Majang Forest Biosphere Reserve

Where the beauty in the harmony of nature and culture is manifested







MELCA-Ethiopia

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

Majang Forest Biosphere Reserve

Majang zone of Gambella people's Regional State is a zone endowed with unique biodiversity, cultural values and traditional practices supporting sustainable conservation of the forest. Majang forest is part of the few afromontane wet natural forests remaining in the country. It constitutes the largest unfragmented forest remaining in the country, and by far the largest in the Horn of Africa. It occurs along a wide ecological gradient and includes diverse species of both flora and fauna.



The Majang forest has been registered as biosphere reserve and included in the network of world biosphere reserves by the Man and the Biosphere program (MAB) of UNESCO in July 2017. Majang forest biosphere reserve is now one of the 669th biosphere reserves from 727 biosphere reserves in 131 countries all over the world.

The biosphere reserve covers a total area of 224,924 hectares. Whereas the total area of the biosphere reserve is divided in to three zones namely Core, Buffer and Transitional zones, the size and distribution of the zones across the biosphere reserve.

Core zone/area: A legally constituted/protected area or areas of sufficient size for long-term conservation. It is exclusively established for biodiversity conservation or to ensure that all plant and animal species and communities survive and flourish throughout the area. Potential activities allowed in the core area include monitoring minimally disturbed ecosystems, and undertaking non-destructive research and other low-impact uses.

Buffer zone: This zone is set to buffer the core zone from human interference, while allowing conservation and sustainable utilization of forest resources. Only activities compatible with sound ecological practices such as eco-friendly agriculture, environmental education, recreation, ecotourism and applied and basic research can take place in this area.

Transitional zone: flexible area - in which sustainable development and resource management practices are promoted and developed. Can be used for a range of uses that can improve the livelihood of the surrounding community on sustainable base. Activities to be undertaken in this area include agricultural activities, settlements and other uses.











Bio-cultural diversity

-Over 550 higher plants, 33 mammals, 180 birds, and 20 amphibian species were recorded.

-Endemic species: at least 27 plants, 5 birds and 3 amphibians.

-Home to over 39 threatened species (IUCN Red list) in the area, which include 5 birds, 3 mammals, 3 amphibians and 28 plant species.

-Deep-rooted culture of nature conservation.

Conservation functions:

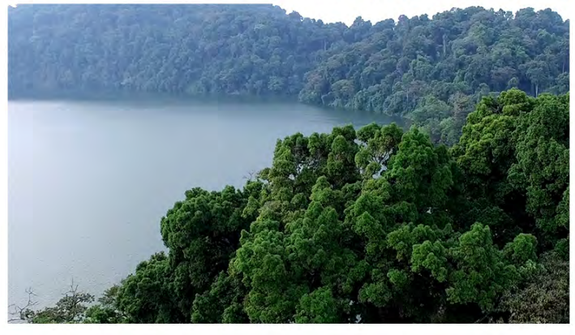
- The forest plays an important role in protection of watersheds that have local and international significance in the Nile basin, conservation of biodiversity, flood and erosion control, and carbon-sequestration to mitigate the effects of climate change. It is the source of rivers like Alwero, Gilo and Akobo, which are the main tributaries of the White Nile
- Habitat for 550 higher plants, 33 mammals, 180 birds, and 20 amphibian species











Supporting sustainable development

- Source of basic livelihood resources including forest honey, coffee, spices, false babnana and fruits,
- Sustainable agricultural investments
- Eco-tourism
- Organic products

Logistical supports

- Support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development

Majang zone land use /land cover (hec)

Agriculture	14770
Coffee plantation	5341
Closed forest	165,768.5
Open forest	12,067
Grass land	2692.3
River course	360.7
Semi urban	225.4
Water body	146.8
Wood land	23,550.6
Total	224924









Significant features of Majang forest biosphere reserve

Moist evergreen Afromontane forest vegetation

The forests in Majang are part of the Afromontane rainforest vegetation types, and are important for conservation of biodiversity.

Transitional Rainforest vegetation

Most forest vegetation of the Majang belongs to this type and represents one of the largest such remnant forests in the country.

Deep-rooted culture of nature conservation

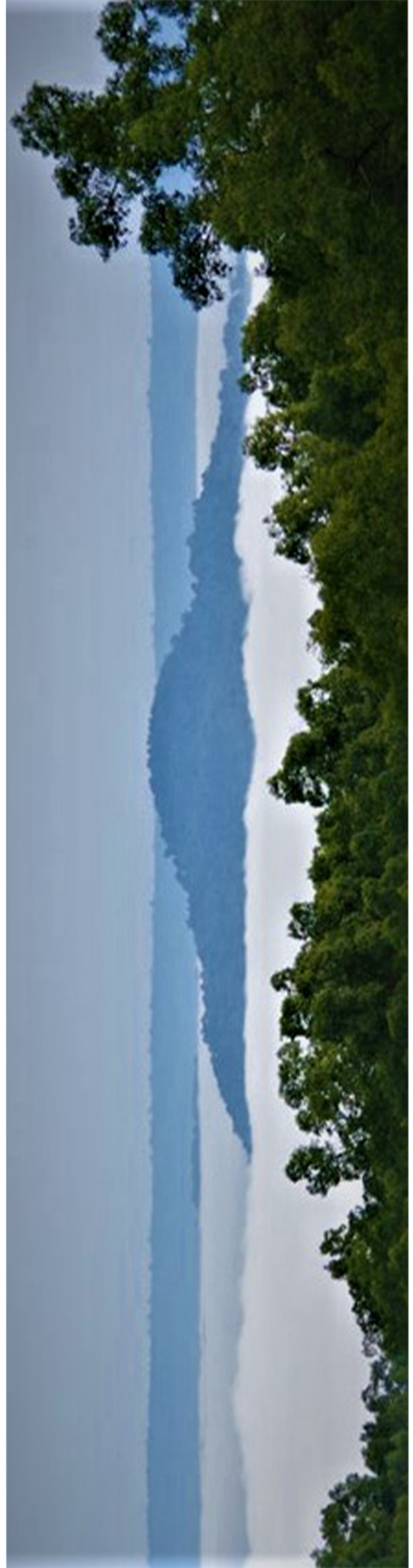
The local communities in the area have deep-rooted culture associated with the use and conservation of forest and natural resources.

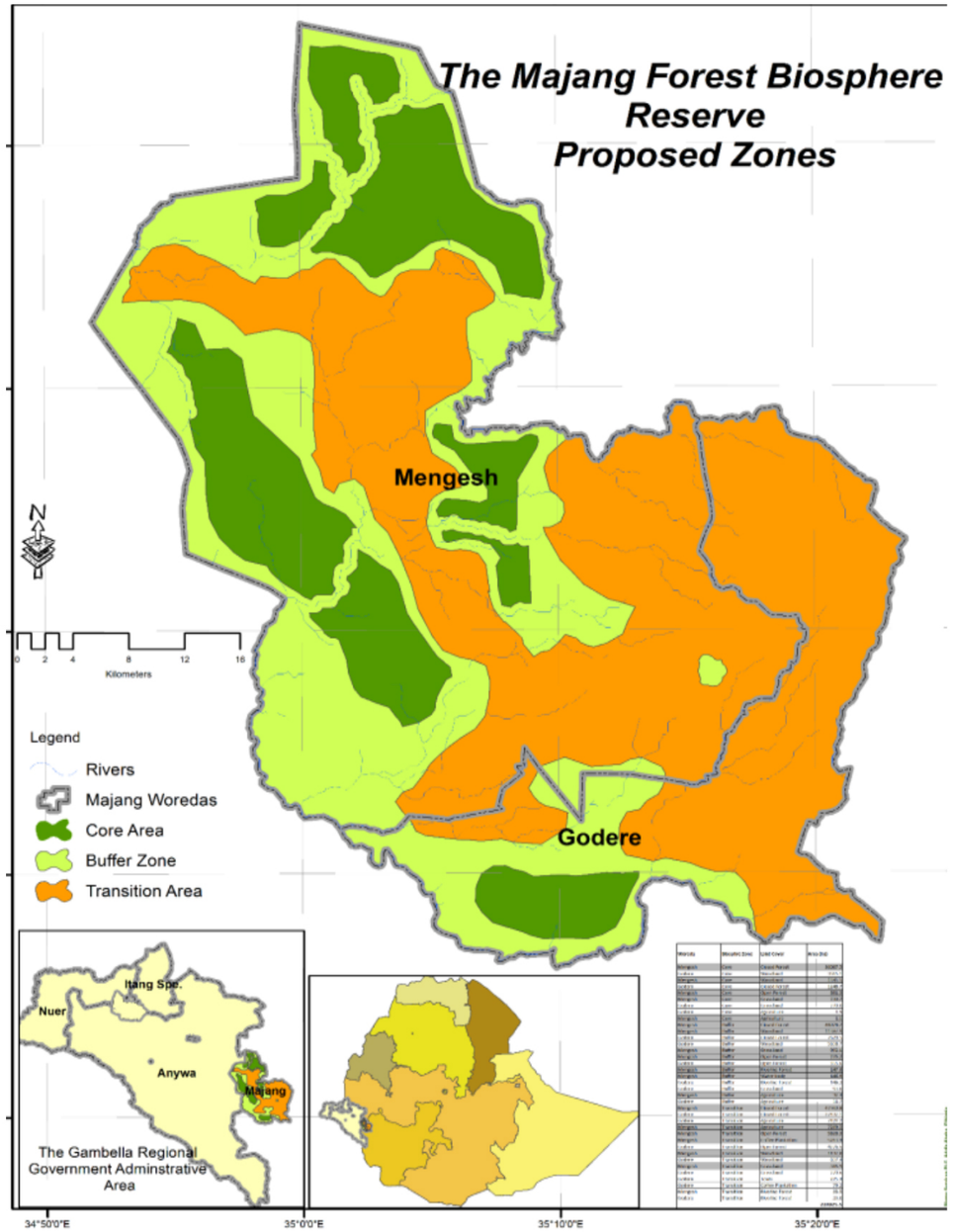
Watershed of regional and global importance

These forests play an important role in protection of watersheds that have local and international significance in the Nile basin, conservation of biodiversity, flood and erosion control, and carbon-sequestration to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Farmlands and homegardens

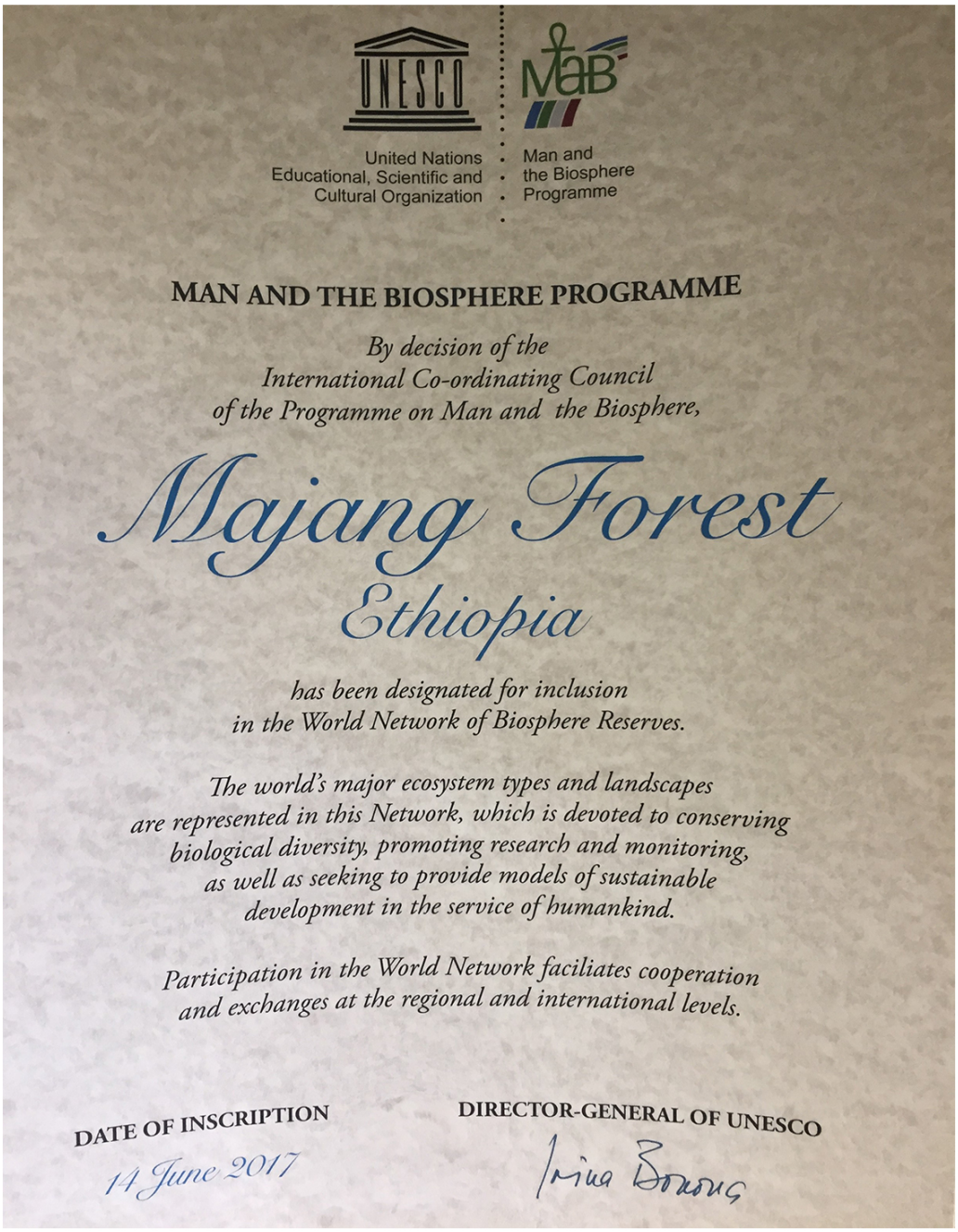
The croplands, homegardens, the managed forests and the natural forests, altogether form a characteristic cultural landscape in the region, depicting domestication stages and evidences of agricultural evolution.





Majang biosphere reserve in brief

Location: *Majang zone, Gambella peoples national regional state*
Total Area coverage: *224,924 hectares*
Core zone: *43882 hecs*
Buffer zone: *73397 hecs*
Transition zone: *107645 hecs*
Altitude: *1500-2500 m.a.s.l*
Population: *60,000*
Zone center: *Meti town*



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