

Thematic Report on Mountain Ecosystems

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report.

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Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report.

At the initial state, a format was provided to prepare a “Thematic Report on the Mountain Ecosystems” in Liberia. The format contains specific questions related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems. A thematic team was set up to conduct inventory stocktaking and survey with all stakeholders on related mountain programs in the country. These stakeholders were visited. Their information systems were researched and interviews conducted with the relevant stakeholders to confirm the data gathered.

The stakeholders involved in this process include the Ministry of Agriculture, the Forestry Development Authority, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Liberia Mining Company, local environmental NGOs including the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), Farmers Associated to Conserve the Environment (FACE), Liberia Indigenous Forum for the Environment (LIFE), Environ-Link, Liberia LTD, and international NGOs including Worldwide Fund for nature (WWF) and Fauna and Flora International (FFI).

Materials utilized include:

- The ten-year Forestry Sector Development Programme and Project of Liberia, 1997;
- First Year National Socio-Economic Programme For Post-War Liberia November 26, 1997;
- FDA Annual Reports (1973, 1988, and 1999);
- Report on the Tri-national Meeting on Mount Nimba held in Man, Ivory Coast, 2001’
- Report on the Tri-national Planning Meeting on Mount Nimba held in N’Zerekore, Guinea, January 2002; and Important Birds Areas in Africa.

Mountain Ecosystems

1. What is the relative priority your country accords to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?							
a) High		b) Medium	X	c) Low			
2. How does your country assess the resources available for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems, both domestic and international?							
a) Good		b) Adequate		c) Limiting	X	d) Severely limiting	
3. Has your country requested financial assistance from GEF for funding the activities for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?							
a) no						X (except the current one-year BSAP grant)	
b) yes, please provide details							

Assessment, Identification and Monitoring

4. Has your country undertaken any assessment of direct and underlying causes of degradation and loss of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems?	
a) no, please specify the reasons	
b) yes, please specify major threats and their relative importance, as well as gaps	X (see further comments below)
c) If yes, please specify the measures your country has taken to control the causes of loss of mountain biodiversity	
5. Has your country identified taxonomic needs for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems?	
a) no, please specify the reasons	
b) yes, please specify	X (see further comments below)
6. Has your country made any assessment of the vulnerability or fragility of the mountains in your country?	
a) no, please specify the reasons	X (see further comments below)
b) yes, please specify the results and observed impacts on mountain biodiversity	

7. Has your country made any assessment important for conservation of biological diversity of mountain ecosystems at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels?	
a) no, please specify the reasons	
b) yes, some assessments or monitoring undertaken (please specify)	X (see further comments below)
c) yes, comprehensive assessments or monitoring programmes undertaken (please specify where results can be found, and opportunities and obstacles, if any)	

Regulatory and Information System and Action Plan

8. Has your country developed regulations, policies and programs for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify sectors	X (see further comments below)
9. Has your country applied the ecosystem approach (adopted at COP 5) in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?	
a) no	X
b) yes, please provide some cases or examples	
10. Does your national biodiversity strategy and action plan cover mountain biological diversity?	
a) no, please specify why	X (see further comments below)
b) yes, please give some information on the strategy and plan, in particular on mountain biodiversity	
11. Has your country disseminated the relevant information concerning management practices, plans and programmes for conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?	
a) no	X (see further comments below)
b) yes, please provide details where information can be retrieved concerning management practices, plans and programmes	

Cooperation

12. Has your country undertaken any collaboration with other Parties for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems at the regional level or within a range of mountains?	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify the objectives of this collaboration and achievements	X (see further comments below)
13. Has your country signed or ratified any regional or international treaty concerning mountains?	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify which treaty and provide as much as possible a report on the progress in the implementation of the treaties, including any major constraints in the implementation of the treaties	X (see further comments below)

Relevant thematic areas and cross-cutting issues

14. Has your country taken account of mountain ecosystems while implementing thematic programmes of work on agricultural; inland waters; forest; and dry and sub-humid lands biological diversity?	
a) no	X
b) yes – but in only one or two thematic programmes of work	
c) yes, included in all programmes of work	
d) if yes, please specify details	
15. Has your country taken any measures to ensure that the tourism in mountains is sustainable?	
a) no , please specify why	X (see further comments below)
b) yes, but in early stages of development (please specify the reasons)	
c) in advanced stages of development (please specify the reasons)	
d) relatively comprehensive measures being implemented (please specify the reasons)	
16. Has your country taken any measures to protect the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems?	
a) no	
b) not relevant	
c) yes, but in early stages of policy or programme development	X - certain extent (see further comments below)
d) yes, in advanced stages of development	

e) some programmes being implemented	
f) comprehensive programmes being implemented	
17. Has your country developed any programmes for the protection of natural and cultural heritages in the mountains?	
a) no	
b) yes, please provide some information in the programmes	X (see further comments below)
18. Has your country established protected areas in mountains?	
a) no	X (see further comments below)
b) yes, please specify the percentage of mountains under protected areas out of total mountain areas in your country	
19. Has your country undertaken any activities to celebrate the International Year of Mountains and Eco-tourism?	
a) no	
b) yes, please specify	X (see further comments below)

Case-studies

Please provide case-studies made by your country in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems.

Ans: No case study has been made.

Further comments

Re 4. b)

Reasons: Fauna and Flora International (FFI) conducted two surveys of Mount Nimba communities in 2001 and 2002. One of the reasons for the surveys was to obtain information on the levels of threats to the biological and natural heritage of the area.

Re 5. b)

Reasons: I. To establish information on endangered fauna and flora species; II) to monitor and control fuelwood production; III) to promote lesser known timber tree species; and IV) to set up information system on medicinal plants and other valuable biodiversity species.

Re 6. a)

Reason: Although the needs are identified, limitations of funding and inadequate trained manpower in the necessary fields have made it difficult to conduct assessment of vulnerability of fragility of the mountains in Liberia.

Re 7. b)

Reasons: Another reason for the FFI surveys was to obtain database on the socio-economic and threat situations for future management program on the sub-regional level (Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia) for the Mount Nimba Massif. These were rapid assessments to obtain information on the Liberia side of the Nimba Massif for discussion in a Tri-national meeting in N'Zerekore, Guinea in January 2002

Re 8. b)

Ans: Yes, Liberia has developed forest and wildlife regulations, forest policies and a ten-year (1998-2008) program and projects, a review of forest law, wildlife and forest products, etc will consider conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems in the country is underway by FAO/FDA. The National Environmental Commission Liberia of has also submitted proposed environmental laws and policy framework to the Government of Liberia (GOL) for legislative actions.

Re 10. a)

Ans: No. Development of BSAP for Liberia is in its initial stage. However, it is envisaged that the future national biodiversity strategy and action plan will definitely cover mountain ecosystem. There will be stocking and inventory of the biodiversity of mountain ecosystems.

Re 11. a)

There are no specific management practices, plans and/or programs as such in Liberia.

Re 12. b)

Ans: Yes. Fauna and Flora International in collaboration with Birdlife International, Conservation International, Worldwide Fund for nature and the governments of respective countries is pursuing a tri-national collaboration for the management of the Mount Nimba Massif, which is shared by Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia.

(a) Objectives of Collaboration

- To establish contact between technical staff from Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia, who will be responsible for managing Mount Nimba.
- To establish contact between the technicians and local communities representatives and relevant politicians.
- To explore practical means of international cooperation for the conservation of Mount Nimba and develop common strategy for managing the area.
- To establish a long-term forum for dialogue and joint planning between the three nations if possible.
- To involve and motivate governmental and corporate sectors as well as local inhabitants, the major stakeholders in the overall scheme.

(b) Achievements:

- i. A report on the consultative workshop held in Ivory Coast in September 2001.
- ii. A report on a planning workshop held in Guinea in January 2002.
- iii. A draft N'Zerekore Declaration on Tripartite Coporation.

Re 13. b)

Ans: Yes.

Liberia has acceded to the following international conventions:

1. the Convention of the Protection of World Culture and Nations Heritage;
2. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance;
3. The Convention on Biodiversity;
4. Convention on Climate Change
5. Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. (POPs)

As a result of these initiatives, a memorandum of understanding has been signed between Conservation International (CI) and the Government of Liberia (GOL) for protected areas management.

Also a declaration on the tri-national management of Mount Nimba has been developed, awaiting the signatures of the appropriate authorities of the respective countries.

Re 15. a)

However, the **Ten-year Forestry Development Sector Plan** developed in 1997 provides for ecotourism generally.

Re 16. c)

Ans: certain extent, yes.

The program developed in January 2002 for the commemoration of the International Year of Mountains (IYM) in Liberia provides for awareness creation and sensitization for the practice and protection of indigenous knowledge for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems in the country.

Re 17. b)

Ans: An on-going program for commemorating the (IYM) in Liberia includes awareness creation towards this objective and to sensitize the population on policy and the need to protect natural and cultural heritages in mountain communities in the country.

Re 18. a)

Ans: No.

However, initiatives are in progress for the establishment of protected areas, which include mountains. Wologizi and Wenegizi Mountains are North-West Liberia are among the proposed protected areas of Liberia.

Re 19. b)

Ans: Yes.

IYM was launched in Liberia May 2002 and its National Committee established; IYM awareness workshop was held in June 2002.

The Environment Protection and Management Law and the National Environmental Policy, which are under discussion for legislative enactment, generally provide for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Liberia. The issue of mountain ecosystem does not stand out.

Limited data is available on mountain ecosystems in Liberia. The concept of conservation and sustainable use of mountain biological diversity is recent and has not gained momentum until recently when the IYM was launched. Except for the rapid assessment of Mount Nimba for the FFI Tri-national planning meeting on Mount Nimba in January 2002, no assessment has been done specifically for mountain ecosystem management. Apparently, Liberia relies on IYM and the current BSAP for obtaining adequate and realistic information of mountain ecosystems and biological diversity in the country.
