

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR MALAWI

Mpeta Mwanyongo
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF
LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Presentation layout

- Introduction
- NBSAP development process
- What constitutes the NBSAP
- Mainstreaming biological diversity in development plans
- Attempts to implement issues highlighted in the NBSAP
- The way forward

1. Introduction

- Malawi has unique and diverse flora, fauna and ecosystems attributed to its diverse climate, soils and topography.
- At around 15% of the global fresh water species from lake Malawi, Malawi is one of the countries with the largest number and diverse communities of fresh water fish in the world.
- Despite this potential, Malawi has experienced threats to its biodiversity. Biodiversity ranks fourth out of the nine key environmental concerns for the country according to the National Environmental Action Plan prepared in 1994.
- Biodiversity is of value economically. For example, fisheries sector is estimated to contribute 4% of the GDP and tourism also contributed 4.2% and 3.2% of GDP in 1996 and 1997 respectively.
- There is indirect contribution of biological diversity through ecosystem services of carbon sequestration, water conservation and sustenance of ecological balance.
- The reasons outlined above together with its obligation to the CBD gave Malawi its rationale to prepare the NBSAP.

2. NBSAP Development process

- The National Biodiversity Steering Committee was responsible for overseeing the development of NBSAP.
- Initially, task forces on different thematic areas were created to collect information and develop draft reports upon which major reports were prepared by lead authors.
- The editorial team synthesized these reports into a draft NBSAP document.
- The EAD the focal point of CBD and NHBGM conducted three regional workshops where participants from different sectoral areas including the community representatives provided an input to the draft NBSAP document.
- The lead authors and the editorial team members incorporated comments from the workshops.
- Then, a national workshop was convened where different sectoral areas from government, private sector, NGO community, the academia and the community representatives participated. Comments from the workshop were incorporated as well.

2. NBSAP Development process cont'd

- The finalized document was adopted by the National Biodiversity Steering Committee.
- The document adopted by the National Steering Committee was submitted to the National Council for Environment which recommended for Cabinet approval.
- The approved NBSAP was then published as a government document.

3. What constitute the NBSAP

- The NBSAP consists of the following major areas:-
- **Vision:** Defines the ability of the people of Malawi to conserve, protect and manage by 2020 all forms of life and to use biodiversity sustainably and sharing the benefits fairly and equitably.
- **Goals:** The four goals outline how Malawi will achieve its vision and highlights Malawi commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use as enshrined in the National Constitution, Vision 2020, the National Environmental Policy and other sectoral documents at the national level; regional and international agreements.
- **Strategies and actions:**
- Have focused on thematic areas which have relationship to the articles in the CBD e.g. indigenous knowledge (article 8) and access and benefit sharing (article 16).

3. What constitutes the NBSAP cont'd

- The thematic issues included terrestrial biodiversity, aquatic biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, traditional knowledge, access and benefit sharing, biotechnology, invasive species, biodiversity policies and legislation, community participation and awareness, information, knowledge and capacity, incentive measures and the country's role in global biodiversity conservation.
- Define the scope, desired outcome of each thematic issue, current state of each thematic issue, its current management and summary of issues.
- Consist action plans which have defined objectives, strategies and actions to address a particular thematic issue.

3. What constitute the NBSAP cont'd.

- Has provided for 20 prioritized actions in the areas of policy and legislative review, formulation and enforcement on biodiversity; programme development and support; and promotion of multi-stakeholders in conservation, protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

4. Mainstreaming biodiversity in development plans

- The Malawi government implemented the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy for some years without showing any tangible achievements. In this document, environment, HIV/ AIDs and gender were consider as cross cutting issues. As a result, they were not focused and did not receive adequate attention they deserved to have been accorded.
- The Malawi Economic Growth and Development Strategy (2006 -2011) has embraced environment as one of the issues that impinge on economic growth. Biodiversity is one of the many environmental areas that are included in the plan and these are budgeted for all the five years.
- However, the budgets are not translated into annual budgets because of ceilings for the ministry cannot allow to meet the yearly strategic budgets. Environment is not in the five priority issues government has placed in the strategy and the priority ones include agriculture, energy, infrastructure, water and HIV/ AIDS.

5. Attempts to implement issues highlighted in the NBSAP

- Under the SADC Biodiversity Support Programme supported by GEF/UNDP, we prepared a status report on policy and legislative mechanism for access and benefit sharing of genetic resources in Malawi. The report made recommendations to formulate policy and legislative framework which will ensure sustainable exploitation of genetic resources whose benefit would be shared fairly and equitably among beneficiaries.
- A subsidiary legislation was drafted, discussed at stakeholder workshops and eventually inserted in the EM draft bill. This was achieved with financial support of the Norwegian Government.
- A status report depicting databases, standards and guidelines on invasive alien species was prepared also with financial support of the GEF/UNDP under the SADC Biodiversity Support Programme. The report outlined the invasive alien species which were affecting biological diversity conservation in the country.
- The management of biodiversity species at the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust is one of the milestone. The area has high diversity of species.

5. Attempts to implement issues highlighted in the NBSAP cont'd.

- Government established a Trust to conserve, protect and manage the biodiversity resources at the mountain using funds under the Endowment created by government with support from GEF/World Bank.
- Government has also given concession to a private firm to manage the wildlife in the game reserve under the public private partnership. The private firm will make improvements such as construction of either lodge or hotel; translocation of threatened species into the park and management of the game reserve resources. 70 elephants have already been translocated from Liwonde National Park to Majete Game reserve. More are expected to move from Lake Malawi National Park in Mangochi to the game reserve. This will promote tourism in the game reserve as well as improve the management of biological diversity.
- A biotechnology policy and the Biosafety regulations have been prepared and adopted by government in order to manage the biotechnologies which are becoming challenging issues in these days. We are able to handle issues of biotechnology such as GMOs.

6. Way forward

- The priority issues in the NBSAP require urgent attention. The effort to implement some of these in a small way is commendable. However, there is need to have a systematic implementation plan to ensure that the issues highlighted in the NBSAP are addressed to meet the aspirations of Malawians and meet Malawi's obligation to the CBD.
- The integration of biodiversity into development plans to access more funding from local resources is becoming problematic. However, as we are implementing the MGDS, reviews are taking place to accommodate the weak areas as what we have observed. Changes will be forthcoming.
- Other than relying on government coffers which have competing needs, it is essential to identify other innovative financing mechanism such as the public private partnership, the use of endowment funds, use of funds from the Polluter Pay Principle etc.
- Providing economic analysis to justify biodiversity conservation from governments or donors will be quite useful.