

# **Strengthening Environmental Collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa**

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## Strengthening Environmental Collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa

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### *Abstract*

*This paper critically explores the need to strengthen environmental collaboration in Africa. It argues that the continent is facing numerous environmental challenges which are hindering the attainment of the Sustainable Development agenda. The paper further posits that environmental collaboration is a key intervention for environmental sustainability in Africa. The paper defines environmental collaboration and identifies the progress made and setbacks facing the attainment of this ideal. It further offers suggestions towards strengthening environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Achieving Sustainable Development has become a global ideal<sup>1</sup>. The concept of Sustainable Development has been described as vital in ensuring the well-being and prosperity of both people and the planet, leaving no one behind<sup>2</sup>. Sustainable Development seeks to integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection<sup>3</sup>. Realizing Sustainable Development is vital in ending poverty, protecting the planet and tackling inequalities<sup>4</sup>. Sustainable Development has been described as key in meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'UNEP and the Sustainable Development Goals' Available at <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> United Nations., 'The Sustainable Development Agenda' Available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development., 'Our Common Future.' Oxford, (Oxford University Press, 1987)

The United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*<sup>6</sup> sets out the global vision for Sustainable Development. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership<sup>7</sup>. The SDGs recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests<sup>8</sup>. At a continental level, *Agenda 2063*<sup>9</sup> is Africa's development blueprint to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the global and continental ideal of Sustainable Development, it has been noted that the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve the SDGs by 2030<sup>11</sup>. Sustainable Development has remained elusive for many African countries<sup>12</sup>. Poverty remains a major challenge in Africa and most countries in the continent have not benefited fully from the opportunities of globalization, further exacerbating the continent's marginalization<sup>13</sup>. It has been pointed out that Africa's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development have been hindered by numerous factors including conflicts, insufficient investment, limited market access opportunities and supply side constraints,

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Africa Union., 'Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want' Available at [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework\\_document\\_book.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework_document_book.pdf) (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Africa., 'Pace of Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals is Insufficient to Achieve Set Targets by 2030 – Joint Report' Available at <https://www.uneca.org/stories/pace-of-progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-is-insufficient-to-achieve-set-targets#:~:text=Addis%20Ababa%2C%202021%20April%202024,progress%20on%20Africa%20Sustainable%20Development.> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations., 'Sustainable Development for Africa' Available at [https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD\\_POI\\_PD/English/POIChapter8.htm#:~:text=It%20recognizes%20that%20partnerships%20among,of%20sustained%20economic%20growth%20and](https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIChapter8.htm#:~:text=It%20recognizes%20that%20partnerships%20among,of%20sustained%20economic%20growth%20and) (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

unsustainable debt burdens, historically declining levels of official development assistance and the impact of diseases and illnesses including HIV/ AIDS and Malaria<sup>14</sup>.

Africa is also experiencing several environmental challenges which are hindering the attainment of Sustainable Development. Despite the fact that Africa is endowed with natural resources, development strategies pursued in the continent have not always been in harmony with the objective of ensuring decent living conditions for the population and maintaining a high level of environmental quality<sup>15</sup>. It has been noted that environmental sustainability is crucial for Africa's long-term prosperity<sup>16</sup>. The continent is blessed with abundant renewable resources, such as solar energy, wind power, and arable land<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, leveraging these resources responsibly can create sustainable economic opportunities while minimizing negative environmental impacts<sup>18</sup>. Further, it has been noted that Africa's vast biodiversity, including its unique ecosystems and wildlife, is a treasure that must be protected for future generations<sup>19</sup>. As a result of these concerns, it has been noted that it is vital to foster collaboration in order to address environmental challenges in Africa for Sustainable Development<sup>20</sup>.

This paper critically explores the need to strengthen environmental collaboration in Africa. It argues that the continent is facing numerous environmental challenges which are hindering the attainment of the Sustainable Development agenda. The paper further posits that environmental collaboration is a key intervention for environmental sustainability in Africa. The paper defines environmental collaboration and the progress

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Boon. E. K., 'An Overview of Sustainable Development in Africa' Available at <https://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c16/E1-48.pdf> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>16</sup> Sustainable Development: Balancing Profitability and Environmental Sustainability in Africa., Available at

<https://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/research-publications/sustainable-development-balancing-profitability-and-environmental-sustainability-in-africa> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa' Available at <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/fostering-collaboration-address-environmental-challenges-africa> (Accessed on 04/07/2024)

made and setbacks facing the attainment of this deal. It further offers suggestions towards strengthening environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa.

## **2.0 Environmental Challenges in Africa**

Africa is a continent that is endowed with an abundance of natural resources<sup>21</sup>. The continent is endowed with natural resources ranging from arable land, water, oil, natural gas, minerals, forests and wildlife<sup>22</sup>. It has been noted that Africa holds a huge proportion of the world's natural resources, both renewables and non-renewables<sup>23</sup>. Further, Africa holds nearly 65 per cent of the world's arable land and ten percent of the planet's internal renewable fresh water source<sup>24</sup>. In addition, it has been noted that beneath the surface of Africa lies a wealth of mineral resources of enormous value<sup>25</sup>. It is estimated that Africa is home to about 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, 12 percent of the world's oil and 8 percent of the world's natural gas reserves<sup>26</sup>. The largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world are in Africa<sup>27</sup>.

Africa is therefore endowed with vast natural resources and rich environments including productive land, renewable resources (such as water, forestry, and fisheries) and non-renewable resources (minerals, coal, gas, and oil)<sup>28</sup>. In Africa, natural resources dominate many national economies and are central to the livelihoods of the poor rural majority<sup>29</sup>. The United Nations Environment Programme notes that in most African countries,

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<sup>21</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Our Work in Africa' Available at <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa#:~:text=The%20largest%20reserves%20of%20cobalt,internal%20renewable%20fresh%20water%20source>. (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Mapping Africa's Natural Resources., Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/2/20/mapping-africas-natural-resources> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> African Development Bank Group., 'Africa's Natural Resources: The Paradox of Plenty' Available at <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/%28E%29%20AfricanBank%202007%20Ch4.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

natural capital accounts for between 30 percent and 50 percent of total wealth<sup>30</sup>. It further points out that over 70 per cent of people living in sub-Saharan Africa depend on forests and woodlands for their livelihoods<sup>31</sup>. In addition, it has been noted that minerals account for an average of 70 per cent of total African exports and about 28 per cent of Gross Domestic Product<sup>32</sup>.

Africa's natural resources provide a unique opportunity to foster human and economic development<sup>33</sup>. Under the right circumstances, natural resources can be an important catalyst for growth and development<sup>34</sup>. However, in Africa natural resource wealth has failed to deliver the expected economic growth and development targets. There are significant obstacles preventing African countries from realizing the potential of natural resources to steer socio-economic development in the continent.

Africa is highly susceptible to environmental problems<sup>35</sup>. The continent faces serious environmental challenges, including land degradation, deforestation, biodiversity loss and extreme vulnerability to climate change<sup>36</sup>. According to UNEP, Africa's 1.4 billion people are facing the prospect of environmental calamity in the form of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste<sup>37</sup>. While Africa has contributed negligibly to climate change, it stands out disproportionately as the most vulnerable region in the world<sup>38</sup>. African countries are

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> African Development Bank Group., 'Catalyzing Growth and Development through Effective Natural Resources Management' Available at [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/anrc/AfDB\\_ANRC\\_BROC\\_HURE\\_en.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/anrc/AfDB_ANRC_BROC_HURE_en.pdf) (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> African Development Bank Group., 'Africa's Natural Resources: The Paradox of Plenty' Op Cit

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Africa' Available at <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa' Op Cit

<sup>38</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Responding to Climate Change' Available at <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/regional-initiatives/responding-climate-change> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

already experiencing effects of climate change such as drought, water scarcity, flooding among others<sup>39</sup>. Climate change is having a devastating impact on the African continent creating food insecurity, stressing water resources, depleting human health, displacing populations and impeding socio-economic development<sup>40</sup>.

In addition, it has been noted that Africa's rich biodiversity is under duress with ongoing losses of species and habitat<sup>41</sup>. Many species of plants and animals in Africa are at the risk of extinction. The decline in Africa's rich ecological biodiversity threatens millions of livelihoods, enhances increased food insecurity, conflicts over land, and transmission of zoonotic diseases<sup>42</sup>.

Air pollution has also been identified as a climate and health emergency, in Africa and around the world. It is among the greatest environmental threats to human health and is responsible for about 7 million deaths each year globally<sup>43</sup>. It has been argued that since Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, preventing emissions from short-lived climate pollutants, like methane and black carbon, will help both save lives and protect the environment<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Kimaro. Didas et al., 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in ECA/SADC/COMESA Region: Opportunities and Challenges.' Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346628199\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Mitigation\\_and\\_Adaptation\\_in\\_ECASADCCOMESA\\_region\\_Opportunities\\_and\\_Challenges](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346628199_Climate_Change_Mitigation_and_Adaptation_in_ECASADCCOMESA_region_Opportunities_and_Challenges) (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>40</sup> Rao. V., & Yadav. P., 'Confronting Climate Change in Africa.' Available at <https://knowledge.insead.edu/responsibility/confronting-climate-change-africa> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>41</sup> Africa Center for Strategic Studies., 'African Biodiversity Loss Raises Risk to Human Security' Available at <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-biodiversity-loss-risk-human-security/> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid



Conflicts over natural resources are also prevalent in Africa<sup>45</sup>. The continent has over the years suffered from resource-based conflicts which usually form a threat to Sustainable Development and have the potential of undermining economic development and sustainability<sup>46</sup>. Natural resources have motivated and fueled armed conflicts in Africa threatening peace, security, and stability<sup>47</sup>. The competition over scarce and vital natural resources is one of the key drivers of conflicts, intercommunal violence, and food insecurity in Africa<sup>48</sup>.

The environment and natural resources sector in Africa is also characterized by poor governance as evidenced by displacement of communities from traditional lands, ineffective national policy directions, poor investment decisions and revenue management<sup>49</sup>. Further, it has been noted that weak institutions lead to poor border controls, lack of human security, drop in investment, poor policy choices as well as a decline in biodiversity and formal trade<sup>50</sup>.

Addressing the foregoing challenges is vital in fostering socio-economic development in Africa. It has been opined that there is need to foster collaboration in order to address environmental challenges in Africa for Sustainable Development<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Muigua. K., 'Resolving Natural Resource-Based Conflicts in Africa through Negotiation and Mediation' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Resolving-Natural-Resource-Based-Conflicts-in-Africa-through-Negotiation-and-Mediation.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>46</sup> Muigua. K., Wamukoya. D., & Kariuki. F., 'Natural Resources and Environmental Justice in Kenya.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2015

<sup>47</sup> Mwanika. PAN., 'Natural Resource Conflict: Management Processes and Strategies in Africa' Available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/136685/PAPER216.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>48</sup> United Nations., 'Root Causes of Conflicts in Africa Must be Addressed beyond Traditional Response' Available at <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15249.doc.htm> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>49</sup> African Development Bank Group., 'Catalyzing Growth and Development through Effective Natural Resources Management' Op Cit

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa' Op Cit

### **3.0 Environmental Collaboration**

Collaboration is key in realizing the Sustainable Development agenda<sup>52</sup>. It has been noted that the scale, scope and complexity of economic, environmental and social transformation required to realize the Sustainable Development agenda means that no one sector – government, business, civil society or academia – will be able to manage the transformation alone<sup>53</sup>. Achieving the SDGs therefore requires a collaborative, sustainable effort between governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, civil society organisations, and individuals<sup>54</sup>. It has been noted that collaboration is helping to build bridges between countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding and respect, and strengthening global partnerships for Sustainable Development<sup>55</sup>.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embraces the role of collaboration towards achieving the SDGs<sup>56</sup>. The Agenda is determined to mobilize the means required to implement the SDGs through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people<sup>57</sup>. SDG 17 envisages collaboration in a number of key areas including finance, technology, capacity-building, and trade in order to achieve the Sustainable Development agenda<sup>58</sup>. The Sustainable Development Agenda also envisages collaboration through policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder

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<sup>52</sup> World Economic Forum., 'Why Collaboration will be Key to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals' Available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/realising-the-potential-of-cross-sector-partnerships/> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Africa Connect., 'Partnering to Maximise SDG Actions (SDG 17): The Efforts of African RENs' <https://africconnect3.net/partnering-to-maximise-sdg-actions-sdg-17-the-efforts-of-african-rents/> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Op Cit

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

partnerships, and data, monitoring and accountability in order to achieve the SDGs. It embraces a global engagement in support of implementation of the SDGs bringing together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations System and other actors in order to mobilize resources for Sustainable Development<sup>59</sup>. Collaboration by all countries and all stakeholders is therefore necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development agenda<sup>60</sup>.

Collaboration is also key in strengthening environmental governance and addressing global and regional environmental challenges<sup>61</sup>. It has been noted that collaboration is a more effective and appropriate approach over traditional ‘command and control,’ protest, or confrontational approaches to environmental governance and sustainability<sup>62</sup>. For example, it has been observed that collaborative relationships, commonly called green alliances, are emerging between marketers and environmental groups to promote corporate environmentalism and create social good<sup>63</sup>. Further, it has been noted that firms are increasingly engaging in several environmental collaborative efforts to enhance their chances of success<sup>64</sup>. Such efforts include collaborating with suppliers to enhance environmental stewardship, and reduce the carbon footprint of firms<sup>65</sup>. By collaborating with key actors to address environmentally-oriented challenges, firms can capture opportunities that may arise from environmental activities while also mitigating environmental challenges such as climate change and pollution<sup>66</sup>. This also allows firms to proactively address environmental issues which in turn help them to minimize the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Hartman. C., Hofman. P., & Stafford. E., ‘Environmental Collaboration’ *Partnership and Leadership*, 2002, Volume 8

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Adomako. S., ‘Environmental Collaboration, Sustainable Innovation, and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Ghana’ Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/sd.2109> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

total environmental impact on their products to create sustainable products and processes<sup>67</sup>.

Environmental collaboration is vital in tackling global and regional environmental challenges including climate change<sup>68</sup>. For example, international collaboration has been embraced to expedite climate action through the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>69</sup>. At COP states review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and collaborate by taking key decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements<sup>70</sup>. Collaboration is also vital in strengthening climate action in areas such as climate finance<sup>71</sup>. It imperative for all countries to collaborate in order to identify and mobilize effective and appropriate financing for climate action<sup>72</sup>. The rapid development of low-carbon technologies is another collaborative priority towards strengthening climate action<sup>73</sup>. Climate technologies play an important role in mitigating carbon emissions<sup>74</sup>. Scaling up climate technologies through collaboration between countries and organizations can therefore strengthen climate action<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Eggenberger. K., 'Accelerating Climate Action through Collaboration' Available at <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/resilience-and-adaptation/accelerating-climate-action-through-collaboration> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>69</sup> United Nations Climate Change., 'Conference of the Parties (COP)' Available at <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Muigua. K., 'Unlocking Climate Finance for Development' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Unlocking-Climate-Finance-for-Development.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy for The Least Developed Countries In Asia: 2022-2030.' Available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNFCCC\\_NBF\\_SD\\_AsianLDCA\\_final.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNFCCC_NBF_SD_AsianLDCA_final.pdf) (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>73</sup> Eggenberger. K., 'Accelerating Climate Action through Collaboration' Op Cit

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

In addition, it has been noted that environmental collaboration is key in tackling air pollution and securing clean air for all<sup>76</sup>. Given the transboundary nature of air pollution, collaboration between governments, development organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia is crucial to reducing pollution and improving air quality<sup>77</sup>. Collaboration can be achieved through increasing available scientific evidence, monitoring air quality, enabling action across key sectors, and facilitating local, national, and global partnerships in order to tackle air pollution and protect health and livelihoods<sup>78</sup>.

Collaboration is also key in protecting biodiversity<sup>79</sup>. It has been opined that the biodiversity crisis, which is fundamentally intertwined with the climate-change crisis, is a global emergency that goes beyond national borders<sup>80</sup>. Addressing this complex issue therefore requires urgent coordinated action informed by the best scientific evidence<sup>81</sup>. International collaboration can thus enhance global, regional, and national biodiversity conservation efforts while also mitigating challenges such as trade in endangered species<sup>82</sup>.

Collaboration is therefore key in addressing environmental challenges including climate change, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity. It is necessary to strengthen environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa.

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<sup>76</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Collaboration Key to Securing Clean Air for All, Experts Say' Available at <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/collaboration-key-securing-clean-air-all-experts-say> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Pettorelli. N., 'Global Biodiversity Collaboration is a No-Brainer' Available at <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-uk-views-of-the-uk-2023-6-global-biodiversity-collaboration-is-a-no-brainer/> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Environmental collaboration is a key approach towards Sustainable Development<sup>83</sup>. It can help tackle global, regional, and national environmental challenges including climate change, pollution, and loss of biodiversity<sup>84</sup>. Fostering collaboration can therefore help Africa to tackle environmental challenges and fast-track its journey towards Sustainable Development<sup>85</sup>.

There are numerous opportunities to strengthen environmental collaboration in Africa. For example, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) is a viable channel that enhances environmental collaboration in the continent<sup>86</sup>. Its mandate is to provide advocacy for environmental protection in Africa; to ensure that basic human needs are met adequately and in a sustainable manner; to ensure that social and economic development is realized at all levels; and to ensure that agricultural activities and practices meet the food security needs of the region<sup>87</sup>. AMCEN has helped the continent forge consensus around the most pressing threats to the environment and it has also given Africa a powerful voice on the global stage<sup>88</sup>. The measures adopted by AMCEN in seeking solutions to environmental concerns in Africa have consistently been participatory and consultative since its inception<sup>89</sup>. It is therefore imperative to utilize and enhance the capacity of AMCEN in order to strengthen environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa.

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<sup>83</sup> Eggenberger. K., 'Accelerating Climate Action through Collaboration' Op Cit

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges in Africa' Op Cit

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'African Ministerial Conference on the Environment' Available at <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/african-ministerial-conference-environment> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

It is also necessary to improve environmental governance at national and regional levels for Sustainable Development in Africa<sup>90</sup>. There have been efforts towards promoting sound environmental governance in Africa through measures such as strengthening environmental legislation, use of technology in environmental enforcement, decentralization of authority to govern renewable resources such as forests, irrigation systems, and inland fisheries, criminalization of environmental offences and enhanced environmental litigation<sup>91</sup>. However, in light of the pressing environmental challenges facing the continent, it is vital to strengthen environmental governance. Collaboration is a key approach towards fostering sound environmental governance in Africa<sup>92</sup>. African countries can strengthen environmental governance by fostering collaboration among all stakeholders including governments, the civil society, the public, communities, and indigenous peoples<sup>93</sup>. It is also important to strengthen institutional, policy and regulatory environmental frameworks at all governance levels to catalyse systemic transformational change for more inclusive, equitable and Sustainable Development in Africa<sup>94</sup>.

African countries can also utilize Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to strengthen environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development<sup>95</sup>. MEAs are governed by international law and deal with global or regional environmental challenges by finding a solution to mitigate or prevent the environmental problems through

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<sup>90</sup> Muigua. K., 'Embracing Sound Environmental Governance in Africa' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Embracing-Sound-Environmental-Governance-in-Africa-1.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>91</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Environmental Rule of Law: Tracking Progress and Charting Future Directions.' Available at [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43943/Environmental\\_rule\\_of\\_law\\_progress.pdf?sequence=3](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43943/Environmental_rule_of_law_progress.pdf?sequence=3) (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>92</sup> Muigua. K., 'Embracing Sound Environmental Governance in Africa' Op Cit

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> United Nations Development Programme., 'Environmental Governance: Bolstering Inclusive and Effective Governance Systems that Champion Environmental Justice and Sustainability' Available at <https://www.undp.org/nature/our-work-areas/environmental-governance> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>95</sup> African Union., 'Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)' Available at <https://au.int/en/meas#:~:text=MEAs%20are%20governed%20by%20international,legally%20binding%20obligations%20or%20commitments>. (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

established legally binding obligations or commitments<sup>96</sup>. According to the African Union, MEAs are key in tackling environmental problems in Africa including: depletion of the ozone layer; adverse impacts of climate change; chemicals and waste; transboundary movement of hazardous wastes; land degradation and desertification; loss of biological diversity; marine pollution; trade in endangered species and destruction of wetlands<sup>97</sup>. African countries should therefore leverage on MEAs in order to strengthen environmental collaboration by enhancing the implementation of MEAs, supporting development and harmonization of a common African position during global MEAs negotiation, strengthening environmental diplomacy in Africa, and promoting resource mobilization for MEAs implementation<sup>98</sup>.

Finally, it is vital to for African countries to collaborate in research and development<sup>99</sup>. Research and development is key in accelerating scientific breakthroughs for Sustainable Development in Africa<sup>100</sup>. It is therefore necessary for African countries to strengthen research and development by increasing funding and enhancing the capacity of national and regional institutions in research and development<sup>101</sup>. Collaborating in research and development can unlock science and innovation in Africa<sup>102</sup>. It has been noted that science and innovation are key in tackling environmental challenges and empowering governments in evidence-based decision making<sup>103</sup>. African countries should therefore collaborate in research and development in order to enhance the role of science and innovation in tackling environmental challenges in the continent.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Coalition for African Research and Innovation., 'The Need for Robust African Research & Development' Available at <https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/coalition-for-african-research-and-innovation-approach.pdf> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>103</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Science and Innovation' Available at <https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/science-and-innovation> (Accessed on 05/07/2024)



Strengthening environmental collaboration for Sustainable Development in Africa is therefore a realistic and achievable target. It is imperative to actualize this ideal.

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