

THE STATUTES OF THE SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA MAB NETWORK

Proceedings of the South and Central Asian MAB Meeting of Experts on Environmental Conservation, Management and Research, Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka 15-18 October 2002

Background

During a Regional Meeting of Coordinators of National MAB Committees and Biosphere Reserves, organized by the UNESCO-New Delhi Office, in collaboration with the Indian National Committee for MAB and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and hosted by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education at Dehra Dun, from 22-25 February 2001, MAB representatives from eight Asian countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, expressed the will to forge closer sub-regional collaboration by initiating a process that would lead to the creation of a 'South and Central Asia MAB Network'.

During the discussions, there was a general consensus that the new network would operate principally in the context of biosphere reserves and similarly managed areas and would focus on a number of thematic topics for regional collaboration, such as traditional ecological knowledge, biodiversity conservation, forest ecosystems, land degradation and rehabilitation in vulnerable ecological systems (such as wetlands, drylands, and mountains) and waste management. Sri Lanka offered to host the regional meeting in 2002, and also offered to produce a regional "South and Central Asia MAB Newsletter" to enhance networking.

It was also agreed that the scientific papers presented at the Dehra Dun meeting would be published through the UNESCO, New Delhi Office, with a synthesis of the presented papers as well as the results of the meeting being made available on the UNESCO-MAB website in preparation of the meeting of the South and Central Asian MAB representatives in Sri Lanka in October 2002.

Taking note of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and in particular its Article 8 that encourages the establishment of regional and thematic sub-networks, the representatives of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participating in the South and Central Asian MAB Meeting held in Hikkaduwa (Sri Lanka) from 15 to 18 October 2002, agreed that the statutes of the "South and Central Asia MAB Network" shall be as follows:

Name of the Network

The name of the network shall be '**South and Central Asia MAB Network**', which shall be abbreviated and hereinafter referred to as SACAM Network.

Objectives

- i) To provide an institutional mechanism for South and Central Asian countries to exchange information on the three functions of biosphere reserves.
- ii) To compare experiences in the management of biosphere reserves in South and Central Asia, particularly in relation to zoning and harmonizing a biosphere reserve's goal of conserving biodiversity with its function of supporting socio-economic development of local economies and people.
- iii) To exchange information with regard to institutional and administrative arrangements for the management of biosphere reserves of South and Central Asia and to make appropriate recommendations for improvement.
- iv) To identify, design and implement short-term multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary studies that explore and demonstrate links between conservation of biodiversity and sustainable socioeconomic development of local people in and around biosphere reserves of South and Central Asia.
- v) To provide opportunities for staff of biosphere reserves and coordinators of MAB National Committees in South and Central Asia to improve their knowledge and skills in implementing the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves.
- vi) To promote and strengthen cooperation between the SACAM Network and other UNESCO Member States in the Asia Pacific Region in the implementation of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, and
- vii) To promote and facilitate information exchange and inter-regional co-operation with similar networks in other parts of Asia and in the world (such as the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network, EABRN; the Southeast Asian Biosphere Reserve Network, SeaBRNet; the African MAB Network, AfriMAB; the Arab MAB Network, ArabMAB; the European MAB Network, EuroMAB; the Latin American Biosphere Reserves Network, IberoMAB; and the Ibero-American Programme for the Development of Science and Technology, CYTED) and international organizations, such as IUCN, as well as any other interested international organization.

Membership

The following organizations/individuals from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are considered to be members of the SACAM Network: the MAB National Committees and affiliated government and private sector agencies; the UNESCO National Commissions and affiliated government and private sector agencies; staff of SACAM Network biosphere reserves **included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**; and UNESCO staff of the International Secretariat of the MAB Programme and the UNESCO Offices in New Delhi (India) and Teheran (Islamic Republic of Iran), Islamabad (Pakistan), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Dhaka (Bangladesh).

Others who are part of national biosphere reserves in South and Central Asia, may be invited by Members to participate in specific activities of the SACAM Network. Similarly, representatives of other MAB Networks (in particular, EABRN and SeaBRNet), UNESCO National Commissions, MAB National Committees and affiliated government and private sector agencies in South and Central Asian countries other than those belonging to the SACAM Network, and international organizations (e.g. IUCN and UNEP) may be invited to participate in activities of the SACAM Network.

Any other country of the region may become a member of the SACAM Network upon its explicit request and upon approval by the SACAM countries.

Activities

Meetings

- i) There shall be at least one meeting of the SACAM Network Members every two years.
- ii) SACAM Network Members shall periodically (e.g. once every five years) meet with other countries of the Asia Pacific Region.

Seminars and workshops

Apart from the meetings mentioned under (i) above, SACAM Network Members may organize special scientific seminars and/or training workshops. While the frequency of the organization of such events shall depend upon available financial and other resources, training workshops shall be organized at least once every three years.

Exchange of specialists

Scientists, administrators, managers and policy-makers concerned with the implementation of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves in a SACAM Network country may visit other countries to share knowledge and experience. Whenever possible, delegation(s) of SACAM Network countries may visit biosphere reserves in countries outside the Network to exchange views regarding biosphere reserve management.

Dissemination and exchange of information

SACAM Network Members will regularly exchange, either directly, or through the services of one of the National MAB Committees or through the International MAB Secretariat in UNESCO, Paris, or the UNESCO Offices in New Delhi, Teheran, Islamabad, Kathmandu and Dhaka, information on issues, problems and solutions to the management of biosphere reserves. Such exchange of information shall be via newly evolving electronic media as well as conventional instruments such as newsletters, brochures and technical and popular articles. SACAM, in cooperation with UNESCO, shall ensure that the proceedings of all meetings, seminars and workshops covered as part of SACAM activities shall be published and disseminated with the minimum possible delay.

Research cooperation

Any SACAM Member may initiate bilateral and multilateral cooperation for carrying out research on specific themes and issues of biosphere reserve management. In this regard a Member may, in consultation with other Members, solicit cooperation, outside of the South and Central Asian Region, as well as of international organizations and donors.

Management cooperation of trans-border biosphere reserves

All SACAM Members are encouraged, through the launching of specific projects, cooperation between management of trans-border biosphere reserves (e.g. Sunderbans Mangrove Ecosystems, both in India and Bangladesh; Manas in Bhutan and India). Such cooperation is particularly encouraged with respect to SACAM Members' participation in the implementation of multilateral agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention (WHC) and other relevant multilateral agreements.

Promotion and fund raising

Any SACAM Member, in consultation with other Members, may launch private or public sector campaigns to promote the work of SACAM and to generate funds for the activities of the SACAM Network.

Budget

The core-budget for the operations of the SACAM Network shall derive from funds of UNESCO's Regular Programme and from the Budget approved for the activities of SACAM by the General Conference, particularly those earmarked for implementing the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves by UNESCO Offices in New Delhi (India), Teheran (Islamic Republic of Iran) and the MAB Secretariat in UNESCO, Paris. Other UNESCO contributions to SACAM may derive from the Director-General's allocations for specific draft resolutions relevant to SACAM and approved by the General Conference, National and Regional Participation Programmes requests and specific proposals submitted to, and approved by the International Co-ordinating Council and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme.

Any SACAM Member State may provide funds to support SACAM activities, through funds-in-trust or voluntary contributions schemes of UNESCO, or directly to a recipient Member in another SACAM country(ies). SACAM Members, individually or jointly may prepare projects for consideration of funding by regional and/or international donors as well as launch fund-raising campaigns to support SACAM activities.

A SACAM Member may provide support to activities in kind: e.g. a SACAM Member may agree to host and meet all local expenses of visitors from other SACAM States if the latter (or other Members such as UNESCO) are meeting the costs of international travel of visitors; all such contributions in kind made by SACAM Members shall be acknowledged in publications which are the outcome of the activity under consideration.

Administration and coordination

The activities of the network shall be administered and coordinated by the UNESCO, New Delhi Office, in cooperation with UNESCO-MAB, Paris and a national focal point in each SACAM Member Country. Any SACAM Member country may discuss with UNESCO, New Delhi Office, short-term arrangements for one of its specialists assisting the UNESCO, New Delhi Office, in implementation of SACAM activities. Countries belonging to SACAM activities i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, may also unanimously decide, at any time in the future, to assign Secretariat responsibilities to one among themselves.

All funds which are administered by the UNESCO-New Delhi Office and the UNESCO-Teheran Office shall be in accordance with the UNESCO Manual Guidelines for managing a specific category (Regular Programme, funds-in-trust, etc.) of programme funds. Whenever a donor who is not a Member of SACAM agrees to provide financial assistance to SACAM activities the procedures for the management

of the said funds will be mutually agreed upon by SACAM Members including UNESCO, and the donor.

Other Matters

Any amendments to the text of the Statutes of the SACAM, including those concerning the termination of the operations of SACAM, shall come into effect only with the unanimous approval of all its Members.