental regulations including the use of environmental and health impact assessments of development projects. Apply the polluter pay's principle to discourage harmful environmental practices of industries.

#### **Monitoring progress**

- Develop monitoring indicators at national and regional levels to define the state of implementation of the Libreville Declaration and its contribution to the SDGs and strengthen the institutional capacity of multisectoral teams for an integrated approach