

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Second Consultation between the International Support Group (ISG) for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme

UNESCO Headquarters (Paris), Room XIII (Bonvin Building)
3 March 2010, 15:00 - 17:30

REPORT

1. Mr N. Ishwaran, Secretary of the MAB Programme, opened the meeting explaining that Mr Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry Economy of Congo and Chair of the International Coordinating Council (ICC), was unable to attend, and so in his absence Mr Ishwaran asked permission of the participants for the meeting to be led by the MAB Secretariat.
2. The agenda of the meeting was adopted, and Mr Ishwaran presented the newly-published map of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) and updated participants on progress made in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013). He noted that progress on the MAP was mixed and to a certain extent MAB stakeholders were still in the process of understanding what the MAP means for them. Nonetheless, certain successes can be highlighted, such as initiatives in several countries to reform their MAB National Committees and biosphere reserves. The Draft Resolution on the MAB Programme and biosphere reserves at UNESCO's 35th General Conference was an important indicator of the growing profile of the programme. The Director-General will be reporting to the 36th General Conference in 2011 on progress made in the MAP implementation.
3. Mr Ishwaran updated participants on a number of current MAB activities, especially in relation to UNESCO's Priority Africa. These include the organization of an AfriMAB meeting to take place in Madagascar in May 2010; the expansion of the programme at the *Ecole régionale post-universitaire d'aménagement et de gestion intégrés des forêts et territoires tropicaux* (ERAIFT) in Kinshasa, for which MAB has the principal executing responsibility; the decision by OAPN, Spain to donate the Sultan Qaboos Award of US\$30,000 which it won to an educational project in biosphere reserves of Guinea-Bissau and other countries in Africa; the organization of a Congo Basin Biosphere Bio-Carbon Forum on 20-24 April 2010 in Brazzaville, Congo; and discussions with the African Development Bank, facilitated by Mr Djombo, the MAB Chair, about further developing the biosphere reserves in the Congo Basin as learning sites for sustainable development.
4. In other MAB developments, Mr Ishwaran noted the organization of an IberoAmerican Conference to be held in late 2010 prior to UNFCCC COP 16 in Mexico; the reinvention of the MAB urban-ecosystem programme with the collaboration of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; the development by EuroMAB of a new communications platform; participation of the MAB Secretariat in an expert workshop on World Heritage and Sustainable development in March 2010 in Brazil in order to explore WH and MAB

synergies; the establishment of an IGCP group to work on questions related to natural resource extraction in biosphere reserves; further development of biosphere reserves as 'learning places' for sustainable development in the context of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; discussions of joint activities for lake-biosphere reserves (such as Tonle Sap in Cambodia) with IHP; and MAB-activities related to the 2010 International Years of Biodiversity and Rapprochement of Cultures and 2011 International Year of Forests.

5. In response to a question from a participant regarding the content and objectives of regional MAB meetings, Ms Meriem Bouamrane of the MAB Secretariat noted that within the EuroMAB network, specific scientific meetings are sometimes organized on a regional level, and that the official meetings of the regional network are generally attended by biosphere reserve managers and national MAB focal points, and the reports of the meetings can be found on the MAB website. Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, also from the MAB Secretariat, explained that the IberoMAB Network is attended by the President of the MAB National Committees of the IberoMAB region. However, he pointed out that during 9-13 November this year, the 1st IberoAmerican Conference will take place in Puerto Morelos, Mexico. This Conference will bring together all MAB National Committees from the political side of the programme and all biosphere reserve managers from the more technical side. He described support within the regional network, particularly from Spain, for exploring transboundary biosphere models between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and said that the IberoAmerican Conference will also help to concretize a regional approach to the implementation of the MAP. Mr Sami Mankoto also informed participants about the AfriMAB model of financing the regional network in part through contributions of members.
6. Regarding the mid-term evaluation of the MAP in 2010, Mr Ishwaran indicated that a template for target-specific evaluation had been developed, and that the final mid-term evaluation report would be presented to the 23rd session of the MAB Council in 2011 and would form the basis for reporting to the 36th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.
7. Regarding the upcoming 22nd session of the MAB Council to be held at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) from 31 May to 4 June 2010, Mr Ishwaran noted that this session will be occurring one year after the 21st session of the Council Session, in accordance with the decision of the Council to meet on an annual basis and alternate between meetings in Paris (UNESCO Headquarters) and elsewhere. Following the election of new Member States to the MAB Council, a new Council Chair and other officials will be chosen. The 23rd session of the MAB Council will coincide in 2011 with the celebration of 40 years of the MAB Programme. Ways of commemorating this anniversary will be discussed at the 22nd Council session. One suggestion is to hold a scientific event focusing on MAB's role in interdisciplinary science co-operation and contributions to understanding and managing socio-ecological systems. Host countries for the 23rd session of the Council and related activities have not been determined, though some preliminary discussions are underway, and the 22nd Council session will take up these questions.
8. A participant observed that the follow-up to the General Conference Draft Resolution on MAB would likely depend to a certain degree on the MAB budget, and asked how that budget compares with other programmes in the Natural Sciences at UNESCO. Mr Ishwaran noted that the political support demonstrated by the Draft Resolution is already an important asset in potentially attracting further resources to the programme in the future. Likewise in response to a question about the budget for implementing the MAP,

Mr Ishwaran explained that there is no global figure for these activities and that different regions do manage to attract more or less support for their activities, but in general implementation must occur at all levels from the level of the individual biosphere reserve to the level of the WNBR as a whole.

9. Several participants asked about the revision of the statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves and the link between the Advisory Committee and the Executive Board. Mr Ishwaran affirmed that comments on the revision of the Advisory Committee statutes will be welcome for discussion at the MAB Council, and explained that while members of the Advisory Committee are chosen by the Director-General, for particularly important decisions regarding the Advisory Committee, such as the amendments to the statutes of the Advisory Committee, the Director-General as a matter would, of course, consult the Executive Board.
10. Mr Ishwaran thanked the participants and declared the Second Consultation between the International Support Group (ISG) for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme closed.