



Second Africa Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) Policy Forum 2023

Africa NCA Community of Practice (CoP)

Nairobi Declaration Statement and Call to Action

PREAMBLE

1. We, the participants of the Second Africa Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) Policy Forum, convened under the auspices of Africa NCA Community of Practice (CoP), hosted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics on behalf of the Kenyan Government in Nairobi on 6 and 7 September 2023, and comprising over 120 representatives from 30 countries, hereby:
2. RECOGNISE the African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action in all respects and emphasize the urgent need to integrate nature into climate and development policies to unlock Africa's rich natural capital for growth and sustainable development.
3. ACKNOWLEDGE that Africa is endowed with abundant Natural Capital, comprising renewable and non-renewable resources. i.e., arable land, freshwater, groundwater, renewable energy potential, extensive forests, and invaluable biodiversity. These resources generate global, regional, and national benefits, supporting our livelihoods and ecosystems.
4. RECOGNISE that we are stewards of approximately "two-thirds of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, untapped freshwater resources, and an estimated 45 percent of global renewable energy potential." We are custodians of approximately 14 percent of the world's remaining forests, which play a crucial role in carbon sequestration. We acknowledge that what you measure impacts what you do because you can't manage what you don't measure. If you only measure GDP and ignore natural capital – you are going to make unsustainable long term policy decisions.
5. RECOGNISE that natural capital is instrumental in addressing Africa's development aspirations. Natural capital is also critical to addressing the *triple planetary crisis* (climate change, nature loss, and pollution), the greatest development challenges of our time. Nature-based Solutions, encompassing landscape conservation, ecosystem restoration, coastal and marine protection, and renewable energy initiatives, offer promising avenues to advance low-carbon, resilient, and nature-smart development in alignment with Agenda 2063, "The Africa we want."
6. EMPHASISE that we cannot advance our economic and development goals by, or address climate change, while, depleting, degrading, and polluting our natural resource base, which underpins our current and future prosperity. Our renewable assets, including agricultural land, tropical forests, rangelands, wildlife, and rich biodiversity, face escalating threats of depletion and extinction, further diminishing our resilience.

7. RECOGNISE the potential for natural capital to drive sustainable economic growth and development and emphasize the need for robust policies and incentives. Properly managed natural capital can generate employment, sustain income growth, enhance resilience, and help combat climate change.
8. APPLAUD the progress made by numerous African countries in the implementation of NCA and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) aiming to inform national policies and reporting on national, regional, and international initiatives and commitments. As well as recognize the need for more capacity building and resources to advance the implementation of the SEEA accounts and analysis among African countries and increase the use of data and evidence.
9. UNDERSTAND that by harnessing our natural capital, Africa can assume a leadership role in addressing the *triple planetary crises* while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global conventions such as the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework which provide opportunities for African countries to access biodiversity and climate finance, including carbon markets and biodiversity credits.
10. ACKNOWLEDGE that poor measurement, undervaluation, and mispricing of natural capital assets and ecosystem services hinder climate adaptation, mitigation, growth, and development. Measurement and valuation are key to making nature count for decision-making.
11. COMMEND that natural capital valuation, accounting and analyses are endorsed in decisions, resolutions and declarations including by the sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Cairo, Egypt in April 2016, the second United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2016, and the eighth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in June 2016.
12. EMPHASISE the importance of incorporating natural capital and ecosystem services into a broader decision-making context through a whole-of-government approach to drive transformative change in policies, practices, and investments across Africa.
13. COMMEND the World Bank, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and others for their support and leadership in ensuring cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, supporting African countries in mainstreaming natural capital into decision-making processes.

A CALL TO ACTION

14. CALL ON African countries to join the Africa NCA Community of Practice (CoP) and to leverage their natural capital assets by adopting, institutionalizing, and operationalizing Natural Capital Accounting in line with the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and related data and analyses, enabling the systematic measurement and valuation of their natural assets through integrating natural capital into system of national accounts and national development plans.
15. CALL ON governments, the African Union (AU), Africa Development Bank (AfDB), other regional bodies, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), technical experts, business and finance sector, donors, and decision-makers to collaborate and support the Africa NCA Community of Practice in unlocking Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and climate resilience.

OUR COMMITMENT

16. WE COMMIT to the Nairobi Declaration's pledge to take the lead with key partner organizations and member countries from Africa in development of global standards, metrics, and market mechanisms to accurately value and compensate for the protection of nature, biodiversity, and socio-economic co-benefits through promoting and synergizing the integration of Natural Capital Accounting and analysis into our policies for development, climate resilience, and nature conservation.
17. WE COMMIT to sustain efforts to learn and share approaches, experiences, and best practices in NCA among member countries and participants via exchanges, dialogue with both practitioners and decision-makers on NCA, and training opportunities as appropriate including both technical practitioners (account producers and analysts) and decision-makers (account users).
18. WE COMMIT to continue to explore and reveal options through NCA, and related analysis, where actions not only enhance both climate and nature, but also address other societal challenges such as food and water security, while further contributing to development goals.

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NAIROBI, KENYA