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ITEM 10 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: PROPOSALS FOR NEW BIOSPHERE RESERVES AND EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO BIOSPHERE RESERVES THAT ARE PART OF THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (WNBR)

1. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions to biosphere reserves that are already part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) were considered at the last meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 2 to 5 February 2015.

2. The members of the Advisory Committee examined 26 proposals for new biosphere reserve (with 2 transboundary sites and 8 re-submissions of proposals for new biosphere reserve) and formulated their recommendations regarding specific sites in line with the recommendation categories as follows:

- *Nominations recommended for approval:* the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional information is needed.
- *Nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information:* the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve subject to receiving the specific information as requested by the Advisory Committee. If the information is received by the Secretariat by 30 April 2015, it will be considered by the MAB ICC at its next session to be held from 8 to 12 June 2015 and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR.
- *Nominations recommended for deferral:* the proposed site is recommended for deferral as it does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and/or major clarifications with regard to the application of the Statutory Framework to the proposed area is requested by the Advisory Committee. The relevant national authorities are therefore invited to revise the nomination and/or provide the requested clarifications for submission to the MAB Secretariat at their earliest convenience.

3. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the attached recommendations of the IACBR as well as the additional information received by the Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information and nominations recommended to be deferred. The Bureau will recommend for the consideration of the MAB ICC final decisions on all sites included in this document.

4. The MAB ICC is invited to decide on the new sites for inclusion in the WNBR and extensions of biosphere reserves already included in the WNBR that could be approved.

Recommendations of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves:

Nominations recommended for approval

Patagonia Azul (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this proposal by Argentina. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the south of the country on the coast of the Chubut province, and covers an area of 3,102,005 ha of which the core area is 197,315 ha; buffer zone: 2,000,000 ha and transition area: 706,488 ha. The proposed site encompasses a coastal area with the greatest biodiversity on the Argentinean coastline. It also includes important breeding, feeding and migration sites of different species of birds and mammals. For example, Punta Tombo hosts the largest colony of Magellanic penguins in the world, accounting for almost 40% of the global population.

The area also constitutes a representative sample of the Patagonian Steppe, the Patagonian Southwest Atlantic, plains and plateaus. The specific geographical characteristics combined with numerous inaccessible areas and over fifty islands and coastal islands, have resulted in pristine areas that protect the essential biodiversity of this region of Patagonia. The area also includes archaeological and paleontological sites of unique value, including an extensive petrified forest.

The proposed biosphere reserve has a very low human population density, the only town being Camarones. The permanent population amounts to 1,680 residents and a seasonal population of 1,842 inhabitants. Of these, five percent belong to indigenous ethnic groups, including the Mapuche, Tehuelche and Ona. Today, most of the territory is occupied by ranches or rural establishments dedicated to sheep rearing, with wool production constituting another economic activity of importance. The southern part of the reserve is linked with the origins of 'Lana Camarones', fine-quality wool made locally since the nineteenth century. Other activities include fishing, tourism, seaweed extraction and small and medium-scale cultivation of native bivalves.

Different research groups from universities, research centres and NGOs are studying the vegetation, fauna and economic resources of the proposed site to identify potential risks, as well as solutions and mitigation mechanisms. The province of Chubut also has accumulated experience in the field of biosphere reserves, as the newly designated Peninsula Valdés and part of the Andino Norpatagónica biosphere reserves are located in this province.

The Advisory Committee considered that there is significant potential for exchange and learning opportunities with the two other biosphere reserves located in the province. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

Rio Grande (Bolivia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this proposal from Bolivia. The proposed site is located in the basin of Rio Grande, a major river system in the department of Santa Cruz, and encompasses an area of 803,754 ha (core area: 71,317 ha; buffer zone: 54,559 ha; transition area: 677,878 ha). The site presents an opportunity to protect the existing biological corridors for flora species, such as the North Yungas and Boliviano-Tucumano forests in the south and the Interandinos Dry Forests, as well as the Andean region and the Chaco Plain.

Various landscapes can be observed in the region due to topographical variations, which ranges from 427m to 2,977m. In the western part of the proposed biosphere reserve the mountains of the eastern Andes cross the territory from north to south, intersected by wide and narrow valleys. In the eastern part the landscape is characterized by flood plains. This diverse altitudinal range has led to a number of different habitat types, including lakes and rivers, tall deciduous and dry forests, lush vegetation, epiphytes and ferns, high-altitude grasslands and dry forests in the plains.

The area is populated by 18,882 inhabitants distributed across eight municipalities. Agriculture and livestock are the main economic activities. Agricultural activity differs depending on the area of production – the lowlands of the southeastern region produce tropical crops (cassava, citrus, bananas, rice), while the valleys of the central area produce potatoes, green vegetables, corn and tobacco. Meanwhile, the wet ecosystems of the upper zone specialize in tubers, cereals and some fruits. Livestock production is characterized by the breeding of domestic animals, such as cattle, swine, poultry and goats. Other economic activities include handicrafts, baked goods and meat processing.

The proposed biosphere reserve has been promoted by an association of local authorities (Mancomunidad de Municipios), which will be responsible for future management of the area. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

Lake Tana (Ethiopia). Situated in the north-western part of Ethiopia, this proposed biosphere reserve comprises Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia, the main source of the Blue Nile, which provides important ecosystem services. The area is a hotspot of biodiversity, internationally known as an Important Bird Area and is of global importance for agricultural genetic diversity. The area is characterized by an enormous heterogeneity of land uses and natural ecosystems; the communities were actively involved in the identification, planning and zoning of the core areas and buffer zones. Out of the 2,031,820 inhabitants of the proposed site, approximately 15,000 are living on the islands of Lake Tana. The area has a unique cultural, historical, geological and aesthetic value with numerous monasteries and churches dating back to the 13th century. Church forests around Lake Tana host outstanding diversity of tree and shrub species and medicinal plants and play an important role in the conservation of biodiversity.

The proposed site covers an area of 695,885 ha (core areas: 22,841 ha incl. 15,142 ha aquatic; buffer zones 187,567 ha incl. 156, 997 ha aquatic and transition area 485,477 ha, incl. 131,179 ha aquatic). The Advisory Committee noted that some core areas lack presence of buffer zones and in such cases the transition area which is adjacent to core areas take over the function of the buffer due to prevalence of water bodies. However, in these individual cases, the function of the zonation is not affected.

The main economic activities are agriculture, fishing, national and international tourism (religious and recreational) and sand mining. The enhancement of production and marketing of local products from the proposed biosphere reserve through cooperatives and small scale businesses will be intensified in close collaboration with local tourism service and hotel sector. A logo for local products from Lake Tana will be developed. For indigenous communities, the proposed biosphere reserve would aim to rekindle an appreciation of their traditional cultures, knowledge and skills of sustainable living within the environment. Restoration of land could create job opportunities for local communities and generate income. In 2013, an action plan for Bahir Dar as green model city was successfully developed and presented to stakeholders and the public. The management plan is in concordance with national, regional and local development plans. Public private partnership will be stimulated as a strategy for development.

The Advisory Committee commended the country for this high quality proposal and recommended that this proposal be **approved**. The Advisory Committee requested the country to submit an improved zonation map distinguishing each zone by colour and a hydrological map by June 2015.

Cacique Lempira, Señor de las Montañas (Honduras). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal submitted by Honduras for Cacique Lempira, Señor de las Montañas. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the western part of the country and covers a total area of 168,634.01 ha (core area: 15,494.88 ha; buffer zone: 50,111.33 ha; transition area: 103,027.89 ha). The area forms part of the eco-region of Pine-Oak Forests and Humid Tropical Forest, considered of great importance due to the diversity of conifers and oaks, and the large number of endangered and endemic species. The high rate of endemism among the wildlife has led

Conservation International to designate the eco-region an Endemic Bird Area and a Biodiversity Hotspot. Furthermore, the area is considered a vital stopover area for neo-tropical migratory birds.

The Celaque Mountain National Park presents the most diverse floristic structure of all cloud forests in the country. The cloud forest is also the only example in the country to integrate continental waters and, as such, is the most important protected area in western Honduras. The National Park also contains Cerro Las Minas, the highest mountain in Honduras (2,849m), while its rivers supply water to over 100,000 people in 120 nearby communities.

The total population of the proposed biosphere reserve amounts to 153,850 inhabitants, who live mainly in the transition area. The majority belong to the Lenca (lord of the hill) ethnic group, which has a strong influence on cultural traditions, social organization, subsistence agriculture and other forms of production in the area. The predominant economic activity is traditional agriculture (87%), with the main crops being corn and beans, and increasingly coffee. Tourism is promoted in the city of Lempira, which receives local and international tourists in growing numbers. This biosphere reserve proposal includes a series of management tools, such as the strategic plans for municipal development, and environmental and risk management plans, which indicate a high level of adoption of the programme among the local municipality.

The Advisory Committee believes that there is a significant potential for exchange and learning opportunities with the tri-national Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

Bromo Tengger Semeru-Arjuno (Indonesia). This proposed site is located in the East Java province and has a total area of 413,374.56 ha. The core area is 78,144.50 ha, the buffer zone 96,349.55 ha and the transition area 238,880.51 ha. The core area consists of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (BTSNP), and Forest Protected Area of Raden Soerjo. It is reported that there are 1,025 species of flora of which 226 species are orchid and 260 species are medicinal and ornamental plants. Plant families commonly found in this area are Fagaceae, Moraceae and Anacardiaceae. Some of the mammal species found in the core area are included in IUCN red list species.

This area has both a long history and strong ambitions to promote sustainable development and serve as a potential beacon of good practice at regional, national and international levels. It is envisaged that the buffer zone will play an important role in terms of agriculture development especially for crops such as ornamental plants, fruits and vegetables. Another important production activity in the buffer zone is animal husbandry. Livestock farming of cattle, goats, sheep, horses, rabbits and chicken contribute to the local economy. Two local Universities – University of Brawijaya and University of Airlangga, together with LIPI (The Indonesian Institute for Sciences) have developed a comprehensive sustainability and environmental policy framework, especially focused on implementation of carbon reduction programmes, as well as biodiversity management.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and noted the on-going research activities in the area and the view to make this proposed site a natural laboratory for the local Universities in the province. It also noted with appreciation the detailed preliminary management plan which has been drafted for this site and encouraged the national authorities to pursue the design of an adaptive management plan, as has been stated in the nomination file with the involvement of all stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee also recommended to the national authorities to ensure that the indigenous people living in the core area maintain their traditional lifestyle and to take all necessary measures to reduce the impact of tourist activities in the core area.

Taka Bonerate-Kepulauan Selayar (Indonesia). The proposed site is located at the South of Sulawesi (Celebes) and belongs to South Sulawesi Province, Selayar Island Regency. It covers an area of about 4,410,736 ha. The core area is 530,765 ha consisting of 21 small islands, with a number of small fringing reefs and atolls. The buffer zone is 702,260 ha and the transition area is 3,177,711 ha. Mangrove forests in the area serve as a barrier against the fierce waves of sea and as such a shelter and spawning ground for various types of fish, and as a habitat for many species of fauna such as birds. The number of mangrove species is varied between 22 to 26 species of 14 families, such as the *Rhizophora stylosa* and *Ceriops tagal*. Several protected and threatened animals found at the proposed site include the scale turtle, green turtle, napoleon fish and mermaid.

The national authorities aim to make this site the leading area in coral reefs conservation and a major tourist destination in Sulawesi. A number of steps such as enhancing the protection of marine protected areas and enforcing the laws have been outlined to help them achieve these goals. Despite Selayar Island's remoteness, the presence of an active airstrip in Selayar Island (Benteng) represents an important condition for tourism development. The proposed site is managed under multi-stakeholder collaborative management that will support demonstration projects; environmental education and training. The area is dedicated as a learning laboratory for researchers, students, local government, NGOs, private sectors, the general public and other stakeholders in order to promote the biosphere reserve concept.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and commended the national authorities for the detailed information provided. It also acknowledged receipt of the additional information clarifying the existence of resident communities of about 6,673 people in the core area. It noted that these two communities known as enclave villages are not located within the conservation zone.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal be **approved**. The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to implement the mechanisms they have proposed such as enforcing the zonation system through dissemination of the legal information on the proposed biosphere reserve to the surrounding communities. The authorities are also encouraged to reinforce the sustainability of the traditional lifestyle of the local communities living in the core area.

Tang-e-Sayad and Sabzkuh (Islamic Republic of Iran). The proposed site is a combination of the preserves of two regions Tang-e- Sayad and Sabzkuh. The landscape of this region is described as very distinct with regard to the height and density of its plant coverage. The total area is 532,878 ha. The core area is 21, 234 ha, the buffer zone 241,862 ha and the transition area 269,782 ha. Land subsidence, geological activities and melting of ice caps have formed several wetlands in the area, where rare fauna such as the wild cat and tiger snake inhabit. Research shows that 22 fish species, including Pike barb and mesopotamian cat fish inhabit the Karun River. The Karun River is the biggest in Iran and runs through the proposed area. During the cold season the bushlands in the area welcome migratory birds such as white stork and greater flamingo.

The presence of several rivers and springs in the proposed site has led to an increment in the development of agriculture and animal husbandry. Local handicrafts such as carpet, felt, dhurrie rugs and folk festivals, also offer tourism development potential in the area. There are animal farms, industrial estates and farmlands in the transition zone. It is envisaged that local community participation will be an avenue for promoting the use of energy resources in an optimal and sustainable way. Communities will develop livestock and agriculture products as well as handicraft for both the local and international market. The national authorities also hope to develop the tourism and ecotourism potential of the area which would be managed by the local communities.

Shahr-e-Kurd University intends to establish the department of natural resources of central Zagros in Dorak Anari village, located in the proposed region. Due to the peculiar features of this

region such as its vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, etc., many visitors from other universities and other educational centers outside the area come to the region for research and educational purposes. The existence of the research center of Shahr-e-Kurd University in this region will lead to the optimal management and coherence of the related research and studies for the site.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this new nomination proposal and congratulated the national authorities for the detailed information provided in the nomination file. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation plans to revitalize lands around some parts of the protected zone in the proposed area, which have been degraded as a result of past grazing activities of domestic livestock. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved** and encouraged the national authorities to finalize the management plan of the proposed area for submission to the MAB Secretariat.

Ledro Alps and Judicaria (Italy). The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of this proposal from Italy which was deferred in 2014. The proposed area is located in the Trento region in northern Italy, between the Dolomite World Heritage Site and the famous Lake Garda, with a total surface area of 47,427 ha. The site is representative of the southern slopes of the central-eastern Alps, comprising different habitats (Alpine meadows, forest, grasslands, moorlands) alternating with traditional crops. Its strategic location contributes to a rich and varied biodiversity and to creating a corridor running north-south across the Alps, establishing territorial continuity between protected areas from the Po valley to the northern Alps. The proposed area includes two settlements around Lake Ledro and Lake Carera and is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites List. It is also a high valued tourist destination, with tourism representing the main source of income for a permanent population of 15,845. Agriculture is the main economic activity developing viticulture, olive, fruit and vegetable growing, animal husbandry among others.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as regards the 2014 MAB ICC recommendations. It noted that the authorities clarified the issue related to the conflict with hunters. It also noted with appreciation efforts made by the steering committee to improve communication and involvement of such stakeholders within the management of the proposed site. It noted with satisfaction that the status of the core areas and transition area as an ecological corridor were clarified even though the Advisory Committee would have wished that these corridors were suggested as buffer zones to improve the relevance of the zonation. More details provided concerning social studies and participatory approaches developed in the proposed area demonstrated the social anchoring of the creation process. It also noted that both the tourism management and Park management plans are now clearer.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal be **approved**. The governance and decision-making system described seems adequate but the authorities are encouraged to further refine it so that it can be more comprehensive and inclusive. Considering these management issues, the Advisory Committee encouraged the Italian authorities to improve the various surveys and to communicate their results to the MAB Secretariat.

Po Delta (Italy). The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of this proposal which was deferred in 2014. The proposal is located in northern Italy, which comprises 139,398 ha, covering 16 municipalities and populated by 120,000 inhabitants. The proposed area is a plain produced by the Po River's action and recent human activities. The area is the only delta in Italy, created by the confluence of the main branches of the river; coastal dune systems and sand formations, lagoons, fishing ponds, marshes, fossil dunes, canals and coastal pine forests, vast brackish wetlands and cultivated lands dominated by rice farming. These landscapes provide a unique identity and an extremely significant heritage of biodiversity due to their range of habitats. The proposed Po Delta Biosphere Reserve is an important tourist destination. Together with agriculture and fish farming, tourism is the main economic activity of local communities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the efforts to involve local stakeholders in the consultation process.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided which clarified the

functioning of the governance structure and filled the gap concerning social science and water quality studies. It highlighted the complex governance system of this proposed site with the Po Delta's Regional parks, the inter-regional Agency for the Po River, the universities, the 16 municipalities and local associations among others, and acknowledged the work done by all these institutions in order to discuss and design a project for all.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee encouraged cooperation with other biosphere reserves that contain delta ecosystems. It also recommended initiating future research to include socio-economic studies and tourism impact assessment.

Aksu-Zhabagly (Kazakhstan). This proposed site is located in the Western end of Talasskiy Alatau and Southern part of Karatau in the West Tien Shan. The total area of the site is 357,734ha. The core area is 131,934ha, the buffer zone 25,800ha and the transition area is 200,000ha. It has 48% of the total diversity of birds in the region, 72.5% of vertebrates, 221 out of 254 fungi species, 63 out of 80 moss species and 15 out of 17 of the vegetation types and 114 out of 180 plant formations of the Western Tien Shan. Approximately 2,500 insect species are currently registered on the territory of the proposed biosphere reserve.

The major land use of the region is agriculture. There are several crops growing on agricultural land: on the rain-fed area – cereal cultures (wheat and barley); on irrigated arable lands – forage cultures (corn, clover, alfalfa). Local people usually breed cattle, sheep (South-Kazakh Merino), goats, horses (trotters and Donskaya breed) and poultry (chicken and turkey). At present, the territory of the buffer zone is visited by scientists and amateurs interested in flora and fauna, as well as ordinary sightseers. Currently, the potential of eco-tourism for educational purposes is still insufficiently developed, although Aksu Zhabagly is one of the famous tourist spots for bird-watchers from all over the world. Research and monitoring activities undertaken in the proposed site include evaluation of the population dynamics of indicator bird species, registration of rare birds' observation and analysis of their distribution on the territory. Other studies carried out include the modern distribution of ungulate mammals on the territory of the site and adjacent territories, definition and condition of mammal populations, study of mammal biology and ethology.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged with appreciation the re-submission of this nomination proposal which was deferred in 2014 by the MAB Council on the premise that the national authorities do the following: i) Enlarge the buffer zone to protect the core area; ii) Undertake functions that will enhance the sustainable development functions of the site; iii) Explore the possibilities of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with the neighbouring countries.

The Advisory Committee noted that with the current zonation as shown on the map, the 2-3km wide area along the border between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have now been delineated as part of the buffer zone, to border that section of the core area which had no buffer zone in the previous nomination application. It also observed that activities such as ecotourism, stakeholder consultation, including the involvement of local communities in the management of the site are well outlined in the updated nomination proposal and that these activities will contribute to enhance the sustainable development of the area.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this updated nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Kazakhstan national authorities to pursue the possibilities of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with neighbouring countries.

Isla Cozumel (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal submitted by Mexico for Cozumel Island and the surrounding marine areas. The proposed biosphere reserve covers a total area of 134,624.17 ha, of which 87,736.54 ha are marine and 46,887.63 ha are terrestrial (core area: 21,974.81 ha; buffer zone: 68,321.23 ha; transition area: 44,328.13 ha). The island of

Cozumel has diverse marine and terrestrial ecosystems, is rich in amphibians and reptiles species, and has 31 endemic taxa. It is also home to three endemic species, which the IUCN considers to be critically endangered.

The main terrestrial ecosystems are medium semi-deciduous forest and mangroves. Medium semi-deciduous forest is rare in other parts of the state of Quintana Roo and hosts a substantial proportion of the endemic species of the island. Marine ecosystems constitute a significant portion of the proposed biosphere reserve, which is part of the second largest reef system in the world, the Mesoamerican Reef, home to 1,192 marine species. The area encompasses two Ramsar sites: Parque Nacional Arrecifes de Cozumel, nominated in 2005, and Manglares y Humedales del Norte de Isla Cozumel, nominated in 2009.

The permanent population of the proposed biosphere reserve amounts to 79,535 (2010 census) inhabitants. Human settlements are located mainly in the city of San Miguel, which comprises most of the tourism and urban infrastructure. Mayan heritage is a quintessential feature of Cozumel. There are more than 36 Mayan archaeological sites in the proposed biosphere reserve, including material remains such as ceremonial and commercial centres and pilgrimage routes. This heritage is the focus of archaeological studies in Cozumel that could be much enhanced by the creation of the reserve.

Farming activities take place essentially in small agricultural fields, contributing to the conservation of most of the territory. Only a few people in Cozumel are involved in farming and fishing; the rest of the population is engaged mostly in the tourism sector. Tourism is thus the most important economic activity on the island of Cozumel which receives a significant number of visitors each year (3,292,452 tourists in 2013). Due to this influx the rate of unemployment is low among the population, which enjoys an income level above the average of Mexico. One of the main objectives of the proposed biosphere reserve of Cozumel Island is to contribute to the development of an Integrated Urban Environmental Management System and to articulate a series of local planning instruments to address issues such as treatment of solid waste, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, energy efficiency, ecological zoning and sustainable tourism management.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that this site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee recommended creating new core areas in the coastal and marine zones in the near future.

Inlay Lake (Myanmar). This proposed site is situated in Taunggyi District, Southern Shan State covering a total area of 489,721 ha. The core area is 2,054 ha, the buffer zone is 125,602 ha and the transition area is 362,065 ha. Inlay Lake is a fresh water lake and it is reportedly the second largest inland lake in Myanmar. The Inlay Lake wetland ecosystem is home to 267 species of birds, out of which 82 are wetland birds, 43 species of freshwater fishes, otters and turtles. In addition, fresh water fish from the inland wetland constitute the major protein food source of the people of Inlay. Diverse flora and fauna species are mentioned and the lake is reported to be the nesting place for the globally endangered Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*).

In addition to its ecological importance, Inlay Lake is also unique for the socio-cultural aspects of local inhabitants, in the way they have adapted their lifestyle and livelihoods to their biophysical environment. Most of them earn their income by traditional methods of hydroponic farming, fishing and shifting cultivation. Farmers from one of the dominant ethnic groups in the Inlay Lake region, the Inthas, practice one of the most famous types of agriculture in the world, floating island agriculture, locally called 'Yechan', which is a form of hydroponic farming. Inlay Lake and its watershed provides several ecosystem services on which local people depend directly or indirectly; they include: clean air, clean water, cooler climate, tranquility and serenity, fish stokes, ecotourism resources and tourism destinations, part of water supply system for hydropower plant, sustainable livelihoods and community support.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged with appreciation the re-submission of the first biosphere

reserve nomination proposal from Myanmar which was deferred in 2014 by the MAB Council on the basis that there was a significant human population (60,000) in the core area. The MAB Council therefore requested the Myanmar national authorities to reclassify inhabited core areas under the buffer zone category whenever possible. The Advisory Committee noted that in accordance with the recommendation by the MAB Council the national authorities have revised the zonation such that the local inhabitants are in the buffer zone and significantly in the transition area. It also noted in the updated nomination proposal that no development activities are undertaken in the core area and tourism activities is very restricted.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this updated nomination proposal and considered that this is the beginning of a long-term cooperation between Myanmar and UNESCO MAB Programme with respect to issues of cultural and biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the site be **approved**. It recommended that the national authorities encourage organic farming with traditional crop varieties which require the use of less fertilizers and pesticides.

Gouritz Cluster (South Africa). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this proposed biosphere reserve located in the southern part of South Africa. The proposed site covers an area of 3,187,892.9 ha (605,675.3 ha terrestrial core area, 3,169.5 ha marine core area; 1,867,760.3 ha buffer zone and 711,287.8 ha transition area) with 261,240 inhabitants (2007 census). It is divided into four connected sectors (cluster biosphere reserve) ranging from sea level to 2,240m. The Advisory Committee recognized the uniqueness of the area which is the only place in the world where three recognized biodiversity hotspots (Fynbos, Succulent Karoo and Maputoland-Tongoland-Albany) converge. The site has a high endemism of plant species (1,325 species including 182 Succulent Karoo endemics and 92 Red List species) and threatened invertebrates including seven endemic species of the enigmatic beetle genus *Colophon* and 14 butterfly species. It provides a migratory route for large mammals such as the leopard and serves as a nursery for marine species. It encompasses three units of a UNESCO World Heritage site of archaeological relevance to humankind. The area is critical for water resources especially in the current climate change situation.

Evidenced by an impressive number of supporting letters, the biosphere reserve nomination process, which started in 2005, has been highly participative like the governance structure which is now officially established. The area is facing deep rooted socio-economic challenges (high unemployment, wide-spread poverty, sprawling informal settlements with inadequate services, rising HIV and crime rates) that the proposed biosphere reserve will contribute to address. One promising way is to solve youth unemployment by building grassroots models of pro-poor enterprises and employment development connected to biodiversity economy, which will foster eco-tourism in the region.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for the improvement of the zonation pattern which now comprises of well delimited patches of core areas, buffer zones and transition areas with well-defined criteria conforming to the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the extensive stakeholder consultations undertaken during the nomination process. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to consolidate the overall management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.

Magaliesberg (South Africa). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this proposed biosphere reserve covering an area of 357,870.0 ha (58,212.0 ha core area, 109,561.0 ha buffer zone and 190,097.0 ha transition area) located between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg in the east and Rustenburg in the west with 262,106 inhabitants. The site lies at the interface of two great African biomes – the Central Grassland Plateaux and the sub-Saharan savannah – with remnants of a third biome, the Afro-montane forest. The rich biodiversity which need to be conserved include floral species such as *Aloe peglerae* and *Frithia pulchra* which are unique biological wonders associated with the proposed site while faunal species include *Myosorex varius*, *Hippotragus niger* and 443 bird species constituting 46.6% of total bird species

in the Southern African sub-region. In addition, the area is endowed with scenic beauty, unique natural features, rich cultural heritage value, and archaeological interest with the Cradle of Humankind, which is part of World Heritage site with 4 million years of history.

The proposed site, facing a high level of unemployment and poverty, is adjacent to major urban infrastructure which impacts its development pattern and economy dominated by primary activities: agriculture, mining, urban development and tourism. The Advisory committee noted with appreciation that the implementation of the biosphere management plan would create a number of alternative community opportunities in partnership with private sector and mitigate industrial impacts. It shall stimulate conservation and promote inter alia sustainable tourism, farming and living (solar power, water saving) practices. A strong brand identity will be developed.

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the improvement of the zonation pattern which excludes the Pelindaba nuclear center and its surrounding area. Based on additional consultation process, the revised zonation conforms to the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a map with only one type of buffer zone and encouraged them to establish the permanent coordinating body derived from the current highly participative Board structure.

Macizo de Anaga (Spain). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of the Macizo de Anaga nomination. This new proposal takes into account the previous recommendations of the Council, made in 2014, by incorporating the marine and coastal areas into the proposed biosphere reserve. The proposed site is located in the northeast of the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands. The total area covers 48,727.61 ha, of which 15,489.01 ha are terrestrial and 33,238.6 ha are marine (core area: 1,973.58 ha; buffer zone: 9,335,46 ha; transition area: 44,328.13 ha).

Macizo de Anaga hosts significant faunal diversity of reptiles, birds and fish, and in particular invertebrates present in large numbers, with 1,900 species recorded. The proposed site consists of four protected natural areas – a Rural Park and three Integral Natural Reserves, as well as areas that form part of the Natura 2000 network, including a Special Bird Protection Area and Special Areas of Conservation. From a geological point of view the massif is one of the oldest areas on the island with rocks dating back 7 million to 9 million years. Over this long period the area has experienced cycles of volcanic and erosive activity, the result of which is a rich geological and geomorphological mosaic.

In total, 22,249 people live permanently in the area of the proposed biosphere reserve. All residents are concentrated in the transition area. Historically, agriculture, livestock farming (especially goat breeding), forestry and fishing have been the main economic activities, dating back to the first human settlements. The advent of tourism in the 1960s, better offers of revenue, and a reduction in the number of schools resulted in the migration of the population from rural areas to the closest urban areas (Santa Cruz, La Laguna).

The Advisory Committee recognized that the proposed biosphere reserve represents an opportunity to promote this culture heritage combined with the development of sustainable tourism. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

Meseta Iberica (Spain/Portugal). The Advisory Committee welcomed this joint submission from Portugal and Spain. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve encompasses the provinces of Salamanca and Zamora in Spain and Terra Quente and Fria in Portugal, and covers an area of 1,132,606 ha (core area: 106,934 ha; buffer zone: 636,654 ha; transition area: 389,018 ha). It includes a wide variety of landscapes, orographic elements and different soil uses. Altitudes in this area vary from 100 meters to 2,000 meters above sea level. The area contains many flagship species, some of which have been the subject of conservation projects, such as the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), European otter (*Lutra lutra*), and Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus*

signatus).

A total of 304,627 people live in the proposed site with only a small number inhabiting the core area. The area also includes built heritage dating back to Roman times and the middle Ages. The remains of forts, castles and walled enclosures in localities such as San Felices de los Gallegos in Salamanca bear witness to frequent wars between Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms during the Middle Ages. This area also boasts a unique cultural heritage manifested in the architecture, customs, traditions and folklore. Ancient traditions such as the use of nomadic livestock are reflected in a network of transhumance paths, known as the Cañadas Reales, which were added in 2007 to the Tentative List for future World Heritage inscription.

The Advisory Committee recognized that the proposed biosphere reserve has the potential to enhance local sustainable activities such as the production of renewable energies, and represents a central contribution to the expansion of sustainable tourism. In addition, the new incomes for local communities and the cooperation between both countries are predicted to reverse the present rural exodus and revitalize this territory.

Although in the northern part of the proposed biosphere reserve, the core area is not entirely covered by a buffer zone, the area is surrounded by a Natura 2000 protected area, which is located outside the proposed area. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved** and advised the national authorities to strengthen cooperation with the Natura 2000 protected area.

Langbiang (Vietnam). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposed site which is located in Lam Dong Province. It has a total area of 275, 439 ha. The size of the core area is 34,943 ha, the buffer zone 72,232 ha and the transition area is 168,264 ha. Part of the Bidoup Nui Ba National park where the national policy of payment for ecological services (PES) was first practiced is the core area. Biodiversity of this region is very high, including many endangered species in Viet Nam and on the International Red Lists. The core area will create a biodiversity corridor, maintaining the integrity of 14 tropical ecosystems that remain in the east of Southern Viet Nam in particular and in Viet Nam in general. It is also the habitat of many species of wildlife, including species classified as rare, endangered, and recorded in Vietnam's Red Data Book such as the Sun Bear.

It is envisaged that the proposed site will contribute to supporting and fostering economic development, human resource development, socio-cultural and ecological sustainability. Community participation in nature conservation and living standard will be improved through activities such as fire prevention and fire fighting for forests. Agriculture, forestry and the fishery sectors are the main sources of employment for the local communities. Among the cultivated crops, flowers, coffee and tea were the strongest in terms of revenue generation in the region. There are a number of planned investment projects for the core area and the buffer zone with the view to improving its overall management and protection. Research work on fauna and flora and diversity of other resources were also reported.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this new nomination proposal and congratulated the national authorities for the detailed information provided. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the involvement of the local communities, especially the indigenous people in the design and management of the proposed site. It also noted the additional information provided about how the national authorities manage to prevent the livelihood activities of the 1,182 indigenous people who live in the core area from impacting on the integrity of the area. The Advisory Committee lauded the national authorities for empowering the indigenous people through the successful practice of PES scheme and also by employing people from the ethnic minority as rangers.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee advised that the national authorities develop an integrated management plan to cover the three zones of the proposed biosphere reserve. The authorities are also requested to provide a topographical map of the Bidoup Nui Ba national park showing clearly its boundaries.

Nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information

Hanma (People's Republic of China). The proposed site is located in Inner Mongolia and it is described as the important part of the Taiga distributed in China. It protects diversity of forest ecosystems and wetland ecosystems. The proposed site covers a total surface area of 148,948 ha, which consist of a core area of 46,510 ha, a buffer zone of 78,850 ha and a transition area of 23,588 ha. The natural vegetation is intact, owing to very limited interaction with humankind. The cold temperate coniferous forest is the best preserved forest type in China and is of high scientific value. The vegetation plays a significant role in protecting water resources, performing water purification, maintaining the ecological safety (balance/equilibrium) in the Heilongjiang area and along the Jiliuhe River, as well as supporting the rare wildlife.

Forest products from this site, such as bilberry, blueberry and other wild fruit, contribute to the socio-economic development of the communities in the area. With the development of tourism, Hanma Nature Reserve has been searching for a path to build tourism as the pillar industry. The authorities believe that the development of ecological tourism in Hanma Nature Reserve will be beneficial not only economically but also environmentally and socially. By way of logistic support, the national authorities have invested in infrastructure development such as the establishment of the "National Station for Epidemic Disease Control and Resource Inspection in Hanma Natural Reserve". It is also planned that the proposed site will cooperate with universities, colleges and research institutions to study jointly the structural functions and succession process of forest ecological systems and wetland ecosystems at the proposed site.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this nomination proposal which was deferred in 2014 by the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for providing additional information on the local community participation in the management of the site to the MAB Council. It noted that this site has a vital role to play in terms of sustaining the indigenous culture of the Ewenke Tribal community whose livelihood depends on the resources of this area.

The Advisory Committee observed that in accordance with the MAB Council's recommendation the national authorities have changed the zonation of the proposed site such that the buffer zone now surrounds the core area except the northern part. In view of this, the Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to submit more information on the legal status of the outer zone north of the boundary of the proposed core area. The Advisory Committee also requested for the signature of the authorities of the Heilongjiang province who are in charge of the management of eastern buffer zone. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that this site be **approved pending** the fulfillment of the above requests by 30 April 2015.

Gorges du Gardon (France). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal by France. The proposed area is located in the Gard department in Southern France. The proposed area covers a total surface of 45,501 hectares (core area 7,800 ha, buffer zone: 13,907 ha and transition area 23,794 ha), with 26 municipalities (250,000 inhabitants) and includes the cities of Uzes in the north and Nimes in the south as well as the Pont du Gard, a World Heritage site inscribed in 1985 located in the core area. The proposed area is typical Mediterranean landscape, with scrubland, green oaks, the Gardon River and cliffs, and contains endangered and protected species such as Egyptian vultures, Bonelli's eagle and the Woodcock orchid. This area is known for its rich cultural, architectural and historical heritage. The main human activities are agriculture, tourism (450,000 visitors per year) and services (64 % of the economic institutions surveyed). The main agricultural activities include wine production located in the buffer zone which employs numerous inhabitants. In addition, a limited but quality olive oil production is done close to Nimes since 2006 (Picholine) as well as *Tuber melanosporum* (truffles) production, herbal plants and aromatics.

Fourteen municipalities, as well as public and private sectors have been involved in the several

consultation phases of the proposal in order to design the final management plan. Nine pilot schemes are focusing on sustainable agriculture, environmental education, environmental research and protection. Several events and meetings were organized for the general public on the control of urbanization. The proposed site will be managed by a joint union *Syndicat mixte de Gorges du Gardon* in cooperation with local partners and on-going programmes such as Agenda 21.

The Advisory Committee noted that there are several villages located adjacent to the core area where there are no buffer zones and that some of them were undergoing high urbanization processes. It therefore recommended that the proposal be **approved pending** reception of zonation map with the villages close to the core areas being surrounded by buffer zones to protect the core area or clarification on effective conservation management arrangement on this issue. It further requested clarification on the governance and coordination mechanism for the proposed area once the Parc naturel regional is established.

Agasthyamala (India). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposed site which is located in the southernmost end of the Western Ghats with a towering peak of 1,868 m above mean sea level. It covers an area of 350,000 ha – mostly tropical forest ecosystem, falls in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu and Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala, Southern India. The core area is 113,500 ha, the buffer zone 144,500 ha and the transition area is 92,000 ha. The site is reported as one of the hot spots in the Western Ghat. The area harbors 2,254 species of higher plants, which include about 405 endemics. It is also a unique genetic reservoir of cultivated plants especially for cardamom, jamune, nutmeg, pepper and plantain. It also consists of three wildlife sanctuaries – Shendurney, Peppara, Neyyar and one Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger reserve.

A number of tribal settlements with a total population of 3,000 are located in the core area of the proposed site, whereas non-tribal families live in the fringe area of the forests. The people derive a wide variety of biological resources for their sustenance but are rarely involved in commercialization. Through a process which involves participatory planning and implementation of activities which reduce forest dependency and at the same time provide more productive livelihoods, tribal populations have been economically empowered to desist from activities such as illicit timber and non-timber forest produce collection. This is made possible by micro financing linked with micro enterprises and by promoting self-help groups through a revolving fund which has been set up at the village level using a “seed grant”. The following research institutes are engaged in basic and applied research activities in the area: Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Forestry Colleges of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute.

The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal and noted the commitment of the national authorities to ensure local community participation and empowerment. It also appreciated that although there is a population of about 3,000 people in the core area this has not interfered with its strict conservation function and the core area is described as undisturbed. The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to continue with careful monitoring and scientific management of the entire site especially the core area in order to sustain its conservation and sustainable development functions.

The Advisory Committee noted that the northernmost part of the core area is not surrounded by a buffer zone and requested the national authorities to provide clarification on the legal status of the outer zone of this part of the core area. If this part is not protected, the Advisory Committee recommended that it should be given legal protection. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the proposal be **approved pending** the fulfillment of these recommendations and the submission of relevant information to the MAB Secretariat by 30 April 2015.

Appennino Tosco-Emiliano (Italy). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal by Italy, located in the Tuscany and the Emilia Romagna Regions, in the north-central Italy. It covers the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine ridge from Passo della Cisa to Passo delle Forbici. This stretch of ridge

marks the geographical and climatic boundary between continental Europe and Mediterranean Europe. It includes 38 municipalities. The total surface of the proposed site is of 223,229 ha, (divided by core areas of 10,110 hectares (including 4 highest peaks in the area), buffer zones of 25,706 hectares and a transition area of 187,413 hectares.)

The area contains close to 70% of total species present in Italy. It includes 122 species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, fish, the wolf, the Golden Eagle, but also numerous floristic biodiversity with at least 260 aquatic and terrestrial plant species. Main economic activity is agriculture with diverse landscapes. Tourism economy is being developed recently, to improve the link between tourism and agriculture through restaurants with “km zero menu” and using local products. The rural life is still specific and rich (Middle Ages fortifications, folk traditions) and contributes to the patchy landscape dynamics. Most parts have a high value for recreation activities and tourism industry, which may represent an important economic resource for a permanent population of 1,300 inhabitants in the buffer zone and 100,000 inhabitants in the transition area compared to 68,500 tourists and seasonal second-home owners. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the existence of a potential network for research, the numerous promotional and communication efforts carried out in the proposed area to manage tourism and conservation activities, and to promote education for sustainable development.

The Advisory Committee also acknowledged that the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano national park worked with local and regional authorities, the network of neighboring area and established an MOU to involve stakeholders' local action groups, chambers of commerce, trade associations and environmental associations, such as Neve e Natura or Montagna Incantata. It also noted that the main scientific research described was focusing on life science or conservation aspects and further encourages the authorities to work on social aspects. It however questioned how tourism (especially growing off-road vehicles) will be managed and how the Park plan will be integrated in the proposed site.

The Advisory Committee recommended that Appennino Tosco Emiliano be **approved pending** the submission by the national authorities to the MAB Secretariat a further elaborated governance structure that is inclusive and comprehensive and ensures local stakeholders' participation in the decision making processes. They are also requested to provide information on the tourism management.

Nominations recommended for deferral

Algeria (general recommendation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submissions of the nomination files for the Tlemcen Mountains, Theniet El Had and Belezma initially examined by the Advisory Committee and subsequently by the MAB ICC in 2014. The Advisory Committee commended once more the Algerian authorities for proposing sites of such immense importance for biodiversity conservation for inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee was however of the opinion that the nominations did not satisfactorily address its previous recommendations, as adopted by the MAB ICC, regarding the fact that the biosphere reserves should not solely be composed of national parks. The resubmitted proposals, like the original nominations, superimposed the biosphere reserves onto existing national parks, thereby restricting the sustainable development functions of the proposed biosphere reserves to those typically found within national parks.

While economic development challenges and opportunities within the national parks could benefit from the application of the biosphere reserve concept, it is by applying the biosphere reserve concept to the larger regions within which the national parks are situated, and where the promotion of large-scale sustainable development opportunities would be key to achieving long-term success in reducing the pressures on and within the national parks, that the biosphere reserve concept would fulfill its intended role and purpose. Therefore, the Advisory Committee reiterated its recommendation from 2014 that the biosphere reserve proposals should be extended geographically to include areas (e.g. buffer and/or transition zones) also outside the

national parks.

As Algeria is not alone in having nominated national parks as biosphere reserves, as there are many existing biosphere reserves, composed solely of national parks, or nature reserve areas, the Advisory Committee would see great benefits from the organization of a technical workshop to be held in Algeria in close cooperation with the ArabMAB Network, experts from International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserve and the UNESCO MAB Secretariat. Topics of how to include national parks as an important, but not exclusive part of biosphere reserve nominations could be addressed during this workshop. It would not only provide Algeria with ideas and suggestions for how its proposals concerning Tlemcen Mountains, Theniet El Had and Belezma could be further improved, and already existing biosphere reserves possibly enlarged, but it could help produce valuable insights of high regional and international relevance related to biosphere reserve nominations targeting national parks.

Belezma (Algeria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this proposal noting that the original submission had been examined by the Advisory Committee and subsequently by the MAB Bureau and the MAB ICC in 2014. The Advisory Committee recalled that the proposal covered the Belezma National Park situated in the province of Batna on the slopes of the Belezma mountain range renowned for its rich flora and fauna, several species of which are endemic and/or threatened. The Advisory Committee appreciated that the revised nomination included additional information regarding to the development functions of the proposed site.

The proposal covers a total area of 26,250 ha corresponding to and superimposed onto the Belezma National Park, of which the core area would make up 7,265 ha, the buffer zone and transition area 6,518.5 ha and 12,466.5 ha respectively. While the zonation had been revised compared to the original submission through an increase in the total size of the core areas and a corresponding reduction of the transition areas, it was not clear from the documents or maps provided if these changes were due to a recalculation or a re-zonation of the areas in question. More importantly, the Advisory Committee noted that its key recommendation from 2014 had not been pursued as the proposed biosphere reserve did not include any areas outside the national park.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal be **deferred** and that the Algerian authorities be invited to consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- In order to engage more effectively with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders at the regional scale surrounding the Belezma National Park, the proposed biosphere reserve, in-line with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, should be extended to include buffer and/or transition zones outside the national park.
- Detailed, updated maps should be provided accordingly.
- A management plan for a larger biosphere reserve covering areas outside the Belezma National Park should be prepared.

Tlemcen Mountains (Algeria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of Monts de Tlemcen proposal, noting that the original submission had been examined by the Advisory Committee and subsequently by the MAB Bureau and the MAB ICC in 2014. The Advisory Committee recalled that Tlemcen National Park is situated in the Tlemcen Province, encompassing rich biodiversity, valuable archeological sites, cultural landmarks and caves. The Advisory Committee appreciated that the revised nomination included additional information regarding to the development functions of the proposed site. As now proposed, the biosphere reserve would cover a total area of 8,225 ha corresponding to the boundaries of the Tlemcen National Park, of which the core area would make up 1,338.50 ha, the buffer zone and transition area are 3,422.5 ha and 3,464.04 ha respectively. While the zonation had been revised compared to the original submission through a reduction in the total size of the core areas

allowing them to be surrounded by buffer zone and transition areas, the Advisory Committee noted that its key recommendation from 2014 had not been pursued as the proposed biosphere reserve did not include any areas outside the national park.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal be **deferred** and that the Algerian authorities be invited to consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- In order to engage more effectively with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders at the regional scale surrounding the Tlemcen National Park, the proposed biosphere reserve, in-line with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, should be extended to include buffer and/or transition zones outside the national park.
- Detailed, updated maps should be provided accordingly.
- A management plan for a larger biosphere reserve covering areas outside the Tlemcen National Park should be prepared.

Theniet El Had (Algeria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of Theniet El Had, noting that the original submission had been examined by the Advisory Committee and subsequently by the MAB Bureau and the MAB ICC in 2014. The Advisory Committee recalled that the Theniet El Had National Park, which is situated in the Ouarsenis mountain range located in the west central Atlas of Algeria, is home to rare mammals and several tree, such as Atlas cedar, and plant species of very high conservation value. The Advisory Committee welcomed the fact that the revised proposal included additional information on the development functions of the site, and importantly, that 'a project to extend the future Theniet El Had Biosphere Reserve is foreseen to fully fulfil its three functions.' This extension project would cover an area of around 8,100 ha spread over three distinct biogeographic areas. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that, although zonation maps were provided showing the extent of the proposed extension that this was work in progress as the total zonation surface data and other background management information for the proposed biosphere reserve still focused only on the national park. Notably, the zonation data provided indicates that the total area of the proposed biosphere reserve would be 3,424 ha, of which the core areas would cover 407 ha, the buffer zones 637 ha and the transition area 2,380 ha.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal be **deferred** and that the Algerian authorities be invited to consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- In order to engage more effectively with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders at the regional scale surrounding the Theniet El Had National Park, the proposed biosphere reserve, in-line with the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, should be extended to include buffer and/or transition zones outside the national park. The outlined proposed extension project of adding a transition zone of some 8,100 ha would seem to be a good starting point for this purpose.
- A management plan for a larger biosphere reserve covering areas outside the Theniet El Had National Park should be prepared.

Khakassky (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, located in the centre of Altai-Sayan Mountain in the Republic of Khakassia. The proposed biosphere reserve is made of two separated units, copying the structure of the existing Khakassky State Nature Reserve. With a total surface of 2,871,400 hectares (core area: 100,499 ha, buffer zone: 416,353 ha, transition area: 2,354,548 ha), the proposed biosphere reserve is a part of Khakassky Reserve, which is a specially protected natural area representing a unique complex of steppe and taiga landscapes. It is located in Altai-Sayan mountain region in

the heart of the Eurasian continent, also listed in WWF “Global-2000” list as one of the virgin or little altered ecoregions that concentrates 90 % of biodiversity on the Earth.

The climatic and natural conditions offer a diversity of landscapes and virgin or little altered ecoregions such as lakes, mountains, forest, dry meadows among others. It contains exceptional and rich biodiversity of fauna (300 bird species, 69 mammal species, 32 fish species, amphibians, reptiles, insects) and flora (trees, shrubs, swamps, salt marshes, plants).

In this well-preserved area, tourism is one of the main economic activities. Pilot schemes towards sustainable development, ecotourism and other types of tourism such as scientific, educational, recreational or rural tourism as well as research on rare and endangered species of animals and environmental education have been initiated. The Advisory Committee noted that long term monitoring, research and environmental policy strategy of the proposed area is elaborated by Scientific and Technical Council of the Khakassky Reserve. Several research studies have been completed within the project of the Russian program of the United Nations and the Global Environmental Facility (UNDP/GEF) “Conservation of biodiversity in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion”. The proposed area is planned to be managed by a Coordination Council, representing experts, authorities and local communities. Planned activities are based on nature conservation, cultural heritage research and promotion and proper managing of tourism with the intention to develop and implement innovative programs for sustainable livelihood of local people.

The Advisory Committee considered that the information provided as regards the functioning of the two separate units as an integrated biosphere reserve was insufficient. It strongly encouraged the authorities to consider the establishment of two separate biosphere reserve proposals, one encompassing steppe and the other mountain taiga ecosystems. It further encouraged authorities to submit new nomination files with different names for both sites that will be distinguished from the name of the existing protected areas. The Advisory Committee also requested the authorities to provide further information about locations of mines and their activities if these mines would be located in the proposed biosphere reserves.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal be **deferred**.

Tajo/Tejo (Spain/Portugal).The Advisory Committee noted the submission of the proposal for the Tajo/Tejo Biosphere Reserve by the Spanish authorities as part of a transboundary biosphere reserve nomination. The national authorities of Portugal could not submit their part of the proposal on time. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that this proposal be deferred and encouraged the Portugal national authorities to submit their proposal before 30 September 2015 in order to complete the dossier of the proposed transboundary biosphere reserve.