



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM: RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN CONVENTION ON CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Africa has a wealth of natural resources, including minerals, land, biological diversity, wildlife, forests, and water. It has the largest tropical rainforest and the second largest freshwater lake in the world. The region offers significant potential for human, social and economic development. It is however, facing enormous challenges. Rapid population growth, rising levels of poverty, and inappropriate development practices are the main factors that affect the state of the environment in Africa.

The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (ACCNNR), originally known as the Algiers Convention, was originally formulated in 1968 and revised and adopted by the African Union in Maputo in July 2003, to take into account more modern international developments in approaches to the management of biological diversity and natural resources, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The main objective of the ACCNNR is to encourage individual and joint action for the conservation, utilization and development of soil, water, flora and fauna, for the present and future welfare of humankind. The Convention also requires contracting Parties to:

- adopt effective measures to conserve and improve the soil; and to control erosion and land use;
- establish policies to conserve, utilize and develop water resources; to prevent pollution; and to control water use;
- protect flora and ensure its best utilization; ensure good management of forests; and control burning, land clearance and overgrazing;
- conserve fauna resources and use them wisely; manage populations and habitats; control hunting, capture and fishing; and prohibit the use of poisons, explosives and automatic weapons in hunting;
- tightly control traffic in trophies, in order to prevent trade in illegally killed and illegally obtained trophies; and
- reconcile customary rights with the convention.

It is the intention of the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane to sign the Convention as soon as the President authorizes her to sign on behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.