

Paris, 8 September 2010
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Third 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)
8 July 2010, 15:00 - 17:30

REPORT

1. Mr N. Ishwaran, Secretary of the MAB Programme, opened the meeting and gave a presentation on the major outcomes and conclusions of the 22nd Session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme, held at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) from 31 May to 4 June 2010.
2. Mr Ishwaran updated participants on the new composition of the Bureau of the MAB/ICC, which is now chaired by Prof. Chung-il Choi (Republic of Korea). Argentina, Austria, Benin, Russia and Egypt have been elected Vice-Chairpersons. Prof. Valery Neronov, the Vice-Chair from Russia was appointed Rapporteur. Mr Ishwaran furthermore informed the Delegates of the inclusion of 13 new Biosphere Reserves into the World Network; Ethiopia and Zimbabwe have their first-ever biosphere reserves recognized by UNESCO. Information was also provided on biosphere reserves that were withdrawn (Sweden and UK), 8 deferrals and 7 extensions including some name changes. 12 Periodic review reports on biosphere reserves had also been received and examined by the Council. The Michel Batisse Award for Case Study on BR Management was awarded to Dr. Fabio Kalesnik from Argentina; 12 MAB Young Scientists Awards (10 under the RP budget and 2 sponsored by Austria) were granted of which six were for women; Indonesia and Kenya had 2 awards each.
3. Mr Ishwaran then informed the Delegates about the efforts made to fully implement the periodic review process for biosphere reserves. The 114 biosphere reserves that have never implemented periodic reviews have been invited by the ICC to do so before 2013. Recent work on the transformation of pre-1995 to post-1995 sites has generated lessons and experiences which are to be shared via a workshop to be hosted by Egypt. This discussion concerns also sites that cannot be transformed from pre- to post-Seville design; some of them that are important for global environmental research could be considered as "MAB research sites" which would be a new set of sites and hence would require new criteria and processes for their establishment. Austria has proposed to host a meeting to discuss the potential for creating such a set of "MAB research sites" in 2011. An electronic work group, Chaired by Prof. Robert Barbault, Chair of MAB France,

is currently studying possible revisions to the periodic review and nomination forms.

4. Of special interest were also the interim evaluation of MAP implementation and the concerns of some Member States of too much reporting obligations taking time away from the focus on implementation and learning. A report on the interim evaluation (2008-2010) of MAP will be elaborated by the Secretariat and reviewed by 23rd session of the ICC and with the recommendations of the ICC submitted to the 36th session of the General Conference in 2011.
5. Mr. Ishwaran informed the Delegates about capacity building initiatives, such as ERAIFT, and how could it be best used by UNESCO for meeting capacity building in Africa within a global environment of increasing financial constraints. He drew attention to the various suggestions from ICC Member States during the Council session on the experience of TVET (Germany) & e-learning applicable to ERAIFT, the legal status of ERAIFT within UNESCO (category I/II centres), the transfer of the ERAIFT model to other parts of Africa (Cote d'Ivoire), including English-speaking Africa (Zimbabwe) and to ecosystems such as drylands (Egypt) and Mountains (Russia). He provided information on South-South Co-operation based on co-operation between ERAIFT, Federal University of Para, Belem, Brazil and MAB Indonesia launched in Jeju, ROK in 2009.
6. Mr. Ishwaran informed that the next ICC will be held in Germany in 2011, and about several ideas to commemorate 40th anniversary events, such as having several countries undertaking activities on the same day; 40 biosphere reserves internationally connected and launching special initiatives. Countries were invited to send others suggestions to Secretariat before 31 August 2010 to enable the Secretariat to produce a concept note before end of September 2010 as requested by the ICC.
7. In response to several questions from Delegations, Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt informed 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 as well as the biosphere reserve managers. He also informed that activities on South-South Cooperation started in UNESCO already in 1992. Mr Ishwaran informed that the next AfriMAB meeting will take pace in Nairobi, Kenya, 12-18 September 2010 and that ERAIFT is already exploring how its work can extend beyond French-speaking countries as part of its current phase 2009-2013 supported by a 4.22 million Euros grant from the European Commission.
8. Mr Ishwaran introduced point 3 of the agenda on the work of the ISG on Statutory Documents of MAB and the WNBR under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Permanente Delegate of Egypt, Mr Mohamed El-Zahaby and made some suggestions concerning next steps in the organization of the work. Mr Ishwaran raised the question whether the document on 'Implementing the MAB Programme and Promoting the Actions of WNBR' needs to be considered statutory? He drew

attention to a table that compared the provisions of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP; 2008) and the Statutory Framework for WNBR (1995) and asked the Delegates' views on whether the level of incompatibilities seriously warrant review and the updating of Statutory Framework for WNBR of 1995.

9. Some Delegates asked about the procedures of the review of the documents, the involvement of the countries and the submission of the final versions of the relevant documents to the Advisory Committee, the ICC, the Executive Board, the General Conference. Suggestions were also made that all decisions and discussions on statutory documents should only take place in Paris in order to give full possibility to the Permanent Delegations to participate in the discussions.
10. Mr Ishwaran informed the Delegates that all documents will be sent out immediately after the ISG meeting by mail and comments from the Delegations were invited by 31 August 2010. Some of the documents, i.e. statutes and rules of procedures of MAB/ICC and the statutes of the international advisory committee for biosphere reserves have already been presented to the ICC in Jeju in Korea and to the Advisory Committee session held in Paris in January 2010. All changes to these three documents from these past sessions of the ICC and the Advisory Committee have been incorporated. For amendments to the Statutes of the Advisory Committee, approval would be sought from the Executive Board. In the case of the Statutes of the MAB/ICC the General Conference must be the approving body for any changes and amendments. All proposed amendments will be submitted to the Legal Affairs Department of UNESCO for clearance. Discussion on all documents will be done in the upcoming ISG meetings, under the Chairpersonship of the Distinguished Delegate of Egypt, to be finalised for the upcoming 23rd Session of the MAB Council to be held Germany in mid-2011. Once the amended statutes of the MAB/ICC are adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, the ICC may amend its own Rules of Procedure accordingly.
11. Before the conclusion of the meeting, remarks were made on the role of MAB in the Global Climate Change discussions and on the International Symposium "Urban Futures and Human and Ecosystem Wellbeing" – 27-30 September 2010 as a contribution to the theme "Better Cities, Better Life" of the World Expo, Shanghai 2010. Countries thanked Mr Ishwaran for providing this information.
12. Mr Ishwaran thanked all the Delegates and declared the Third Consultation between the International Support Group (ISG) for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme closed.