



## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (AFRIMAB)**

### **4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**“AfriMAB: “Aligning the MAB Strategy (2015 – 2025) to the Sustainable  
Development Goals (SDGs) 2015 -2030”**

**M-PLAZA HOTEL, ACCRA GHANA**

**24 - 27 NOVEMBER 2015**



### **REVISED REPORT December 2015**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the African Network of Biosphere Reserves (AfriMAB) of the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme was hosted by Ghana MAB National Committee in Accra from 24 to 27 November 2015 under the theme “*AfriMAB: Aligning the MAB Strategy (2015 – 2025) to the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs (2015 -2030)*.”

## **II Participation**

2. In all participants from 20 Member States attended the assembly including representatives of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central Africa Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, and Zimbabwe.
3. The following institutions were also represented: UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional offices in Southern and Central Africa, UNESCO Country Office - Accra, UNESCO Liaison office to the AU and UNECA in Addis Ababa and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).
4. The full list of participants is presented as Annex 1 to this report.)

## **III Opening Ceremony**

5. Three Ministers of State responsible for Education, Lands and Natural Resources and Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation graced the occasion to demonstrate Inter-Ministerial Collaboration and co-operation in support of MAB programme and activities.
6. The opening ceremony was chaired by Prof. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and former member of the International Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves. He observed that God created nature for humans to enjoy. However, human activities are leading mankind to a tipping point where, if no action is taken, the earth would have no future. He accepted to chair the opening ceremony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the AfriMAB General Assembly.
7. The chairman further indicated that the theme “*AfriMAB: Aligning the MAB Strategy (2015 – 2025) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015 -2030*” was most appropriate considering its coinciding with the commencement of the implementation of the SDGs. He subscribed completely with the decision to align the MAB strategy with the SDGs.

## **IV Welcome Address**

8. In his welcome statement, Mr. Daniel Amlalo, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Chairman of National MAB Committee, Ghana welcomed participants to the 4<sup>th</sup> AfriMAB General Assembly and

was delighted that Ghana was hosting the meeting the second consecutive time.

9. In his observation , he indicated that after 44 years of implementation, the MAB programme had contributed to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa by addressing biodiversity conservation and natural resources management challenges.

10. He reiterated the appropriateness of the theme for the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as it coincided with preparation for the implementation of the newly adopted SDGs and the fourth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Lima Peru 2016.

11. The AfriMAB chair further indicated that one of the notable achievements of the African Network was the development and publication of a “Management Manual for UNESCO biospheres reserves in Africa”. He expressed the hope that, this General Assembly would prepare Member States to attain the SDGs within the framework of the Lima Action Plan and serve as an opportunity for members to prepare and present a common voice at the Lima congress. He added that the African Network would also celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.

12. He also envisaged that, the session would consider green economies, mining, ecological restoration and formation of thematic technical groups to report to the General Assembly.

13. In his concluding remarks, he reminded delegates of the vision of the new MAB Strategy which is “A world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere.”

14. Mr. Amlalo expressed appreciation to UNESCO Headquarters, all donors, the MAB Committee and the three Ministers of State for their unflinching support for MAB and organization of the General Assembly of AfriMAB.

## **V Statement by Representative of UNESCO Headquarters**

15. Dr. N. Rakotorisoa expressed her sincere appreciation to the delegates for their commitment and thanked the Government of Ghana as well as the Ghana MAB National Committee for agreeing to host the AFRIMAB General Assembly for the second consecutive time at short notice.

16. She also disclosed that the MAB Action Plan would be finalized for adoption in Lima in 2016 and further emphasized the need for delegates to have a clear idea on what the African Regional Network want to achieve collectively. She expressed her confidence in the ability of Member States to develop a clear road-map for the future as we prepare to celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

17. She further called for inclusion and sensitization of the younger generation on the values of the MAB programme, to positively influence the Future We Want.

## **VI Statement by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN),**

18. Mr. Florian Carius expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to address this General Assembly and for the hospitality and leadership demonstrated by the Government of Ghana. He emphasised Germany’s commitment to sustainable

development for which biodiversity and ecosystem services play a key role. Hence the Government allocates 500 Million Euros annually for the conservation of ecosystems worldwide since 2013 and intends to double its climate finance from 2014 to 2020.

Mr. Carius expressed his confidence that the recently published “Management Manual for UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Africa” would trigger new momentum for the implementation of the MAB Programme in Africa. He informed participants that a project on “Biosphere Reserves as Model Regions for Anti-Poaching in Africa” was to be started in December 2015. He presented a copy of a publication on biosphere reserves in Germany to the Chair of AfriMAB as a gift.

## **VII Statement by the Hon. Minister of Lands and Natural Resources**

19. Hon. Nii Osah Mills, in his speech, stressed that the current SDGs seek to address the issues affecting mankind. He therefore urged member states to strategize in order to contribute to its achievement. He also said that, it is imperative for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to take lead roles in activities aimed at attaining the SDGs.

20. He mentioned that, two biospheres i.e. Songor and Bia have received support, from MAB. He identified the need to empower local communities by providing alternative livelihoods, to reduce pressure on our forest and other natural resources. He expressed his delight on the achievement of the Green Economy activities within Bia BR, and supported the idea for the establishment of Transboundary biosphere reserve between Ghana and Togo.

## **VIII Statement by the Hon. Minister for Education**

21. Prof. Naana Jane Opoku Agyemang charged the organisers to consider the inclusion of students in such meetings, so as to create sustained interest in MAB activities. In her statement, the Minister emphasized the objectives for the establishment of MAB.

22. She said given the diversity of natural resources on our continent there is the need to increase the number of biosphere reserves on the continent for development.

23. She expressed her delight that Ghana has submitted a nomination dossier for the enlistment of Lake Bosomtwe and its catchment area as Ghana’s third BR, in addition to Songor and Bia BR and called on delegates to develop strategies that link the MAB Strategy to the SDGs through applied research and monitoring.

## **IX Keynote Address by the Hon. Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation**

24. In his keynote address Hon. Mahama Ayariga indicated that it was a pleasure for Ghana to be part of such a momentous occasion as the world redefines how development should take place. He said 7.2 billion people on this planet are all looking for better livelihood opportunities and that their developmental demands pose environmental challenges. We must therefore ensure that the earth’s carrying capacity

is not over stressed.

25. Hon. Ayariga said, the role of key actors in thinking through workable strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, is most critical. He said we must rededicate ourselves to create space for the preservation of pristine ecosystems. He thanked UNESCO for their continuous support and pledged Ghana's commitment to work with all network partners within the AfriMAB programme towards the achievement of the SDGs.

## **X Report from the Chair of AfriMAB**

26. Mr. Daniel Amlalo briefed members on the history, functions and the successes as well as challenges of AfriMAB since its establishment in 1996. He said AfriMAB's activity implementation was then based on four thematic sub-networks including:

1. Zoning and improving biosphere reserves functioning
2. Biosphere reserves and local communities, stakeholders and other social actors
3. Participation and income sharing
4. Partnerships and networking through transboundary biosphere reserves.

27. Mr. Amlalo recounted some of the key achievements of the AfriMAB bureau elected in 2013. They include the following:

- *Improved financing mechanism for Biosphere Reserves and Sub Networks.*
- *Implementation of green economy projects in Biosphere Reserves.*
- *Integration of biosphere concept and payment for ecosystem services into other development agenda.*
- *Research on ecosystem services in Biosphere Reserves*
- *Capacity building for Biosphere Reserve Managers and Other Stakeholders*

28. Mr. Amlalo said the bureau faced a number of challenges within the period under review. These were the non-functionality of most MAB committees in several countries and capacity limitations for compliance with the exit strategy.

29. He concluded his address with an acknowledgment of support of the inputs from UNESCO Headquarters, field offices, AfriMAB secretariat, KOICA, the German National Commission for UNESCO (DUK), Dr. Paul Makenzi, Mrs. Sheila Ashong, Ghana MAB Committee, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and all AfriMAB member states.

## **XI Election of the Bureau**

30. In accordance with the AfriMAB statutes and Charter, Mr. Daniel Amlalo, and Ghana being the hosting country, the Chairman of National MAB Committee of

Ghana was retained as AfriMAB chair. The Assembly endorsed the decision with an applause.

Other members elected to the new bureau were:

- Coordinator, West Africa: Nigeria represented by Dr Adeshola Adepoju.
- Coordinator, Eastern Africa Kenya represented by Dr. Paul Makenzi.
- Coordinator, Central Africa South Tomé and Principe represented Dr. Placida Lopez Da Silva Lima
- Coordinator, Southern Africa South Africa , Ms Skumsa Mancotywa represented by Mr. Caiphus Khumalo.

## **XII Presentation by Representative of UNESCO Head Quarters**

31. Dr. Noeline R. Rakotoarisoa made a presentation on the topic “MAB Programme: Agenda 2030 and the SDGs”, which discussed the mandate of UNESCO within the new agenda 2030. She outlined the critical role science for issues of global concern that require international collaboration such as science to support green and inclusive economies and societies, and science for peace and security as key to the UNESCO mission.

32. She emphasized the long-standing intergovernmental/international scientific programmes on environment and natural resources as the main pillars of UNESCO to contribute to the global for Sustainable Development agenda. These she said are interdisciplinary and holistic.

33. Dr. Rakotoarisoa, said that holistic development can be achieved through the conservation of biological and cultural diversity, innovative approaches to sustainable development and the promotion of research, monitoring, education and training.

34. She gave an extensive report on the milestones achieved from 3<sup>rd</sup> WCBR: Madrid Action Plan (MAB) to the adoption of Post 2015 development agenda & SDG's (Appendix 1 )

35. Touching on the SDGs, Dr. Rakotoarisoa identified three critical goals for consideration by the network in the framework of the MAB programme:

Goals 13, Climate - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts[33]

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss[35]

36. The main contribution of members to the presentation included:

- i. The need to improve communication among member states through quarterly reviews and submission of periodic reports to the secretariat for review by the ICC Strengthening the role of MAB in the discussion of issues of climate change at the global stage.
- ii. The integration of REDD<sup>+</sup> in the MAB programme.
- iii. The need for member states to domesticate the MAB Strategy in their national workplans.

### **XIII Report from UNESCO MAB Secretariat**

37. Dr. Noeline R. Rakotoarisoa made a presentation on activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the last AfriMAB General Assembly in Accra. She indicated that there has been a reduction in the number of young scientists awardees from 10 to 6, but gender balance is ensured. She informed the Assembly that six applicants had been selected for the UNESCO MAB Young Scientists Award. Three of the awardees were from Africa (South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania). She encouraged member states to apply for the Michel Batisse award at the next call.

38. She disclosed that fifty five (55) new proposals for Biosphere reserves were received, out of which 33 were approved including two trans-boundary reserves. She said, however that, three (3) biosphere reserves have been withdrawn. She further reported that presently there are a total of 651 Biosphere Reserves in 120 countries, of which 67 can be found in 28 African countries.

39. With regard to the Exit Strategy adopted in May 2013 by the ICC there are 262 sites located in 74 countries that were due for periodic review. For AfriMAB, 11 sites in 9 countries have submitted their periodic review reports while 7 sites have never submitted a report. Member states were reminded to submit their periodic review report before the next ICC meeting in 2016.

40. It was announced that the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Biosphere Reserves would be held in Lima, from 14 -17 March 2016, and 1500 participants are expected to attend. The conference would include plenary sessions, workshops and other side events. During the plenary, 2 case studies would be presented to show how the network in Africa is contributing to MAB activities and sustainable development.

41. It was reported that the SUMAMAD Project had been completed. The Green Economy in biosphere reserves project, which is being carried out in reserves in Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania are on-going.

42. Regarding partnership, member states were encouraged to seek collaboration especially with the private sector. The linkage between the MAB concept and research activities were also to be strengthened.

43. With respect to capacity building the main achievement was the transformation of the “Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests And Lands”, Abbreviated AS “ERAIFT” in DR Congo as a category 2 center under the auspices of UNESCO. The objective of the school is to build capacity of a new generation of managers of natural resources through the application of the ecosystemic approach as training method.

### **XIV Enhancement of Communication**

44. Germany, Spain, Austria have helped produced the MAB brochure and management manuals for managers of biosphere reserves. Members were encouraged to make use of social media such as UNESCO’s Facebook and twitter account as part of sharing of information and experience especially among the youth.

### **XV Presentation of Sub-Regional and National Reports**

45. Regional representatives of the bureau made presentations on their Sub-regional activities after which individual member states in the regions had the opportunity to present detailed reports. The detailed reports (Annex 2 ) were from the following member states:

46. Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ghana, Gambia, Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Sao Tome Principe, Senegal, South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

47. The presentations covered specific activities undertaken in member countries along the following priority areas:

- livelihood enhancement and implementation of green economies
- national priorities for the next two years
- exit strategy
- nomination of new sites
- initiatives for transboundary biosphere reserves
- capacity building for biosphere reserve managers
- exchanges between biosphere reserves
- adoption of new technologies to promote biosphere reserves
- research projects and capacity building on ecosystem services
- improvement of biosphere reserve zonation
- Integration of biosphere reserve concept and payment for ecosystem services into other development agenda.

## **XVI Presentation on Floating Mangroves and Green Schools**

48. Dr. Benno Böer gave a brief presentation on floating mangroves project- an innovative science-based technology for large-scale renewable energy. He said the project involves the cultivation of mangroves in a plastic set-up suspended in the ocean water. In this way the mangroves would not compete for arable land and fresh water resources. Dr. Böer disclosed that the floating mangroves experiment when successful would facilitate atmospheric carbon sequestration, create jobs and provide the raw materials for the production of renewable energy. He said 3 study sites within the Horn of Africa - Ethiopia, Tanzania and Cameroon have been selected for the pilot.

49. Touching on the Green School concept, Dr. Benno Böer said the UNESCO liaison office in Addis Ababa is partnering with the African Union to establish a green school in each African country. The Green Schools would be used to promote sustainable consumption, rain harvesting, application of renewable energy, waste water recycling amongst others.

50. In addition, he said, the green schools concept would leverage the environmental values in the various religious practices to promote the conservation and protection of biosphere reserves.

## **XVII Presentation on Regional Anti-Poaching Project to be implemented by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).**

51. In his presentation, Mr. Florian Carius reported that, Germany considered Biosphere reserves as a key instrument for promoting international cooperation on sustainable development and that Africa was a priority for international cooperation in Biosphere Reserves

52. This new project would focus on poaching of vertebrates, in all AfriMAB sub regions.

53. The project would involve;

- Situation analysis of poaching through survey among all 67 biosphere reserve managers (2016)
- Case studies in 5 pilot sites by (master) students of local universities to analyse factors of success/failure in Anti-Poaching (2017)
- Capacity building on anti-poaching & publication of results (2018)

54. The project will be implemented by the African Wildlife Foundation over a three year period from 2015 to 2018.

### **XVIII Presentation on MAB Strategy and Action Plan by Dr. Paul Makenzi,**

55. Dr. Paul Makenzi summarized the process of the development of the MAB Strategy, which was adopted at the 38<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO. He defined a strategy as that which “gives direction to where one is going” or is that set of plan intended to achieve something over a long period. There was a need to develop a new strategy since there have been new developments after the Seville Strategy of 1995 and Madrid Action Plan (2008-2013) was adopted.

56. He indicated that apart from the MAB Strategy group, a roster of Experts had been established to review the draft strategy. Dr. Tiomoko and Dr. Ruida Stavliet were mentioned as two experts who had contributed to the process.

57. Concluding, he mentioned that this was a great opportunity for participants to make their inputs into the developmental process of the new MAB strategy and its action plan especially at a time when the African continent is faced by impacts of climate change, power struggles, and historical injustices.

### **XIX Overview of MAB Strategy (2015-2025)**

58. Dr. Noeline R. Rakotoarisoa outlined the content of the MAB strategy, with reference to the vision and mission statement for the strategy 2015-2025. She indicated that of the four (4) strategic objectives, the first three (3) were related to the function of biosphere reserves while the fourth was related to climate change. She further indicated that the Lima Action Plan was structured around the strategic action areas contained in the MAB Strategy.

### **XX Presentation on Mining in Biosphere Reserves**

59. Dr. Ruida Pool-Stavliet said mining in biosphere reserves was a major issue particularly in Africa. She said the extractive industries have serious social and environmental impacts on biosphere reserves. Citing examples from South Africa, she said there was a major coal mine (open and under ground) very close to the Vhembe

biosphere reserve and the Mapungubwe World Heritage site. According to her, the activities of the coal mine was detrimental to biodiversity.

60. She said there was the urgent need to develop legislations, policies and best practice guidelines to regulate mining in biosphere reserves. She reiterated the need to integrate biodiversity conservation, Biosphere reserves and extractive industries into land use planning and management.

## **XXI. Presentation on African Biosphere Reserve Fund (AfriBioFund)**

61. Dr. Noeline R. Rakotoarisoa said the fund was launched in Kenya in 2010, to assist member countries to implement activities in the various biosphere reserves. The establishment of the fund was discussed at the last AfriMAB General Assembly in 2013. Dr. Rakotoarisoa further disclosed that several donors had been contacted to contribute to the fund. However, the donors requested for some form of commitment from member states. This commitment, she said, included bilateral relations with donor partners in the respective countries and their participation in UNESCO programmes. She further indicated that the support of the African Union could be sought.

62. Contributing to the discussion, the Chair of AfriMAB said to date only five member countries had contributed to the fund. He observed that commitment from focal points and institutions is crucial in ensuring the regular payment of contributions.

63. The UNESCO MAB Secretariat was asked to write and present the charter to the member countries on the need to pay their dues as enshrined in the Charter. In addition, UNESCO MAB Secretariat was requested to write to the Permanent Delegations of Member States to support their countries. He said the Bureau would leverage the skills of members to develop proposals for funding to attract the needed resources for AfriMAB activities. The chair further entreated the AfriMAB Secretariat and the Sub regional groupings to take up the mobilization of funds through proposal writing. Members suggested the establishment of a Finance Committee to seek for funding. In his response, the chair said the bureau would consider the proposal.

64. It was observed that AfriMAB could use the SDGs and the MAB strategy to leverage funding support from some donor institutions. The AfriMAB Chair and Coordinators could also write to the AfDB through their governments for support for AfriMAB activities as well as explore the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Participants were encouraged to make individual donations to the fund as a show of our commitment for the sustainability of the fund and to encourage potential donors to support the fund. A form was circulated for participants to donate or pledge for future donations.

## **XXII Group work**

65. The delegates were divided into three main groups (Southern Africa, Eastern and West Africa and Eastern Africa) to consider the draft Lima Action Plan with regard to regional priorities to guide the development or revision of national strategic plans and related documents for member countries.

After extensive deliberations, the 3 working groups made presentations to the plenary.

66. The consolidated input from the groups is found in Annex 3.

## **XXIII Establishment of a working group for the next biennium**

67. Five (5) working groups were established along the Lima Action Plan strategic areas:

A. The world network of biosphere reserves comprised of effectively functioning models for SD (leader East Africa : Paul Makenzi)

Proposed thematic working groups: green economy; extractive industries and poaching; Migratory species; Climate Change

B. Inclusive, dynamic, result-oriented collaboration and networking within the MAB programme and the World Network of biosphere reserves (leader western Africa Nigeria) Establishment of a group of experts

Proposed thematic working groups: capacity building and training; Education; transboundary BR; zonation; research

C: Effective external partnerships and sufficient and sustainable funding for the MAB programme and the WNBR (leader chair AfriMAB Ghana)

Proposed thematic working groups: fund raising

D: comprehensive, modern, open and transparent communication, information and data sharing ( leader central Africa : Sao Tome and Principe)

Proposed thematic working groups: communication; information; data collection and sharing

E. Effective governance of and within the MAB programme and the world network of biosphere reserves (leader southern Africa: South Africa)

Proposed thematic group: capacity building and support to MAB national committees;

68. Each group leader was tasked to develop a two- paged concept paper for circulation to all members for their comments. The group on funding was to be coordinated by the AfriMAB Chair while the four others were to be coordinated by the sub-regional coordinators. Outputs were expected to be forwarded to the secretariat within 2 weeks.

#### **XXIV Presentation on Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR): A means to Poverty Reduction, Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in sub-Saharan Africa – Mr. Osman Zakari (UNESCO, Accra)**

69. The Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) is an initiative of the Republic of Korea through Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) working in collaboration with UNESCO MAB.

70. The project started from June 2013 and is expected to end in December 2016. A total budget for the Project was US\$ 1,804,029.18 (i.e. 430, 000 USD per country). A total of 1131 individuals were targeted to be trained in alternative sources of livelihoods (i.e. Ghana 231, Nigeria 200 and Tanzania 700). Beneficiaries were trained in fish farming, mushroom farming, snail farming, palm oil production, butterfly farming and tree planting. The project is in its second year of implementation and has been extended until end of 2016.

#### **XXV Planned activities for Lima Congress and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of AfriMAB**

71. Delegates agreed that AfriMAB member states should showcase the following at the Lima congress:

- Exhibitions – Posters on specific thematic areas on AfriMAB. Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Benin expressed interest
- Video documentary – Countries were to submit three minutes documentary on their biosphere reserves for consideration
- Cocktail: Round table to present products from the biosphere reserves

72. Participants agreed on the need to ensure packing of products should conform to international standards.

73. UNESCO sub regional offices were to provide information on logistic support to be provided to member states for the congress

74. The working group formed for the Lima Congress was composed of Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Senegal, Benin, Malawi, Tanzania, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. The "AfriMAB Lima Action plan resulting from the group work is presented in Annex 3..

## **XXVI Update on Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Initiatives**

### **75. Benin and Togo (Attakora Mountains)**

An Agreement between the two countries was signed in 2012. There were several hot spots within the reserves such as forest, mangroves, estuaries, water bodies, swampy areas/wetlands that are being considered. A map had been developed with inputs from the local communities. The governments of Togo, Benin and Germany are supporting this initiative.

### **76. Cote D' I voire and Burkina Faso**

The process had been initiated for Comoe National Park to be designated, and a cooperation agreement between the two countries had been signed by their governments.

### **77. Cote D' I voire, Liberia and Guinea**

Meetings have been held in Cote D' I voire and Liberia and an agreement signed for the cooperation. Funding was provided by an American NGO. A participatory tool developed by the NGO was being used to guide the preparatory phase prior to designation. The progress of consultation was stalled by the Ebola outbreak. On the Liberia side, progress has been made though there are some challenges with the communities. The Germany government is supporting the initiative.

### **78. Benin and – Burkina Faso**

Feasibilities studies were under way.

### **79. Ghana- Burkina Faso**

A Memorandum of Understanding establishing a Wildlife Corridor between the two countries was already in place.

### **80. Ghana - Togo**

Two stakeholder meetings were held with the mountain support partnership. Two possible sites were discussed i.e Kyabobo and Agumatsa. A draft MOU for collaboration to nominate Agumatsa has been prepared by Ghana for Togo for consideration.

### **81. Ghana – Cote D’ I voire**

Reconnaissance visit facilitated by UNESCO to the Bui National park has been undertaken. A scheduled meeting with the Ivorian delegation to discuss cooperation with the Comoe biosphere Reserve could not come on. A Ghanaian delegation was expected to visit Cote D’ I voire in 2016 for further consultations..

### **82. Nigeria - Cameroon**

A draft proposal was currently under review by country experts before final submission to UNESCO.

### **83. Gambia – Senegal (Saloum Delta – Niumbi)**

The initiative started 10 years ago, MOU signed and zoning of the area has been completed. Management plan was being finalized. Senegal was currently assisting Gambia to designate its national reserve into a biosphere reserve.

### **84. Kenya – Uganda**

Mount Elgon, dossier is ready but yet to be signed for final submission. This was expected to be completed before the Lima Congress.

### **85. Mali – Burkina Faso**

Conservation action plan developed for Migratory elephants, supported by an America foundation.

### **86. Guinea – Mali**

This initiative has been pending for the past 6 years.

### **87. Tanzania and Other Countries**

The transboundary initiatives have been discussed during MAB National Committee meeting in 2010 and earmarked 4 potential transboundary biosphere reserves which are:

- The Kilimanjaro Mt (Kilimanjaro – Amboseli) (Tanzania and Kenya)
- Kimisi/Burigi – Akagera (Tanzania and Rwanda)
- The Malagarasi ecosystem (Tanzania and Burundi)
- Selou – Niasa (Tanzania and Mozambique)

However, MAB Committee meeting in June 2015 finally decided to revive this exercise and to start with; the Kilimanjaro-Amboseli was earmarked. With regard to Kilimanjaro-Amboseli, initial consultations were made with Kenya pending availability of resources and also finalization of the already existing country initiatives such as the nomination of Saadani National Park and Jozani Chwaka Bay Marine Park. Parellel to the above, it was advised to seek for financial assistance from international organizations such as SADC to continue with the transboundary initiative and this has to be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania.

### **88. Niger and Algeria**

Initial communication between the two countries had been established. In Algeria, however, the process has stalled due their different affiliations i.e AfriMAB and ArabMAB.

89. Dr. Antonio Abreu made a presentation of the final report on the Sustainable Management of Lake Bosomtwe Project supported by the Spanish government. His presentation informed members about the proposed Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve ahead of the field visit to be conducted the next day. He indicated that the objectives of the Spanish government funded project were to:

- Document culture at risk
- Identify and document sources of water to the lake
- Promote soil and water conservation and best practices
- Promote alternative sources of livelihoods
- Develop a long-term water quality monitoring programme.
- Capacity building at community level for monitoring and protection, and,
- Create community based water conservation approaches

90. He touched on the multi stakeholder approach used in the project with to achieve livelihood enhancement and the initiation of the Community Resource management Area (CREMA).

### **XXVIII Review of the Draft Report and Adoption of the Communique**

91. At the conclusion of individual donations to the AfriBiofund, an amount of GHS800, CFA105,000, Eu20 and US\$530 were realized for the regional fund, with outstanding pledges of Eu100 and 1000 Rand.

92. After review of the draft report, the secretariat was given two weeks to submit the English and French versions of the report to participants. The draft Communique was accepted after few changes.

### **XXIX Venue for the 5th Session of the AfriMAB General Assembly**

**93.** Nigeria expressed the wish to host the next Session of the General Assembly to be held in 2017.

### **XXX Closing**

94. The chair thanked the bureau members, UNESCO, the interpreters and all participants for contributing to a successful General Assembly. Presentations were made to the former bureau members and other partners who had supported AfriMAB activities in the past biennium, while the secretariat and planning committee was

commended for their work. The chair wished all a memorable stay in Ghana and an enjoyable visit to Lake Bosomtwe.

95. The Chair then declared the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the AfriMAB General Assembly closed.