

# **GHANA MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) NATIONAL COMMITTEE**



## **REPORT ON PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIMA ACTION PLAN (2016 – 2025) PRESENTED TO THE 31<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE MAB COUNCIL, PARIS –FRANCE, JUNE 2019**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) National Committee of Ghana is hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana and is currently composed of 28 members representing government regulatory and research institutions, universities and Non Governmental organisations.

This report presents an update on activity implementation for the last biennium ie: since the 29th Session of the MAB council in France in 2017 with respect to the Lima Action Plan targets.

### **2.0 HANDING OVER OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (AFRIMAB) TO NIGERIA AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> AFRIMAB GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

After two consecutive terms as the chair of AfriMAB, Ghana participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of AfriMAB where the leadership was handed over to Nigeria. The meeting, which focussed on governance of biosphere reserves was well patronised by National Committees, biosphere reserve managers across the region and UNESCO Headquarters and field offices.

### **3.0 ACTIONS TAKEN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIMA ACTION PLAN**

The MAB National Committee formed a subcommittee for contextualization of the Lima Action Plan in 2016. Between 2017 and 2018, a local version, the Ghana Action plan was prepared and published in October 2018.

The first National forum on Biosphere Reserves was organised in November 2018. The forum brought together many stakeholders across Ghana to discuss the relevance of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for attaining the sustainable development goals and the role of various stakeholders. The climax of the forum was the launch of the Ghana Action plan by the Hon. Minister for Environment Science, Technology and Innovation, Prof. Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng. He urged all participants to do their best to support the implementation of the action plan.

The Ghana Action Plan has since been shared with all local, national and international stakeholders and published online. It is expected to serve as a tool for consensus building, fundraising and to solicit stakeholder support for biosphere reserve activities in Ghana.

#### ***3.1 Strategic Action Area A: The World Network of Biosphere Reserves consisting of effectively functioning models for sustainable development.***

As part of efforts to ensure proper functioning of all Biosphere reserves in Ghana, the following actions have been taken:

***a. Promote Green Economy Initiatives Inside Biosphere Reserves:*** The MAB National committee collaborated with a local NGO, Challenges Ghana Group, to conduct follow-up training on financial management for selected beneficiaries of the Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves Project after conclusion of the project. This is expected to enhance their ability to sustain the businesses introduced and supported under the project. A follow-up monitoring to the Green Economy Project entrepreneurs has also been conducted to assess the progress of the businesses and explore options for the continued sustenance of the businesses. The visit brought to

light the need for provision of technical backstopping to enhance the functioning of the livelihood associations formed under the project.

***b. Use BRs as Observatories for Research and Climate Monitoring:*** The water quality monitoring programme introduced in Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve supported with the support of the German National Commission for UNESCO was completed. A manual rain gauge was purchased and presented to two school environmental clubs to continue collecting rainfall data in the biosphere reserve.

The annual call for proposals and screening for the Young Scientists Award was done between July and September and selected applications forwarded to UNESCO Headquarters. For the 2018 call, the application of Ms Abena Dufie Bremang Wiredu, the Manager of Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve, was selected as one of the young Scientist Award winners..

One research study, the BSc thesis by Mr Alfred Essuman on Antipoaching Efforts for Managing the Bia Biosphere Reserve was conducted under the Biosphere Reserves and Anti-poaching project in Africa (BRAPA) funded by BfN. The student researcher, the biosphere reserve manager and one university professor joined representatives of four other biosphere reserves involved in the BRAPA project in an international review workshop in Uganda which came out with some recommendations on how to manage poaching in Biosphere Reserves in Africa.

***c. Integration of BRs into relevant legislation, policies and/or programmes complemented by support for the functioning of BRs***

In line with Action 3.1 of the Ghana Action Plan and Lima Action plan, The MAB National Secretariat coordinated the review of the Medium-Term Development Plans of 10 districts covering biosphere reserves and proposed biosphere reserves. The activity was conducted in close collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). Based on the information gaps identified in the district plans during the review, a capacity-building workshop was organized in January 2019 for five representatives from each of the ten districts. The plans have been revised after the capacity building workshop and resubmitted.

A review in May 2019 by the MAB Committee and the NDPC showed a significant improvement in terms of mainstreaming ecosystem services and the biosphere reserve

concept into planning. There is however the need for follow-up monitoring for implementation to ensure adequate financial support is provided by local authorities for MAB activities.

***d. Research, practical learning and training opportunities that support the management of BRs and sustainable development in BRs***

In line with Action 4.1 of the Lima Action Plan, a cooperation agreement has been signed between Lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve and Schalsee Biosphere Reserve of Germany. The cooperation covers research, exchanges and education for sustainable development. Exchange visits have been conducted by German partners to Ghana and vice versa in 2017 and 2018 respectively, with stakeholder consultations initiated for a research cooperation project among universities in the two countries.

***3.2 Strategic Action Area B: Inclusive, dynamic and result-oriented collaboration and networking within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves***

As part of efforts to ensure transnational and transboundary cooperation, five women from Ghana visited Principe Island Biosphere Reserve in October 2017 to train their counterparts there on how to use glass to make beads as a livelihood venture.

As a follow-up to this, the MAB National Secretariat and the Songor Biosphere Reserve have secured funding under UNESCO's participation programme to implement a bead-making initiative in the Songor Biosphere Reserve. The project is expected to feed into the Waste Segregation programme of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Exchanges between schools in Songor Biosphere Reserve and KARST Biosphere Reserve of Slovenia continued with sharing of presentations about nature on World Wetlands Day.

For transboundary biosphere reserves, Ghana, in collaboration with UNESCO field office – Accra, has started stakeholder consultations for nomination of Gbele Resource Reserve and Kyabobo National Park as transboundary Reserves with Burkina Faso and Togo respectively.

#### **4.0 PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD NETWORK AND OTHER EXCHANGES**

Ghana participated in the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB council in Palembang, Indonesia in 2018. Ghana also supported the MAB committee of Nigeria in the review of a Green Economy Manual, which has been developed under the BIOPALT Project.

The MAB Secretariat collaborated with the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO for the initiation of the Naturweit Programme through which five young (5) volunteers from Germany are serving in Ghana's three Biosphere Reserves: Bia, Songor and Lake Bosomtwe.

#### **5.0 PLANNED ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM**

The national forum on biosphere reserves is expected to be held annually to provide a forum for MAB stakeholders to interact and share knowledge and experience. A manual for mainstreaming the biosphere reserve concept and ecosystem services into development planning is expected to be developed and published for awareness creation among stakeholders to facilitate the integration of the BR concept into all national planning and legislation. Ghana is counting on the support of our partners for re-election to the MAB ICC.

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