



Report of the 7th Meeting of the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)

Dhaka, Bangladesh
14-15 December 2015



Jointly Organized by
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We would like to express our gratitude to Ms. Beatrice Kaldun, Head and Representative UNESCO Dhaka for taking personal interest and providing valuable support and guidance to make the meeting happen in Dhaka. It was due to her great enthusiasm and energy not only in organizing the event but through her personal involvement throughout the process that made the meeting a success.

Our grateful thanks to all the Participants from member countries for their active participation and very valuable contribution. We also acknowledge the active participation and contribution of the Participants from Bangladesh representing various ministries, departments, Universities and NGOs who made the meeting full of energy.

We gratefully acknowledge the enthusiastic support of our colleagues Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and Representative, Dr Mitrasen Bhikhajee, Senior Programme Specialist and Ms Elizabeth Vasu, Programme Assistant in UNESCO New Delhi Office and Mr. A N M Ziaul Hoque Zia, Senior Finance & Administrative Assistant, Mr. Rajib Kanti Biswas, Administrative Assistant, Mr. Md. Anisuzzaman Khan and Ms Mahfuja Rahman, Project Officers in UNESCO Dhaka offices in organizing a successful meeting. Our sincere thanks to UNESCO Jakarta Office specially Dr Shahbaz Khan, Director and Representative and Ms Siti Rachmania Senior Programme Assistant for their generous support for the 7th SACAM meeting.

We would also like to thank and acknowledge the support given by various ministries, departments and agencies of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and care given by UNDSS for the safety and security of the Participants.

- Secretary SACAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNESCO New Delhi in association with the UNESCO Dhaka Office organized the 7th SACAM meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 14 and 15 December 2015. The meeting was attended by over 25 participants including representatives of member countries and experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The focus of the meeting was on (i) sharing of experiences of MAB and biosphere reserves/world natural heritage sites from across the South and Central Asian sub-region, (ii) SACAM participation in 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Lima during March 2016 and (iii) strengthening of the MAB programme in Bangladesh. Participants expressed the need to revitalize MAB programme and nominate the first biosphere reserve in Bangladesh. It was agreed that Bangladesh will soon launch the MAB programme with the meeting of the national MAB Committee and present its first biosphere reserve in the Lima Congress in March 2016.



The Participants from member countries shared case studies of their experience of the MAB programme in their country presentations. The presentations followed animated discussion specially from Bangladesh participants on how the experience from other countries can be replicated in their own country to have successful launch of the MAB programme. A strategic planning session to discuss the SACAM participation in the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima 2016 was also organized where participants provided their ideas and input for the Congress. It was agreed to organize a side event of SACAM and display MAB related publications, posters and other publicity material from the region during the Congress.

The meeting also discussed ways for strengthening collaboration and partnership within the network and among the larger MAB community. The need to share information and success stories from BRs among each other was also emphasized during the meeting. During the discussion, participants stressed the need

to have an active MAB committee in each country with at least getting one biosphere reserve designated. Countries like Iran and India which have vast experience in the biosphere reserves and MAB programme, should come forward to support other member countries through their expertise. Setting up/revival of MAB Committees in the countries which have defunct or no committees, incentives to promote biosphere reserve related research, education and management, promotion of trans-boundary Biosphere Reserves, creation of biosphere reserve fund/SACAM Trust Fund and enhancing visibility of biosphere reserves through appropriate branding and communication strategies were some of the important recommendations of the meeting.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Opening Remarks by Ms. Beatrice Kaldun, Head and Representative UNESCO Dhaka

Ms. Beatrice Kaldun welcomed the participants representing SACAM member countries and the host country Bangladesh. She expressed the hope that this meeting will provide the much needed boost to MAB and biosphere reserve programme in Bangladesh. She thanked the Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) for providing necessary back up support in organizing the event. She specifically thanked Secretary, SACAM for choosing Dhaka as the venue to hold the meeting and hoped that there will be useful deliberations which will benefit the entire South and Central Asian region. She emphasized that Bangladesh which is hosting SACAM Meeting for the first time, will benefit from the deliberations of the meeting through launch of the MAB programme and creation of biosphere reserves which will be a positive move for biodiversity conservation in the country.

Dr. Hafeza Akhter, Science Officer, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) in her opening remarks welcomed the guests from abroad and also from home to the meeting being held for the first time in Bangladesh. She expressed the hope that the meeting will help strengthen MAB programme and biodiversity conservation in the country. She thanked the UNESCO Dhaka and UNESCO Delhi Offices for taking initiative to organize the 7th SACAM meeting in Bangladesh within a very short time. Ms. Akhter informed that Bangladesh has the Sundarbans as UNESCO designated world natural heritage site, but unfortunately has no biosphere reserve designated under UNESCO's MAB programme. Therefore, this meeting is an excellent opportunity for Bangladesh to establish the MAB programme and establish a

network of biosphere reserves in due course. Ms. Akhter also appreciated the representatives of SACAM countries attending the meeting on such a short notice to share their country papers/reports and ideas/plans for the forthcoming Lima Congress on MAB. She requested the participants to support MAB in Bangladesh by guiding for the smooth launch of MAB in Bangladesh.

TECHNICAL SESSION I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Dr. Ram Boojh, Secretary SACAM introduced the background, context and themes of the Meeting. He elaborated on the progress and future plans of SACAM and expressed the hope that the 7th SACAM meeting will prove to be fruitful and productive. He informed that Bangladesh is one of the founder members of SACAM and has been represented in most of the SACAM and other MAB related meetings. It is a matter great privilege that Bangladesh is hosting the SACAM Meeting for the first time. He informed that the 7th SACAM Meeting was scheduled to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan during the first week of December jointly by UNESCO Almaty Office and MAB Kazakhstan. However, they expressed their inability to organize it at the very last minute. UNESCO Kathmandu Office then proposed to organize it but due to prevailing political situation and fuel crisis in the country, it was not possible to organize. Dr Ram expressed his gratitude to UNESCO Dhaka Office and BNCU for agreeing to host the meeting on short notice. Following is the summary of his presentation:

- UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) programme works mainly through the World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently with 651 biosphere reserves in 120 countries all over the world. One of the key feature of the programme is international, regional, sub-regional and ecosystem-specific networking. These networks play a key role in the exchange of information and experiences and are as follows;
 1. AfriMAB (Africa MAB Network)
 2. IberoMAB (Latin America and the Caribbean MAB Network)
 3. EuroMAB (MAB Network for Europe and North America)
 4. EABRN (East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network)
 5. PacMAB (Pacific MAB Network)
 6. SACAM (South & Central Asia MAB Network)
 7. SeaBRnet (South East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network)
 8. ArabMAB (Arab MAB Network)
 9. REDBIOS (East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network)

- South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) was set up during the Regional Meeting of Coordinators of National MAB Committees and Biosphere Reserves organized by UNESCO New Delhi in collaboration with the Indian National Committee for MAB and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India in Dehradun from 22 to 25 February 2001. The meeting was hosted by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and was attended by MAB representatives from eight Asian countries -Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting decided to strengthen closer collaboration through the creation of a sub-regional network named as South & Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) to facilitate information exchange on biodiversity conservation, forest ecosystems, land degradation and rehabilitation in vulnerable ecological systems.
- The first meeting of the Network was hosted by MAB-Sri Lanka on "Environmental Conservation, Management and Research" in Hikkaduwa from 15 to 18 October 2002 which was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting formally adopted the statutes of the "South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)". Iran hosted the 2nd SACAM meeting in Zibakenar on 25-28 September 2004, which focused on "Sustainable Eco-tourism in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas". The meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- The 3rd meeting of SACAM was held in Jodhpur, India from 12 to 15 November 2007 in conjunction with the International Workshop on "Ensuring the Future of Drylands – Towards Implementing the MAB Agenda for a Sustainable Future of Drylands". The Meeting was attended by the MAB National Committees of the region, member countries of the Network, dry land experts from neighboring Asian countries and countries adjacent to the region such as China, the Russian Federation, Arab countries, as well as representatives of national/international organizations working on dry land issues.
- The 4th SACAM Meeting was organized in Qeshm Island, Iran from 14–17 November, 2011. The meeting was organized in association with countries of the SACAM sub region, MAB secretariat and SACAM Secretariat and marked the 40th Anniversary of MAB and 10th anniversary of the SACAM. Around 60 participants including delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, attended the meeting. The highlight of the recommendations of the meeting was the request to the Director General of UNESCO to explore the possibility of declaring an international year of Biosphere Reserves within the International Decade of Biodiversity.
- A special SACAM meeting was held in 2013 in Ramsar City, Mazandaran Province of Iran during the workshop on "Ecosystem Management of Wetlands" from 25-26 February followed by the "Regional Meeting on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services" from 27-28 February, 2013. During this meeting, the status of the Central Asian States was elevated from "Observers" to "Full Members" of the SACAM thus increasing the number of member countries up to 14, viz.????, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- The 5th SACAM meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on the theme "Harmonizing Community Livelihood with Biodiversity Conservation" on November 26-27, 2013. The 6th SACAM meeting was also held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 03–05 December 2014 on the theme "Impact of Climate Change on Natural Ecosystems".

– **Seventh SACAM Meeting:**

The focus of the 7th SACAM Meeting was on strengthening MAB programme in Bangladesh, sharing of experiences from other member countries and preparation for the Lima Congress. The expected outputs are:

- a) Plan for strengthening MAB Programme in Bangladesh including reconstitution of MAB Committee and identification of sites for biosphere reserves;
- b) Awareness and better understanding of the MAB programme in other countries through sharing of experiences and case studies and
- c) Plan for SACAM side event at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru, on 14-17 March 2016.

TECHNICAL SESSION II: STRENGTHENING MAB PROGRAMME IN BANGLADESH

Strengthening MAB and Biosphere Reserve/Natural Heritage Programme in Bangladesh

The session was facilitated by Ms. Beatrice Kaldun and Mr. Ram Boojh.

Nepal Experiences

Professor R P Chaudhary, Chair, MAB Nepal presented the case study of Nepal, regarding reconstitution of the MAB National Committee and efforts towards identification of potential sites for designation of biosphere reserves. He informed that MAB Committee in Nepal has been reconstituted under the Ministry of Education with seven members representing relevant Government departments, educational institutions and NGOs. Prof Chaudhary deliberated on his work on the ecological, cultural features and management aspects of Kanchenjunga Trans-boundary Landscape as a potential biosphere reserve. The landscape is trans-boundary with an area of 25,000 sq. km, Bhutan: 5,834 sq. km (23%), India: 14,127 sq. km (56%), Nepal: 5,190 sq. km (21%), with 18 PAs; 9 eco-regions; FIGURE SEEMS TO BE MISSING> Biodiversity hotspot; 1 RAMSAR site; 90 different ethnic groups. The site is under IUCN Category: IV-Habitat/Species Management Area.

The presentation was followed by a discussion mainly from Bangladesh participants about various aspects of MAB Committee and how Bangladesh can benefit from Nepal and other countries' experience. Experiences of Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Iran and India were also shared.

Discussion on MAB in Bangladesh

The session was chaired by Mr. Masumur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Representative from Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) and Center for Research in Natural Resources and Management (CARINAM) presented brief notes on potential sites of Bangladesh for Biosphere Reserves.

Prof Dr. Giasuddin Mia of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman University of Science and Technology (BSMRAU) presented the state of MAB in Bangladesh. Prof Giasuddin Mia, Chairman of the Department of Agriculture & Forestry. He informed that he is one of the founder members of the MAB National Committee. He shared the detailed structure of the MAB National Committee which was constituted in 2003 and can still be revived as most of the members are by their designation. Prof Mia further informed that he carried out a case study on the Sundarbans which was funded by UNESCO under the MAB programme during 1999-2000. The study was published by UNESCO as a trans-boundary study report, and later presented in Sri Lanka at the 1st meeting of SACAM. While deliberating on the structure of the MAB National Committee, Prof. Giasuddin Mia informed that it has 17 members representing all relevant line ministries, departments, Universities and NGOs chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests. Secretary General of BNCU is the Member Secretary of the Committee. He elaborated that Bangladesh is literally a wetland country and almost all the land gets flooded except the undulating hillocks in the South Eastern region during Monsoon. These seasonally flooded lands are very fertile and people cultivate paddy in winter and harvest fish in monsoon. The wetlands in the northeastern part of Bangladesh close to the Indian state of West Bengal and Assam are home to thousands of migratory birds, indigenous fish, breeding ground Pallas Fish Eagle, a threatened species of birds of prey, freshwater swamp and habitat of rare wild Bengal rose could be a potential biosphere reserve of Bangladesh. The area is already designated as RAMSAR Site, Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), Important Bird Area (IBA) and fish sanctuary.

Dr. SMA Rashid in his brief presentation told that Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in the southeastern region and the river Padma (Ganges) in the northwestern region of Bangladesh are two potential sites for Biosphere Reserves. He mentioned that CHT is part of one of the Hotspots of Global Biodiversity. Eastern hills biome is one of the last refuge of the rare wild flora and fauna of Bangladesh. These hills are the regional semi-evergreen forest biodiversity hot spot at the juncture of Indo-Malayan and Indo-Himalayan sub-region of the Oriental region. The Kassalong-Myaniy -Sangu-Matamuhuri river valley is considered to be home of more than 2000 species wild flora and + 1000 species of wild fauna. Dr.SMA Rashid proposed that for saving Gharial and other threatened wetlands flora and fauna especially rare wildlife the second site could be part of the Ganges River as transboundary biosphere reserve site between India and Bangladesh

Mr. Md. Abdullah Abraham from Bangladesh Forest Department proposed that the Sundarbans could be a potential Biosphere Reserve in Bangladesh. The Sundarbans, one of the world's largest coastal wetlands, covers about one million hectares in the delta of the rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna and is shared between Bangladesh (*60%) and India (*40%). Large areas of the Sundarbans mangroves have been converted into paddy fields over the past two centuries and more recently into shrimp farms. The regulation of river flows by a series of dams, barrages and embankments for diverting water upstream for various human needs and for flood control has caused large reduction in freshwater inflow and seriously affected the biodiversity. Two major factors will determine the future of the Sundarbans mangroves and their biological diversity. The Sundarbans, an estuarine mangrove swamp at the dead end of the Ganges Delta facing the Bay of Bengal is a globally important habitat of wildlife. The Sundarbans as coastal wetland contributes a remarkable profit to both formal and informal sectors of the national economy. This is the only forest in Bangladesh capable to accommodate mega fauna by providing huge area of occurrence and diverse ecological niche of occupancy for species of both wetlands and terrestrial flora and fauna. The Sundarbans act as the ecological safety valve for the survival of human beings, their non-human neighbors and both biological and physical assets in the southwestern part of Bangladesh. The Sundarbans swamp has the highest numbers of species composition in its mangrove flora. Although some wildlife species is locally extirpated from Sundarbans but still some flagship species of wildlife like Tiger, Deer, Otter, Fishing

Cat, Boar, Monkey, Otters, Dolphins, Adjutant Stork, Vultures, Bar-headed Geese, White-bellied Sea Eagle, King cobra, Batagur, Logger-head turtle, Ring Lizard, is roaming safely here in a viable population . The Sundarbans also lies at the cross roads of two global migratory birds flyways, the East-Asia Australasia and Central Asian Flyways. The species diversity and healthy population of cetaceans is noteworthy.

After the presentation of Mr. Abraham, the following are the supplementary information and observation of the participants.

- The Sundarbans are under different management titles such as World Natural Heritage Site, RAMSAR site, Wildlife sanctuary, Important Birding??? Area etc. There are other important sites in the country having biodiversity of global significance which are not well managed such as downstream of the confluence of the river Padma-Jamuna, Central Coast and CHT which might be candidates for biosphere reserves of Bangladesh.
- The Bangladesh MAB Committee can be revived through a gazette notification and should be made more representative by including organizations such as CARINAM as an NGO member. It was pointed out that there is no provision for declaration of a Biosphere Reserve under the Wildlife Protection Act of Bangladesh which needs to be looked into.

SESSION III: COUNTRY REPORTS

Bhutan

Mr. Damber Singh Rai, Chief Forestry Officer/MAB Focal Officer presented the country report of Bhutan. He started his presentation by showing a video clip: Land of Hope-Land of Thunder Dragon and the highlights are as follows:

- Environmental conservation is a pillar of Gross National Happiness
- The Constitution of Bhutan requires that at least 60 % of total land area under forest cover for all times to come is maintained
- Bhutan is a carbon neutral country and committed to remain as carbon neutral for all the time to come.
- Forests (80.89 % of total land) makes up the dominant ecosystem in the country comprising of at least 3 broad eco-floristic zones
- Aquatic ecosystems – Rivers, Lakes, Marshlands, hot springs
- Agricultural ecosystems – six major agro-ecological zones
- MAB : constitution of Bhutan Article 5, Section 5 clearly states that the government can declare any area deemed important and worthy
- MAB National Committee: Ten members
- Heritage Forests: local important forests managed by the local communities, target 20 by 2018

Iran

Ms. Mehrasa Mehrdadi, Technical Adviser to the Deputy Head Natural Environment and Biodiversity Division, Department of Environment, Iran presented country report of Iran. In her presentation she gave the history, present activities and future MAB programme of Iran. Some of the important points of her deliberation are summarized as follows:

- Iran has 11 biosphere reserves
- MAB Committee was formed in 1976 with 18 members (GO, academia, NGOs). The committee is chaired by the secretary, Ministry of Environment.
- Country has 11 BRs. Periodic review of 9 BRs was done in 2013,
- A Stakeholder consultation meeting was organized during 4-6 October 2015 through the funding by Michael Succow Foundation. A road map has been drawn specifically to work towards transboundary BRs, Iran-Iraq, Armenia.

Sri Lanka

Mr. E.A.P.N. Edirisinghe, Deputy Conservator of Forest presented the report of Sri Lanka. The highlights of the presentation are:

- Sri Lanka has 30% area covered under forest with 2 WNHS, 4 biosphere reserves.
- Sinharaja BR- was the first BR declared in 1978, KDN (Kanneliya Dedigala Nakiyadeniya) Complex BR-2004, Bundala BR (coastal area) 2005, Hurulu BR 1977.
- MAB Committee is constituted under the Secretary National Science Foundation (NSF) with representation from Government and academia. It is less bureaucrats having more professionals – 10 members on its roll.
- Policies are good but there is problem in implementation.
- Protocols followed to control tourism: no visit by vehicles, trails: alternate trails if crowded, natural control: rain: no private resort in the PAs
- Definition of PAs is confusing. Core zone boundaries should not be physically demarcated. Animals may move out of the core areas.

Nepal

Mr. Ram Prasad Chowdhury, Chair Nepal MAB Committee presented the country report of Nepal.

The presentation underlined the major activities implemented to revive MAB national committee and identification of Biosphere reserve site.

- Nepal is rich in biodiversity, highest peak is Sagar Matha (8,848m) which is a national park and world natural heritage site (WNHS). It has high rate of floral diversity with 6400m highest vegetation, high faunal diversity with 182 fish, amphibian 77, reptiles 188, birds 863, mammals 181.
- There was initially Species approach of conservation during the 1960s, then participatory approach during the 1980s and now since 2000, landscape approach is being followed. Nepal has 4 well defined landscapes, Tarai Arc landscape, sacred Himalaya landscape, Kailash sacred landscape, Chitwan landscape.
- First National Park was set up in 1973 in Chitwan which is also a UNESCO designated World Natural Heritage Site (WNHS). Development works in Chitwan are causing problems; rhino translocation; 550-600 rhinos in Nepal; high genetic diversity, 932 sq. km

- Among the major challenges are those from illegal trade, poaching; habitat loss degradation; human-wildlife conflict; alien species, financing, climate change. Recent earthquake of April 2015 affected 31 districts out of 75 districts; 2.2% forest loss-FAO, 7 PAs affected; 15,988 sqkm ; 46.8% of PAs affected;
- Among the lessons learnt are that community participation strategies have not worked well in removing poverty and achievement of MDG targets in Nepal. The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) alone is not sufficient for conserving the biodiversity in the country. There is need to link biodiversity and Climate change together to attract funds.
- Address aspirations of local people, people-centered approach, and resources management outside PAs increase resilience of ecosystems at landscape scale

Pakistan

Ms. Fareena Arshad, First Secretary of Pakistan High Commission, Dhaka represented Pakistan and she read out the country paper prepared by Prof. Dr. Muhammed Ashraf, Co-chairman National MAB Committee Pakistan. Summary of the presentation is as follows:

- Although the UNESCO MAB programme in Pakistan was initiated in 1977 with designation of Lal Suhnra National Park as its first Biosphere Reserve, however the MAB programme has remained dormant for quite a long time.
- The MAB Programme was revitalized in 2012 by the combined effort of Ministry of Science and Technology, Pakistan Science Foundation, UNESCO-Pakistan and Pakistan Museum of Natural History. A permanent MAB secretariat is established at Pakistan Museum of Natural History with a 16 member national committee headed by Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology as chair and Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation as Co-chair.
- Pakistan MAB hosted 5th and 6th SACAM meetings in Islamabad during 2014 and 2015 respectively.
- Pakistan has institutionalized MAB programme and developed substantial expertise in this field. It has extended its services to Afghanistan for establishing Band-e_ Amir Biosphere Reserve which will be first BR in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan MAB has already submitted nomination dossier for new BR known as “Pals Valley Biosphere Reserve” which is one of the most pristine and undisturbed habitats of Pakistan and is the abode of many unique species of plants and animals.

India

As Indian MAB focal person Ms. R. Dalwani could not come for the meeting, Dr Ram Boojh presented the country paper of India. Following are the main features of the report.

- 678 Protected Areas including 102 National Parks, 515 WL Sanctuaries, 4 community Reserves and 57 Conservation Reserves in different bio-geographic regions to protect the threatened flora and fauna and their habitats.
- Indian National MAB Committee. Identified 13 potential sites for designation as Biosphere Reserves in 1979. Committee of Secretaries approved establishment of Biosphere Reserves in India for conservation of critical eco-systems during 1983.
- In the year 1986, BR Scheme was initiated to facilitate conservation of entire eco-system and ensure its perpetuation and unhindered evaluation of the living resources, with the designation of Nilgiri as 1st BR of India.

- To date, 18 BRs have been designated covering 8 Bio-geographic Zones and 9 of the 18 BRs included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO.
- The Indian National Man and Biosphere (MAB) Committee
 - Advises on policy and programme formulation for Biosphere Reserves (BRs) in line with MAB objectives (Potential BR sites & WNBR).
 - Lays down guidelines on management plans for BRs.
 - Reviews the progress of programme implementation in BRs.
- The MAB programme in the States is coordinated by a State Level Steering Committee (SLSC) which examines Management Action Plans (MAP) and makes recommendations to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for financial assistance.
- There are Local level Committees (LLC) for each BR to coordinate activities of various local Departments and to recommend suitable interventions for incorporation in the biosphere reserve management at the site level.
- Under the National MAB programme, MoEFCC provides funds to undertake activities such as habitat management, rehabilitation of landscapes of threatened species and ecosystems, conservation of critical habitats in buffer zones, maintenance and protection of corridor areas, eco-development, value addition and income generating activities (apiculture, sericulture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc.)

Ms. Vinita Apte, of the Terre Policy Centre, India shared the experience of her organization of working in the Western Ghats World Heritage site particularly of community stewardship for the Kaas Plateau. She showed a short film on the work.

Kazakhstan

As Dr Elina Maltseva, Deputy Chairperson of Kazakhstan MAB committee, could not come to the meeting, her country report was read out by Dr. Ram Boojh, main points of which are as follows.

- The Kazakhstan National MAB Committee was established in 1978 by the Resolution of the Academy of Sciences of KazSSR.
- **The overall goal** of the Committee is *development of the national biosphere reserve's network in the Republic of Kazakhstan, its integration in the global and regional biosphere reserves' networks, analysis of the international experience in the development of the specially protected natural territories, as well as research of the problems of biological and ecosystem diversity's conservation, human and nature interaction and distribution of ecological knowledge in the frames of UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program.*
- Renewed Committee with Chairman Prof. R. Jashenko started its activity on May 24, 2011. Since then five biosphere reserves were successfully nominated:
 - Korgalzhyn (2012)
 - Alakol (2013)
 - Ak-Zhayik (2014)
 - Katon-Karagay (2014)
 - Aksu-Zhabagly (2015)
- There is also ongoing work on establishment of first transboundary biosphere reserve in Altai, including Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve in Kazakhstan and Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve in Russia.

- MAB National Committee along with the Committee of Forestry and Hunting of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan is currently developing the proposals for amendments to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Specially Protected Natural Territories" on the UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

Maldives

In the absence of the delegate of Maldives, a short film on the country's first biosphere reserve, Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve was screened to the audience.

The film explores the process of declaration of Baa Atoll as the first biosphere reserve in the Maldives on account of its globally significant biodiversity, commitment of local communities and its potential to address threats to biodiversity and demonstrate sustainable use. Work on declaring Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve started in early 2009, a series of workshops and meetings were held right across the atoll which involved the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Discussions were also held at national level as well, which included the environment, tourism and the fisheries ministers' meeting to discuss the issue of declaring Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. With the workshops and meetings completed and the conclusions of these pointing towards Baa Atoll to be declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve one final round of community consultation was undertaken in the same year. Baa Atoll was inscribed under UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves on 28 June 2011. The Government of Maldives is promoting the Baa Atoll at International Fora as a means to climate change adaptation and mitigation and has made a commitment to declare the whole country as Biosphere Reserve by 2017.

SESSION IV: STRATEGIC MEETING OF SACAM FOR PLANNING THE 4TH WORLD CONGRESS OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN LIMA 2016

Dr. Ram Boojh introduced about the forthcoming 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves which will take place in the city of Lima, Peru, on 14-17 March 2016. The theme of the Congress is "A New Vision for the Decade 2016-2025: UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development".

- Participants of the Congress will involve all National Committees of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and experts directly involved in the practical implementation of biosphere reserves, including: representatives of governments, biosphere reserves, local communities, UN agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and organizations and institutions from all over the world working with the MAB Programme.
- The Congress will address issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, such as education for sustainable development, the economic viability of nature conservation systems, biodiversity, and the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, among others.

The Congress has three main objectives:

- 1) Review of the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves 2008-2013, the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of 1995.

- 2) Assess the lessons learned and the new challenges to be faced by the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- 3) Develop and launch an Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves for 2016-2025.

Following outcomes are expected of the Congress: The below bullets are messy – I am not good at this, so you may want to get help from your own office!!

☒ The Lima Declaration

☒ The Lima Action Plan of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for 2016-2025.

1. Ministry of Environment of Peru (MINAM) and the National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SERNANP) together with Secretariat of the Man and Biosphere Programme at the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO Paris and MAB National Committee of Peru will be the organizers. Four types of parallel sessions will take place at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (4WCBR), each of which will be half day and consist of seven parallel workshops/side events – THIS EXCEL SHEET HAS TO BE ADDED INTO ANNEX!!!
 - Parallel sessions focusing on specific themes: MAB Regional Networks, ecosystems and ecological issues (e.g. forest, drylands, climate change) and biosphere-related issues (e.g. governance, economy, and youth) have been planned. Each of these workshops on specific themes will have two UNESCO staff to be in charge of the organization. They are responsible to:
 - a) Develop the concept and detailed agenda of the workshop,
 - b) Identify a chair and a rapporteur for the workshop, and a key note speaker, plus 2 or 3 additional speakers, and
 - c) Ensure the smooth organization of the workshop. It is expected that each workshop will have one staff from the MAB Secretariat and one from the field offices of UNESCO.
 - The main presentations should not exceed 20 minutes. Other presentations should be very brief thus enabling substantial Q&A and discussions. The workshops must closely relate to the overall topic of the Congress.
 - Each workshop must produce a one-page document, in form of a narrative text or in bullet-points, summarizing the most important results of this workshop to be presented on the morning of the last day of the Congress. All these documents will be included into the final report of the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves.

After the introduction the floor was opened for discussion. Major points of discussion and suggestions are as follows:

- SACAM should be represented in good strength in Lima. All National MAB Committees and biosphere reserve managers, civil society organizations, experts and youth should participate. Iranian delegate Ms. Meharasa informed that Iran has already expressed their interest to present case study during the SACAM event.

- A special side event on SACAM focusing on implementation of Madrid Action Plan, key lessons learnt, Lima Action Plan and activities linked to SDGs should be organized.
- Funding for participation is an issue. As far as possible member countries should identify funds for participation locally. It was suggested that Member countries should also approach Congress Secretariat for support.
- MAB Committees of the region should showcase their activities related to BRs and their products and suitable exhibits should be displayed.
- Bangladesh should identify one BR and should present that as the first BR from the country at Lima. Similarly other countries should also highlight their key achievements during the Congress during the SACAM side event.

Participants also discussed and expressed that emphasis should be given to Conservation and Sustainable development not sustainable use of biosphere reserves:

- Man centered conservation action to be at the buffer and specifically at transition zone
- More comprehensive and clear strategic guideline for the transition zone is required
- MABs more pragmatic and close integration with Climate Change themes is required
- Bangladesh should join the Lima congress and indicate at least site of countries first Biosphere Reserve
- MAB focus need to prioritize on SDG 14 for greater attention on Marine Biome conservation and sustainable development.
- Iran expressed their interest to present a case study at the Lima Congress.
- All members were reminded to bring their materials (publications, case study, video, photographs, souvenir etc.) to showcase SACAM activities
- Focused daily activities need to be planned and assigned
- At least 1 or 2 representatives from each member country of SACAM should join the congress and earlier communication to Lima congress secretariat is asked for.

SESSION V: NETWORKING: SACAM AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Ms. Mehrasa Mehrdadi explained the significance of up scaling and upholding the close cooperation and collaboration through SACAM networking. Mr. Ram provided the outline of future needs and ways for better and stronger collaboration. He mentioned that there is need to share information and success stories from BRs among each other. Earlier each host country used to bring out a newsletter of the meeting. The first SACAM newsletter was published by Sri Lanka specifically containing the report of the first SACAM meeting held in Hikkaduwa in Sri Lanka. The 2nd issue of the newsletter was brought out by

Iran MAB and the 3rd issue of the Newsletter was published by the Secretariat, but then its production was discontinued.

During the discussion, participants emphasized the need to have an active MAB committee in each country with a biosphere reserve designated. Countries like Iran and India which have vast experience in the biosphere reserves and MAB programme, should come forward to support other member countries with their expertise.

For the implementation of these suggestions, all are responsible.

Some of the important needs for stronger collaboration which were agreed by all National MAB Committees to implement which will be reviewed in next SACAM meeting are outlined as follows:

- ❖ Set up MAB Committees/Biosphere Reserves in countries which have none.
- ❖ Incentives to promote BR related research, education and management
- ❖ Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserves
- ❖ Biosphere Reserve fund/SACAM Trust Fund
- ❖ Expert group of member countries
- ❖ Visibility, branding and communication

CLOSING SESSION

Recommendations

During the closing session, Dr Ram Boojh, Secretary, SACAM read out the recommendations of the meeting as below:

1. Bangladesh being one of the Founding Members of the SACAM with representation in almost every Network meeting should revive the MAB national committee and programme urgently by convening a necessary meeting early 2016. The country has many potential sites for biosphere reserves, and are advised to identify one site to be declared as biosphere reserve. BNCU and UNESCO Dhaka shall work together to this effect with support from SACAM secretariat if needed.
2. Bangladesh should join the Lima Congress and announce the country's first Biosphere Reserve at the event.
3. The concept and deeper meaning of biosphere reserves needs to be better communicated to policy and decision makers as well as the general public.

4. MAB should focus on SDG 14 for greater attention on conservation and sustainable development of Marine Biome.
5. All members need to bring their materials (publications, case study, video, photographs, souvenir etc.) to showcase SACAM activities during the Lima Congress.
6. There is a need for an integrated and people centered approach for addressing aspirations of local people, involving efficient resource management outside the biosphere reserves is required. and protected areas.
7. South-south cooperation with emphasis on SAARC countries and on transboundary biosphere reserves should be encouraged for the conservation of biodiversity and greater regional cooperation through biosphere reserves.
8. The future direction for MAB programme in the region should be on climate change particularly on increasing resilience and adaptive capacity. Efforts should be made to align BR management plans with SDGs and climate change.
9. Each Biosphere reserve should bring out models for sustainable development linking to SDGs.
10. SACAM should focus on having BRs in the Indian Ocean/islands and coasts for the conservation of marine ecosystems.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony was chaired by Ms. Beatrice Kaldun. Mr.Md.Monjur Hossain, Secretary of Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO graced the ceremony as chief guest. Mr. Ram Boojh, Secretary SACAM welcomed and thanked the participants of the 7th meeting. He presented the workshop achievements or results, with highlights of outcome and recommendations. He also expressed his satisfaction to BNCU and UNESCO Dhaka for hosting the meeting on such short notice. He expressed thanks especially to Ms. Beatrice Kaldun, Head and Representative of UNESCO Dhaka for her all out support in making the 7th SACAM meeting a success.

Closing Remarks by the Chief Guest

The Chief Guest of the closing session, Mr.Md.Monjur Hossain, Secretary, BNCU thanked the participants and informed that he will soon convene the meeting of the Bangladesh National MAB which will be led by MOEF and BNCU will act as member secretary. He noted that South Asia is the largest in terms of population and is most vulnerable to the climate change; hence there is a need for better cooperation in terms of preparedness, adaptation and resilience to the negative impacts of climate change. SACAM can play a very important role in this and MAB committees and experts of the member countries should share and learn the experiences not only of the MAB but also of the sustainable development strategies and action in their counties. He further highlighted the role of BNCU that it will work in closer cooperation with other related ministries and departments in developing Bangladesh MAB programme and its subsequent implementation. He underlined that MOEF and BNCU would very soon kick off the Bangladesh National MAB Committee and its plan in cooperation with UNESCO Dhaka Office. Finally he expressed his

satisfaction and happiness that SACAM secretariat provided the opportunity to Bangladesh to host the 7th meet at Dhaka. He also thanked all those who had organized the event on a very short notice.



Vote of Thanks

Vote of thanks was given by Mr. Ram Boojh Secretary SACAM and Ms. Beatrice Kaldun, Head and Representative of UNESCO Dhaka as the organizers of the 7th SACAM meeting. Mr. Ram Prasad Chowdhury, Chairperson, NEPAL MAB Committee and Dr. Md. Hiruzzaman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, Bangladesh made closing remarks on behalf of the participants and thanked the forum.

Finally, the 7th SACAM meeting was formally declared closed by Ms. Beatrice Kaldun, Head and Representative, UNESCO Dhaka.

ANNEXURES

Annexure 1



Seventh Meeting of South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)

Date: 14 - 15 December, 2015
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Background Note

Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments. It proposes interdisciplinary research, demonstration and training in natural resources management.

Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts 651 biosphere reserves in 120 countries all over the world. Building international, regional, sub-regional and ecosystem-specific networking is a key feature of the MAB programme. These networks play a key role in the exchange of information and experiences and are as follows;

1. **AfriMAB** (Africa MAB Network)
2. **IberoMAB** (Latin America and the Caribbean MAB Network)
3. **EuroMAB** (MAB Network for Europe and North America)
4. **EABRN** (East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network)
5. **PacMAB** (Pacific MAB Network)
6. **SACAM** (South & Central Asia MAB Network)
7. **SeaBRnet** (South East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network)
8. **ArabMAB** (Arab MAB Network)
9. **REDBIOS** (East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network)

South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) was set up during the Regional Meeting of Coordinators of National MAB Committees and Biosphere Reserves organized by UNESCO New Delhi in collaboration with the Indian National Committee for MAB and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India in Dehradun from 22 to 25 February 2001. The meeting was hosted by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and was attended by MAB representatives from eight Asian countries

-Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting decided to strengthen closer collaboration through the creation of a sub-regional network named as South & central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) to facilitate information exchange on biodiversity conservation, forest ecosystems, land degradation and rehabilitation in vulnerable ecological systems.

The first meeting of the Network was hosted by MAB-Sri Lanka on "Environmental Conservation, Management and Research" in Hikkaduwa from 15 to 18 October which was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting formally adopted the statutes of the "South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)". The Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the 2nd SACAM meeting in Zibakenar on 25-28 September 2004, which focused on "Sustainable Eco-tourism in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas". The meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh,

Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The 3rd meeting of SACAM was held in Jodhpur, India from 12 to 15 November, 2007 in conjunction with the International Workshop on "Ensuring the Future of Drylands – Towards Implementing the MAB Agenda for a Sustainable Future of Drylands". The Meeting was attended by the MAB National Committees of the region, member countries of the Network, dry land experts from neighboring Asian countries and countries adjacent to the region such as China, the Russian Federation, Arab countries, as well as representatives of national/international organizations working on dry land issues. The 4th SACAM Meeting was organized in Qeshm Island, Iran from 14–17 November, 2011. The meeting was organized in association with countries of the SACAM sub region, MAB secretariat and SACAM Secretariat and marked the 40th Anniversary of MAB and 10th anniversary of the SACAM. Around 60 participants including delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, attended the meeting. The highlight of the recommendations of the meeting was the request to Director General, UNESCO to explore the possibility of declaring an international year of Biosphere Reserves within the International Decade of Biodiversity.

A special SACAM meeting was held in Ramsar City, Mazandaran Province of Islamic Republic of Iran during the workshop on "Ecosystem Management of Wetlands" from 25-26 February followed by "Regional Meeting on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services" from 27-28 February, 2013. During this meeting, status of the Central Asian States was elevated from "Observers" to "Full Members" of the SACAM thus increasing the number of member countries up to 14, viz., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The 5th SACAM meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on the theme "*Harmonizing Community Livelihood with Biodiversity Conservation*" on November 26-27, 2013. The 6th SACAM meeting was also held in Islamabad-Pakistan from 03–05 December 2014 on the theme "*Impact of Climate Change on Natural Ecosystems*".

Seventh SACAM Meeting

The 7th SACAM meeting is being organized jointly by UNESCO New Delhi and UNESCO Dhaka Offices on 14-15 December 2015. The focus of the meeting will be on strengthening MAB programme in Bangladesh, sharing of experiences from other member countries and preparation for Lima Congress.

Venue:

UNESCO Dhaka Office
House-122, Block-F, Road-01, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh
Tel: +880-2-9862073, 9873210
Email: dhaka@unesco.org Website: www.unesco.org/dhaka

Participants

- a) MAB Focal points/experts of South and Central Asian countries
- b) MAB/Natural Heritage/biodiversity experts/Ministries and relevant Stakeholders of Bangladesh
- c) UNESCO Science Officers of SACAM region

Focus

The focus of the meeting will be on three areas:

1. Sharing of experiences of MAB and biosphere reserves/world natural heritage sites from across the South and Central Asian sub-region,
2. Discussion on the SACAM participation and themes for a side event during the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Lima during March 2016 and
3. Strengthening the MAB programme in Bangladesh.

Format

Presentations, lectures and discussions etc.

Expected Outcome

- a) Plan for strengthening MAB Programme in Bangladesh including reconstitution of MAB Committee and identification of sites for biosphere reserves
- b) Awareness and better understanding of the MAB programme in other countries through sharing of experiences and case studies
- c) Planning for SACAM side event in 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru, on 14-17 March 2016.

Contact

For further information

1. Ms. Beatrice Kaldun
Head and Representative
UNESCO Dhaka Office
Tel: +8802-9873210
Email: b.kaldun@unesco.org
2. Dr Ram Boojh
Secretary SACAM
UNESCO New Delhi Office
Tel: +91-11-26713000 Mobile: +919910020449
Email: r.boojh@unesco.org

Annexure 2

INFORMATION NOTE

The 7th SACAM meeting is being organized jointly by UNESCO New Delhi and UNESCO Dhaka from 14-15 December 2015. The focus of the meeting will be on exchanging information and planning for MAB, strengthening MAB programme in Dhaka and preparation for Lima Congress.

UNESCO Dhaka is pleased to welcome you all in Dhaka, Bangladesh for the SACAM meeting. Following is logistical information to facilitate your participation in the meeting and your stay in Dhaka.

1. Visa

The Government of Bangladesh requires an entry visa. It can be obtained in the country of your residence. For those who do not have a Bangladesh Embassy or Consulate in their countries you can obtain visa on arrival at the Dhaka Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Visa Cost is US\$ 50. Please use the invitation letter while applying for visa.

2. Transportation

Pick-up and drop-off at Dhaka Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to **Hotel Paradise Garden** has been arranged for all the participants and will be facilitated by the Hotel Paradise Garden. Upon your arrival, a staff member from the hotel, holding your name in a placard will be waiting for you once you exit the baggage claim area.

In case you have any flight changes or foreseeable delays, please inform ASAP Mr. Rajib Kanti Biswas, UNESCO Dhaka Office, Cell no.01711-986-319; e-mail: rk.biswas@unesco.org

Transportation between hotel and venue for the participants is arranged by the UNESCO Dhaka Office. The transport will leave the hotel at 8:00 AM. Please be in the hotel lobby before or at 8:00 AM. The transport will leave from UNESCO Office to the hotel in the evening after the day's session concludes.

3. Accommodation

The accommodation of the delegates will be at the **Hotel Paradise Garden** for the duration of the conference period.

4. Address of Hotel

Paradise Garden (Pvt) Ltd
20 Park Road, Baridhara, Dhaka 1212
Telephone No: +880 2 881 9342
Contact person: Mr. Mahbubul Alam
Email. ulalam2004@gmail.com
Cell. 01819 19193323

5. Venue

Level 2, Meeting Room
UNESCO DHAKA OFFICE
House-122, Road-1, Block-F, Banani
Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh
Tel. (880-2) 9862073, 9873210, 9894654
Fax. (880-2) 9871150
E-mail: dhaka@unesco.org
Web: www.unescodhaka.org

Main contacts at UNESCO Dhaka:

Mr. Rajib Kanti Biswas, (Visa, logistics) Cell no.01711-986-319; e-mail: rk.biswas@unesco.org
Mr. A N M Ziaul Hoque Zia, Cell no.01713-142-933; e-mail: an.hoque@unesco.org
(Office security, logistics).

6. Registration

Registration of the participants of the meeting will be at UNESCO Dhaka Office (level 2)
9:00 AM- to 9:30 AM in the morning of 14 December 2015.

7. Equipment and technical support

Free Wi-Fi internet service is available, a password will be provided to you at registration time. One Laptop computer, one Multi-Media Projector with screen will be available for presentations during the workshop.

8. Currency

The official currency of Bangladesh is Taka. The current UN exchange rate is 78.75 Taka = 1 US\$. US Dollars. Visa and Master cards are commonly accepted in restaurants, hotels and other establishments catering to foreigners. Upon arrival at the Dhaka Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport you can change US\$ and other major currencies or Traveler Cheques at one of the exchange booths in the arrival hall. Alternatively, you can change at the hotel.

9. Climate

The weather in Dhaka in December is relatively cool and dry.

Temperature:	Max.	Min.
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Summers	36.7°C	21.1°C
Winters	31.7°C	10.5°C

Rainfall : 2540 mm annually
Humidity : 80 percent (approx.)

It is also advisable that you bring warmer clothes (a light jacket/shawl or scarf) to be used in the air-conditioned meeting room.

10. Attire:

Smart-casual for all sessions.

11. Electricity:

Normally the point of electricity is provided by three square pin contact socket. The standard current is 250-volts (50-cycle).

12. In case of any emergencies contact:

- UN Security Advisor – Mr. Charles Tive: (M) 88 01713 036042 , Email: charles.tive@undss.org
HOT Line Number at Radio Room Dhaka: +88- 01758-777777 (To be called only on Emergency);
- 24/7 UN Radio Room, Dhaka: Mobile: +88-01713257666
- Fire Services: 8827397
- Police: Emergency- 999 2222; +88-0171 3398311

13. Ambulance and Hospitals

- Day-Night Ambulance Service: 9123073; 8122041

13. Banks

Standard Chartered Bank (SCB)

North Gulshan Branch, Block- NW (A), 189 Gulshan Avenue (North), Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, [Banking Hours \(Sun- Thu\): 10:00 am to 4:00 pm](#)

UN Agencies in Bangladesh deal financial issues with Standard Chartered Bank and UNESCO Dhaka with North Gulshan Branch of SCB.

Additional information on Bangladesh



Bangladesh is a deltaic country located at the juncture of Indo-Malyan and Indo-China sub-regions of the Oriental Region. This biogeographical location favours the country to act as biological corridor of the wildlife among neighbouring countries, India, Myanmar and Bhutan. The hydrological regime of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra Rivers ecologically connected and intermingled the flora and faunal composition of Bangladesh with Nepal, India and Bhutan. Henceforth, this strategic location makes Bangladesh as one of the most ecologically significant and biologically diverse landscapes in terms of stepping stones, staging ground and flyways for wildlife migration of the region. Consequently, a large number of wildlife species traverse in widespread habitats and thereby maintain a wide range of gene pool. Moreover, the climatic variability influences the biodiversity of the country in a number of ways; most significantly in terms of species richness and on the contrary damage caused due to natural calamities, like, flood, riverbank erosion, and cyclones destroy and damage the richness in biodiversity.

Bangladesh is a part of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem, which is one of world's 64 Large Marine Ecosystems. On the basis of the Arbitral Tribunal's recent verdicts, Bangladesh's maritime area has increased by 19,467 square kilometres and now stands at 106,613 square kilometres. This has opened up the opportunity to explore marine resources in and under the water in a planned way, including marine biodiversity.

The climate in Bangladesh is tropical and monsoonal. In the dry season, from October to March, temperatures are mild and pleasant. The weather turns hot and muggy from March to June, awaiting the monsoon rains. From June to October, the skies open and drop most of the country's total annual rainfall (as much as 6,950 mm or 224 inches/year).

Annexure 3

Table: List of Biosphere Reserves in SACAM region.

Sr No.	Country	No. of BRs
1.	Afghanistan	0
2.	<u>Bangladesh</u>	<u>0</u>
3.	Bhutan	0
4.	India	9+9*
5.	Iran	11
6.	Kazakhstan	5
7.	Maldives	1
8.	Nepal	0
9.	Pakistan	2
10.	Sri Lanka	4
<u>11.</u>	<u>Turkmenistan*</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>12.</u>	<u>Uzbekistan*</u>	<u>0</u>
Total		32

Annexure 4



WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Day 1: December 14, 2015

09:00-09:30	Registration	
Inaugural Session		
09:30- 9:45	Opening Session:	
	Opening remarks	Ms. Beatrice Kaldun Head and Representative UNESCO Dhaka
	Remarks by guest from BNCU	Dr. Hafeza Akhter, Programme Officer, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU)
Session I:	Introduction and Overview	
9:45- 10:30	Introduction to Workshop, SACAM background, progress and future plans	Mr. Ram Boojh, Secretary SACAM
	Discussion	All
10:30 - 10:45	Tea Break	
Session II:	Strengthening MAB and Biosphere Reserve/Natural Heritage Programme in Bangladesh facilitated by Ms. Beatrice Kaldun and Mr. Ram Boojh	
10:45-11:55	Nepal experiences of reconstruction of their MAB committee and their efforts in identification of new biosphere reserve	Professor RP Chowdhury, Chair Nepal MAB
11:55- 12:05	Experience of strengthening MAB in Nepal	Ms. Laura Heiskanen, UNESCO Kathmandu
12:00-1:00	Discussion	Bangladesh Stakeholders
13:30- 14:00	Lunch	
14:00-16:30	Discussion on MAB in Bangladesh	

Day 2: December 15, 2015

Session III :	Country Presentations	
9:30 - 9:50	Bhutan	
9:50 - 10:10	India	
10:10- 10:30	Iran	
10:30 - 10:50	Nepal	
10:50 - 11:10	Tea Break	
11:10 - 11:30	Sri Lanka	
11:30- 11:40	Maldives: A short film on Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve	
Session IV:	Strategic Meeting of SACAM for planning for the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima 2016	
11:45- 13:00	The session will discuss about the ideas, issues and opportunities for SACAM during the Lima Congress: 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves; A New Vision for the Decade 2016-2025: UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development	All
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
Session V:	Networking Session: SACAM and regional collaboration	
14:00-16:00	Group discussions on strengthening SACAM Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Strengthening collaboration and future priorities and activities ●Planning for programmes and collaborative projects ●Networking ideas, website, newsletter etc. ●Date and venue of next meeting ●Conclusions and Recommendations 	
16:00 - 16:30	Closing ceremony	
	Closing Remarks by representatives of BNCU	
	Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks by UNESCO	

Annexure 5

7th Meeting of the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM), Dhaka, Bangladesh 14-15 December 2015

LIST OF INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

SI #	Name and Designation	Address	Phone/Fax/Email
01	Mr. Damber Singh Rai Chief Forestry Officer/MAB Focal Officer	Nature Recreation and Ecotourism Division Department of Forest and Park Services Thimphu BHUTAN	Cell: +97517116548 Email: drai_bt@yahoo.com
02	Dr. Ms. Vinitaa H Apte President 1 TERRE Policy Centre	Pandit Ajgaokar Scheme Khandobacha Mal Bhugaon, Pune 411042 INDIA	Tel: 09822091537 Email : aptevh@gmail.com
03	Ms. Mehrasa Mehrdad Technical Expert and Adviser to the Deputy Head	Natural Environment and Biodiversity Division Department of Environment Tehran IRAN	Tel: +98 21- 42781915 Fax: +98 21- 88233055 Cell: +98 912 2499130 Email: mehrasa.mehrdadi@gmail.com
05	Ms. Fareena Arshad First Secretary High Commission of Pakistan, Gulshan - 2, Dhaka	High Commission for Pakistan, NE(C) 2, Road # 71, Gulshan-II, Dhaka. BANGLADESH	Phone: (0088)(02)8825388-89 Cell: 01978000025
06	Mr. E. A. P. N. Edirisinghe Deputy Conservator of Forests	Sri Lanka Forest Department 82 Rajamalwatta Road Battaramulla SRI LANKA	Email: eapnishantha@yahoo.com
07	Prof. Ram P. Chaudhary, Chairperson, MAB Nepal Executive Director, Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST),	Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur (TU), Nepal	(977-1) 4330348 (Off.); 4288394 (Res.), 9841283652 (Cell) ram@cdbtu.wlink.com.np ; turecast@mail.com.np

NATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

SI #	Name and Designation	Address	Phone/Fax/Email
01	Mr. Md. Monjur Hossain Secretary, BNCU	Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO	monjur_1967@yahoo.com
02	Dr. Hafeza Akther, Programme Officer (Science), BNCU	Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO	ahmed2labib@yahoo.com
03	Md. Masumur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, MOEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests	Cell No. 01711308900 E-mail: rahman.masumur@gmail.com
04	Mr. Md. Abdullah Abraham ACF	Development Planning Unit, Forest Department	Phone:02- 8181147 Email: nobu_fd@yahoo.com
05	Dr. Md. Golam Mustofa Deputy Secretary MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology, Bangladesh Secretariat	Cell No.: 01552324590 E-mail: dmgmustofa@gmail.com
06	Dr.Md. Hiruzzaman Deputy Secretary	Ministry of Water Resources Bangladesh Secretariat	Tel: 8802 9577235 Cell No: 01715094001 Email: mhzaman5964@gmail.com
07	Md.Abu Yousuf Miah Deputy Chief, Energy and Mineral Resources Division	Ministry of Energy, Power and Mineral Resources Bangladesh secretariat	Cell. 01552307255 E-mail: ayousuf64@yahoo.com
08	Mr. Mirza Mohammad Ali Reza, Senior Assistant Secretary	Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar	Cell No.: 01712691297 Email: reza3174@gmail.com
09	Dr. Md. Zabed Hossain, Professor,	Department of Botany University of Dhaka Dhaka 1000	Tel: 01727-736087 Email: zabed@du.ac.bd
10	Professor Dr. Nasreen Hossain	Department of Architecture Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh	Tel: 880 2 966 5650 (PABX)Ext. 7757(o), 7414 (r), Cell No: 01755628178 FAX: +880 2 861 3026 861 3046
11	Dr. SMA Rashid Chief Executive, Centre for Advanced Research in Natural	Centre for Research In Natural Resources and Management House - 545, Road-11, Baitul Aman Housing Society, Adabor, Dhaka 1207	carinam.bangladesh@gmail.com

	Resources and Management (CARINAM)		
12	Prof Dr. Giasuddin Mia	Bangabandhu Sheik Mujibur Rahman University of Science and Technology (BSMRAU)	

UNESCO PARTICIPANTS

SI #	Name and Designation	Address	Phone/Fax/Email
01	Ms. Beatrice Kaldun Head and Representative UNESCO Dhaka	House # 122, Road # 1, Block F, Banani, Dhaka 1213 BANGLADESH	Tel:+88 (02) 9862073, 9873210 Fax: +88 (02) 9871150 Email: b.kaldun@unesco.org
02	Dr. Ram Boojh Secretary, SACAM (South and Central Asia MAB Network)	UNESCO Office in New Delhi B 5/29 Safdarjung Enclave New Delhi 110029 INDIA	Tel: +91 11 2671300 Cell: +919910020449 Email: r.boojh@unesco.org Ramboojh1@yahoo.com
03	Ms. Laura Heiskanen Natural Heritage Coordinator	UNESCO Office in Kathmandu Sanepa-02, Lalitpur P.O.Box 14391 Kathmandu, NEPAL	Tel: +977 (1) 5554396 Fax: +977 (1) 5554450 Email: la.heiskanen@unesco.org
04	Mr. Md. Anisuzzaman Khan Project Officer for Science UNESCO Dhaka	House # 122, Road # 1, Block F, Banani, Dhaka 1213 BANGLADESH	Tel:+88 (02) 9862073, 9873210 Fax: +88 (02) 9871150 Email: ma.khan@unesco.org
05	Ms. Mahfuza Rahman Project Officer for Education UNESCO Dhaka	House # 122, Road # 1, Block F, Banani, Dhaka 1213 BANGLADESH	Tel:+88 (02) 9862073, 9873210 Fax: +88 (02) 9871150 Email: ma.rahman@unesco.org