

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**  
Twenty-seventh session

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**ITEM 16 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: INFORMATION ON THE IUCN PROJECT  
“IMPROVING THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF PROTECTED AREAS WITH  
OVERLAPPING INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS”**

1. At the 2012 World Conservation Congress held on Jeju Island (Republic of Korea), Resolution WCC-2012-Res-052 was adopted which calls for the establishment of an integrated management system for UNESCO protected areas, i.e. Biosphere Reserves, natural World Heritage sites and Global Geoparks<sup>1</sup>. This resolution *inter alia* expresses its concern that different management guidelines, time cycles and periods provided and monitored by different authorities impedes the establishment of a comprehensive management regime for individual sites that carry multiple international designations. For example, periodic review cycles for Biosphere Reserves are set every ten years, while reporting for World Heritage sites is requested every six years, and regular evaluation for sites recognized under the Global Geoparks Network takes place every four years. Moreover, the resolution states its conviction that an integrated management system of UNESCO international protected areas is the most assured method for conservation of wild fauna and flora, and that this approach to management complies with the fundamental concept of IUCN and contributes to the sustainable use of ecosystems. In its operative paragraph, Resolution WCC-2012-Res-052 “requests the [IUCN] Director General, based on the learnings of the Jeju experience<sup>2</sup> and in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, to develop an integrated conservation management manual that includes guidelines and other prescriptions for the systematic conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, to develop and standardize a management system for protected areas including the integration of the different cycles for re-evaluation of designations, and to distribute it as a model for IUCN Members.”

2. Thanks to extra-budgetary funding provided by the Korean Self-governing Province of Jeju and the Republic of Korea, IUCN is currently carrying out a project entitled “Improving the integrated management system of protected areas with overlapping designations” with a view to implementing the above-mentioned resolution. In addition to Biosphere Reserves, natural World Heritage sites and Global Geoparks, the project also addresses wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. To date (February 2015) there are 2,186 Ramsar sites, 197 natural World Heritage sites and 31 mixed World Heritage sites, 631 Biosphere Reserves and 111 Global Geoparks the world over. Of these, there are 178 sites with dual Ramsar Convention and Biosphere Reserve designations, 105 sites with dual natural World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve designation, 85 sites that carry both the designations of the

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<sup>1</sup> The IUCN Resolution refers to *protected areas* while, strictly speaking, biosphere reserves and global geoparks are not protected areas as such but they *contain* protected areas. It should also be noted that the UNESCO General Conference will decide, at its 38<sup>th</sup> session in autumn 2015, on the acceptance of the Global Geoparks Network under the auspices of UNESCO.

<sup>2</sup> Jeju Island (Republic of Korea) is currently the only site in the world which has a quadruple international designation: it is a biosphere reserve, a natural world heritage site, a global geopark and a Ramsar site.

Ramsar and the World Heritage conventions, 13 sites which are listed as Global Geoparks and World Heritages sites, 12 sites figures on the Ramsar site list and the list of the Global Geoparks Network and 8 sites are both Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks. Fifty-eight sites even have a triple designation in any combination of the four designating bodies.

3. A Guidance document will be published in four languages<sup>3</sup> for the 2016 World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i (USA). This document is intended as a manual for managers of sites with multiple designations, but also for national authorities in charge of the above-mentioned protected areas as well as for the UNESCO and Ramsar Convention secretariats and other international bodies and programmes (e.g. FAO, UNEP-WCMC, European Union for Natura 2000 sites). The Guidance will be a resource book specifying the particular objectives, nomination procedures and operations of each of the four designating bodies. Thanks to a number of case studies of sites with multiple designations, challenges for the management of such sites will be highlighted, and also ways of overcoming such challenges through an emphasis on the complementarity and the synergy that multiple international site designations can offer.

4. The MAB International Coordinating Council is invited to take note of this ongoing IUCN Project. Moreover, the MAB Council may wish to provide advice on how management of sites with multiple international designations may be improved at the site level as well as at the national and global levels.

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<sup>3</sup> The publication will be produced in English, French, Korean and Spanish.