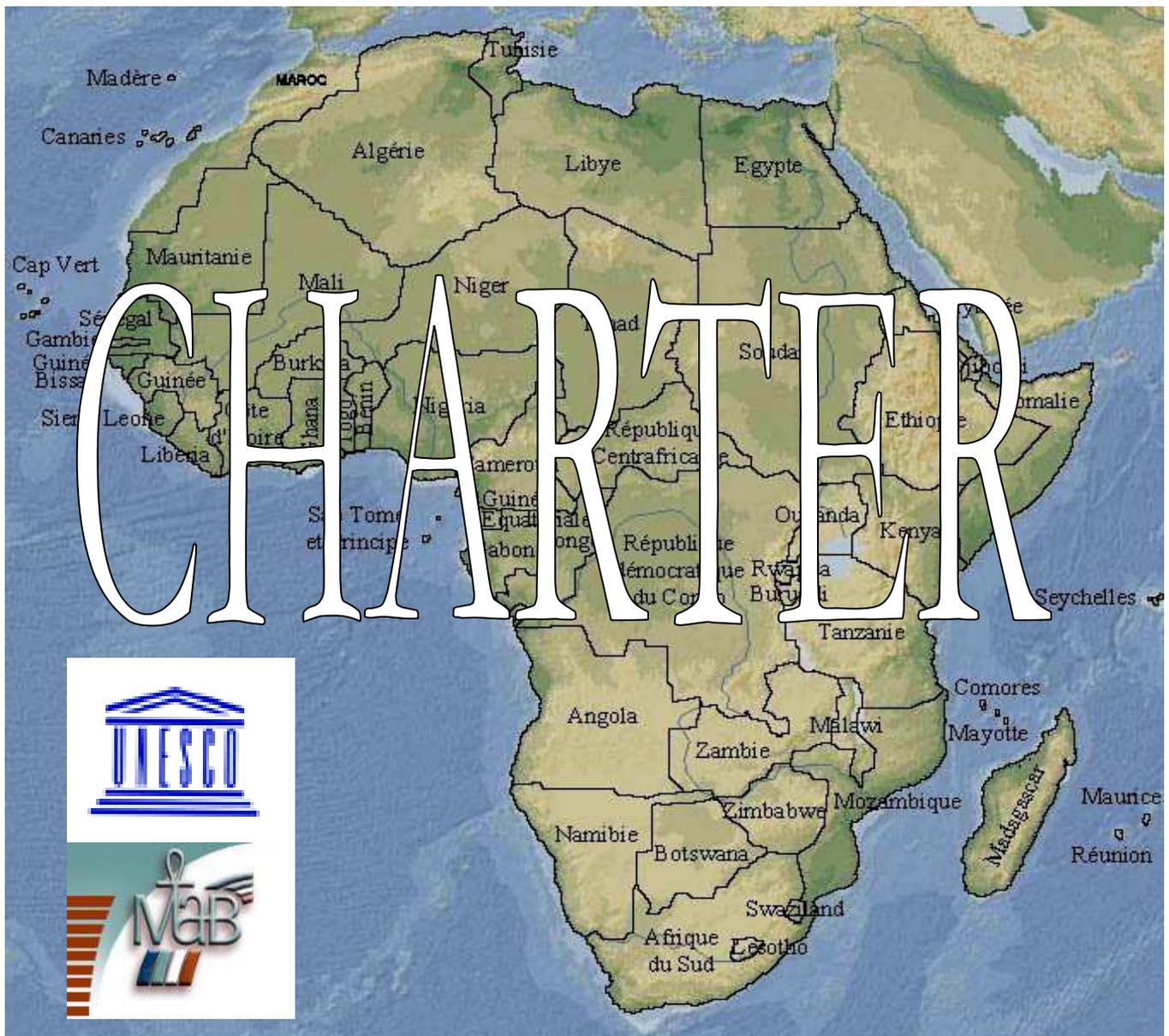


# AFRICAN BIOSPHERE RESERVES NETWORK

Afrimab



Space provided for the flags of countries with BR

## **Preamble**

1. Considering that biosphere reserves are set up with the aim of promoting a balanced relationship between human beings and the Biosphere ;
2. Considering the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, in particular- its articles 8 and 10.2 ;
3. Reminding the creation in 1996 of the African Network of MAB (AfriMAB) by UNESCO's MAB National Committees and managers of biosphere reserves, with the aim of building and strengthening their capacity to promote biosphere reserves as privileged tools of experimentation in conservation of environment and sustainable development;
4. Conscious of the need for Africa to have an organised framework for its network of biosphere reserves ;
5. Willing to exchange information, maximize efforts and harmonize actions geared towards the management and development of African biosphere reserves ;

The Members of the AfriMAB Network hereby adopt the Charter organizing the AfriMAB Network set forth below:

### **A. AfriMAB's Network Missions**

The AfriMAB Network aims to provide an organized framework that will permit to conduct, in particular, the following missions :

- 1) The exchange of information and harmonization of efforts for better conservation as well as integrated and sustainable management of the ecological and socio cultural heritage in African biosphere reserves ;
- 2) Strengthened relations and partnerships between MAB National Committees, administrative authorities and technical structures of the countries concerned, to ensure that the MAB programme and network are generally taken into account by the member States of the African Union in their national development policies ;
- 3) The promotion of relations with other regional networks ;

4) The promotion and support of efforts aimed at creating, managing and monitoring biosphere reserves.

## **B. AfriMAB's Network Objectives**

### ***Overall objectives***

The AfriMAB Network aims to contribute, from a general perspective, to the objectives of the Sevilla Strategy which are:

- To use biosphere reserves as a means of conserving natural and cultural biodiversity (Objective No. 1) ;
- To use biosphere reserves as a model of regional development and as learning sites for sustainable development (Objective No. 2) ;
- To use biosphere reserves in research, continuous monitoring, education and training (Objective No. 3) ;
- To put into practice the concept of biosphere reserve (Objective No. 4)

### ***Specific Objectives:***

Within the region, AfriMAB Network aims, specifically, to:

- Promote the implementation of the MAB Programme for sustainable development in sub- Saharan Africa ;
- Promote the implementation of national and regional policies for the sustainable use of Biosphere Reserves ecosystems in African countries ;
- Provide a regional and international framework for dialogue and cooperation for developing biosphere reserves management policies ;

- Promote the conservation of biological diversity through the sustainable management, restoration and rehabilitation of various ecosystems ;
- Create greater awareness on ecological, cultural, recreational, scientific and social values of Biosphere Reserves in Africa, especially with regard to policy makers, local communities and other stakeholders ;
- Participate in building institutional capacities in the African region in order to face the challenges of conservation and long-term use of Biosphere Reserves ecosystems in Africa and ;
- Contribute to the sustainable management of Biosphere Reserve ecosystems.

### **C. Implementation Strategy for the AfriMAB Network:**

1. **Develop an advocacy** strategy for national policy-makers (politicians, private sector, civil society) and institutional players in Africa to develop, adopt and implement national Biosphere Reserves management policies consistent with the principles and objectives of the MAB Programme, the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework ;
2. **Develop actions** through which knowledge will be enhanced and scientific and technical information on the value and function of Biosphere Reserves disseminated, with the aim of facilitating decision making and contributing to poverty alleviation among the immediate users of natural resources ;
3. **Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders** in the effective implementation of National Biosphere Reserve Management Policies, especially in terms of providing knowledge and approaches for the sustainable management of ecosystems and poverty reduction within Biosphere Reserves ;

4. **Contribute to strengthening the capacity of relevant legal frameworks** to ensure that Africa's biological and cultural diversity is protected by law and the concept of biosphere reserves is enshrined in national laws ;
5. **Scale up regional and international cooperation** around issues relating to climate change, desertification and the protection of migratory species in an effort to sustain the livelihoods of local populations of Biosphere Reserves ;
6. **Strengthen synergy and communication**, for improved collaboration and coordination between Biosphere Reserves and other Conventions, Agreement and similar initiatives ;
7. **Promote information sharing by twinning** and creating transboundary Biosphere Reserves networks ;
8. **Raise fund** to ensure its effective and long-lasting functioning with a view, in particular, to facilitating information sharing between network Members ;
9. **Develop a partnership strategy** in order to work in synergy with all institutions and organizations with similar initiatives ongoing in the African region. **At the level of countries**, AfriMAB's Network will collaborate with national authorities, local authorities, the civil society, Non-Governmental Organizations working in the area of management of biological diversity, as well as the private sector. **At the regional level**, AfriMAB's Network will endeavour to strengthen cooperation with Regional Economic Communities, and with the relevant technical organs of the African Union Commission. **AfriMAB will establish partnerships with international organizations** involved in conservation, applied environmental research, rural development. A specific strategy will be drawn up in order to involve private sector in the implementation and funding of biosphere reserves.

#### **D. The implementation of the Charter**

## **D.1 – Governance of the Network**

**MAB national committees represented by their focal points, biosphere reserves represented by their managers and local community representatives shall be members as of right of the network.**

**Countries shall forward the composition of their MAB national committees and the names of their representatives (focal points) in the AfriMAB network to MAB/UNESCO Secretariat and to the MAB Bureau in office.**

### **D.1.a. Fundamental Instruments**

The functioning of AfriMAB's Network shall be based on the following instruments:

- ❖ **The Members' Charter;**
- ❖ **The AfriMAB's Network Statutes**
- ❖ **Five-year strategic action plans**

### **D.1.b. Organs and Financial Resources of AfriMAB**

The organs of the network shall be the General Assembly and the Bureau.

#### **D.1.b.1- The General Assembly**

The general assembly shall be convened statutorily at each regional meeting of the network. Its functions shall be spelt out in the Statutes.

#### **D.1.b.2 – The Bureau**

##### **D.1.b.2.1. Election**

The Bureau shall be elected through consensus by the General Assembly, including during the founding General Assembly, as stated in the Statutes.

#### **D.1.b.2.2. Composition**

The Bureau shall be composed of:

- A Chairperson (member of the MAB National Committee of the country chosen to host the next General Assembly meeting of the Network);
- A Secretary General;
- Six technical coordinators in charge of facilitating the exchange of the following commissions:
  - **Thematic Commission 1:** Managing, zoning and enhancing the functioning of biosphere reserves ;
  - **Thematic Commission 2:** Participation of partners and social stakeholders; equitable benefit-sharing of income ;
  - **Thematic Commission 3:** Scientific research and capacity building ;
  - **Thematic Commission 4 :** Transboundary biosphere reserves ;
  - **Thematic Commission 5:** Biosphere reserves in conflict or post-conflict situations ;
  - **Thematic Commission 6:** Adaptation to climate change.

#### **D.1.b.2.3. Functions of the Bureau**

**The Chairperson** shall represent the Network before its partners.

**The Bureau** shall, in conjunction with the MAB Secretariat and the regional UNESCO Office in Nairobi, be responsible for:

1. coordinating the activities of the Network ;
2. establishing relations between AfriMAB and other regional networks ;
3. sourcing for and exploiting financing opportunities in States, regional initiatives and institutions, the private sector and international organisations ;
4. preparing the working documents of the various forums and drafting the reports thereof ;

5. disseminating information within the Network ;
6. preparing draft Five-year Strategic Plans with the support of the network of focal points ;
7. preparing the draft regulatory documents of the Network (internal rules, partnership agreements...).

**The technical commissions** shall particularly be responsible for:

- i) facilitating intellectual and scientific activities of the Network ;
- ii) ensuring the participation of network members in reflections on the major issues affecting the network and the challenges identified by the MAB Programme.

### **The Secretariat of the Bureau**

shall devolve on the country chosen to chair the Bureau, which country shall provide the necessary human resources and logistics for the Network's meetings (office space, facilities, server, Internet).

#### **D.1.b.2.4. Term of Office**

The term of office of the Bureau shall span the period between two consecutive statutory meetings of the General Assembly.

### **D.1.b.3. The Financial Resources of the Networks**

Given the basic principles that AfriMAB seeks to:

- Empower the various stakeholders;
- Mobilise own financial resources, enhance human resources and make the most of local and regional opportunities;

AfriMAB's Network hereby adopts its funding strategy mainly based on:

- i) Contributions by its members, the conditions and amounts of which shall be spelt out in the Statutes ;
- ii) Support from member States ;

- iii) Opportunities presented by regional initiatives and institutions (NEPAD, WAEMU, ECOWAS, CILLS, SADC, UDEAC, etc.) ;
- iv) Opportunities resulting from relations with MAB regional networks and MAB national Committees ;
- v) Partnership with private enterprises, international or national organisations involved in environmental conservation and applied research.

The present Charter is adopted by the members of AfriMAB's network in attendance at the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Madrid (Spain) on 9 February 2008.