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International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Twenty-seventh session
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France
8 - 12 June 2015

FINAL REPORT

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1. The twenty-seventh session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France from 8 to 12 June 2015.

2. A total of 250 participants including representatives of the following Members of the ICC as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th and 37th sessions: Algeria, Arab Republic of Egypt, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen.

3. Observers from the following Member States were present: Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Italy, Madagascar, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey, United States of America, Vietnam

4. Representatives from the International Social Sciences Council, UNEP-WCMC as well the private sector and NGO's were present.

5. The full list of participants is presented as annex 1 to this report.

I. Introduction and Opening by the Chair of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council

6. Mr Sergio Guevara, the Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC), officially opened the meeting. He welcomed all members of the ICC and Observers, and

thanked the Secretariat for preparing the session. He underscored that important decisions would be taken during this session, notably relating to the MAB Strategy, and highlighted the upcoming 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Lima, Peru in March 2016.

II. Opening remarks

7. On behalf of the Director General, Ms Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social Sciences Sector, warmly welcomed the Delegates. In her opening statement, she called for the mobilization of resources, creativity and imagination to address the many complex challenges confronting our world. She mentioned that all of UNESCO's programmes, including the MAB Programme, are currently engaged with the Member States in preparing for the 38th Session of the General Conference, in the context of a global effort for the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She cautioned that fragmented policies will lead to unsustainable outcomes which will be detrimental to natural resources and biodiversity. Policy fragmentation can be avoided by integrating the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. The MAB Programme, like UNESCO's other intergovernmental programmes, has a crucial role to play.

8. Ms Al-Nashif hoped that discussions on the new MAB Strategy during this session will be fruitful and will lead to the adoption of the Strategy by the end of the session. She added that, with the collective efforts of all, the new MAB Strategy will carry forward the identity of the MAB Programme with new and inspiring vision and priorities that will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. She noted that, at the last session of the Executive Board, many Member States supported the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

9. She welcomed the submission of new nominations of biosphere reserves as well as periodic review reports. She acknowledged that the management of many biosphere reserves remains a challenge. She encouraged Member States, with the support of the MAB Secretariat, to provide periodic review reports to enable the Secretariat provide timely guidance in order for sites to fulfil the requirements of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves.

10. She called on delegates to provide their insights for the development of the proposed guidelines for the nomination of biosphere reserves. She also welcomed the management manual produced through the collaboration of the German National Commission for UNESCO and the AfriMAB network. She thanked the Government of Peru for their support to UNESCO and the MAB Programme and for offering to host the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in March 2016.

11. MAB and the WNBR can offer responses to cross-cutting issues related to the environmental, social, cultural and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Addressing the global agendas with regard to biodiversity, green society development and climate change mitigation to national and local development contexts in specific ecosystems is a high priority. This integration, which corresponds to the concept of sustainability science, brings together the efforts of all UNESCO's Science programmes. The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Sector is committed to supporting these efforts. She stressed the importance of paying attention to the participation of young people across UNESCO's activities. She noted that the Youth Forum organized by the SHS Sector will take place at the end of October of this year under the theme "Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet". She welcomed the participation of Youth networks related to MAB at this Forum.

12. She looked forward to the results of the two panel sessions during this session of the ICC which will be organised to foster dialogue and partnership both within UNESCO and with the private sector. She called on the ICC to adopt the MAB strategy 2015-2025 that would provide a new and inspiring vision for MAB and seek to contribute to the SDG targets. She ended by wishing good deliberations to the participants.

III. Report by the Chair of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council

13. In his report as Chair of the MAB ICC, Mr Guevara congratulated the MAB Bureau and the other members of the MAB Strategy Group for their elaboration of a draft Strategy document for MAB for 2015-2025, a period in which the programme would experience profound changes. He thanked MAB national committees and focal points as well as the directors of biosphere reserve for their inputs to the Strategy. He underscored the important role that biosphere reserves would play in implementing the new sustainable development goals (SDGs), notably with regard to promoting sustainable economic activities within their territories.

14. Mr Guevara underscored the success of the MAB programme, as illustrated by the high number of new proposals for biosphere reserves, notably in countries without any sites. He encouraged every UNESCO Member State to have a least one biosphere reserve.

15. He mentioned MABnet and social media as important outlets for promoting the MAB programme and its success stories, such as the work done in the Monarch butterfly Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. Finally, he looked forward to the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserve to be held in Latin America, in Lima, Peru in March 2016 and thanked the Peruvian government for hosting the event.

IV. Adoption of the agenda and timetable

16. The agenda was unanimously adopted by the MAB ICC without any objections.

V. Report by the Secretary of the MAB Programme

17. In this oral presentation, Mr Han Qunli, the Secretary of the MAB Programme introduced document SC-15/CONF.227/4. He gave an overview of the status of the MAB Programme and also highlighted some new developments and activities undertaken at the national, regional and international level. He also reported on the status of the implementation of the decisions made at the 26th session of the ICC.

18. He recalled that, at the last ICC in June 2014, 13 new sites were added to the WNBR, making a total of 631 biosphere reserves in 119 countries including 14 transboundary sites covering approximately 10,180,000 km² of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems. Mr Han noted that the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves had examined 26 nominations this year.

19. He said that the quality of MAB and WNBR has been enhanced by the continued implementation of the periodic review process and in particular the implementation of the 'Exit Strategy' for the WNBR. The evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) by UNESCO Internal Oversight Service has ensured institutional verification and

the accountability of the WNBR. The MAB Secretary stated that the draft of the MAB Strategy 2015-2025 had advanced well and would be presented at the current session of the ICC. The drafting of the new MAB Action Plan will start later this year.

20. He noted that new partnerships and funds have been established, such as the Funds in Trust project in coastal zones in Latin America and a project by the Africa Development Bank for cooperation in Lake Chad in Africa. Mr Han also added that the MAB Programme continues to be associated with, and provides inputs to, the major international processes such as CBD, IPBES, UNCCD, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Future Earth, the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the UN Secretary General's Science Advisory Board. The MAB Secretariat is also playing an active role in UNESCO's preparations leading up to the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UNFCCC, and seeks to ensure that the MAB Programme and its WNBR are referred to at key events.

21. The MAB Secretary also highlighted other successful events such as the Conference on "Botanists of the twenty-first century: Roles, challenges and opportunities" held at UNESCO headquarters in September 2014, which brought together over 300 international participants from 60 countries. The declaration of the meeting was shared at the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Convention for Biological Diversity, in consideration of its relevance to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and its Aichi Targets.

22. The MAB Secretary highlighted the importance of MAB communication, and the production of publications and outreach material: the 2014-2015 map of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves prepared by the MAB Secretariat with the generous support of the German National Commission for UNESCO; the MAB Activity Report thanks to the generous support of the Austrian MAB Committee and translated into Spanish by the Spanish MAB Committee; the MAB programme leaflet. He recognized the importance of social media to inform the broader public and informed the Council about the MAB Facebook page and Twitter that is becoming a popular social media outlet for MAB.

23. He recalled the importance of consolidating UNESCO's traditional partnerships with scientific institutions and organizations, and exploring new partnerships with civil society organizations, local governments, development agencies and the private sector. The MAB Secretariat will further strengthen in-house collaboration in view of new and emerging frameworks such as the SDGs and the Global Action Programme on ESD.

24. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the main aspects of the WNBR in relation to the global agenda, especially the SDGs.

25. The MAB Secretary expressed his sincere thanks to the MAB ICC and all Member States.

26. The UK mentioned that one of the recommendations of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Japan in November 2014 was that biosphere reserves should be a focus for education for sustainable development.

27. Egypt and Malaysia congratulated the Secretary for his comprehensive and complete report. Kenya added that social media was very important in order to increase outreach to youth and that they would like to see more partnerships between the MAB Programme and other UNESCO programmes.

28. Various Member States congratulated the Secretariat on the implementation of its activities and of the decisions taken at the 26th Session of the ICC, highlighting the importance of social media to reach youth, of sustainability science, of collaboration with all of UNESCO's scientific programmes including MOST and of contributing towards the achievement of the SDGs.

29. Before the conclusion of this item, the ICC witnessed the signature of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the International Center of Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage under the auspices of UNESCO (HIST) (China) and the regional Post-graduate training school for integrated management of tropical forests and lands (ERAIFT), Democratic Republic of Congo. The MOU is to build capacity for the use of space technology for the management of UNESCO-designated sites in Africa. It will address the needs of MAB and its WNBR for technical support in data collection and related capacity building for managers, especially in Africa and tropical ecosystems.

VI. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States, regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB

30. The Chair of the ICC invited Member States to highlight activities which they had implemented at national, regional and international levels since the 26th session of the ICC. He noted that various Member States had submitted written reports which had been published on MABnet, and that additional submissions made during this session would also be added. Brief national oral reports were presented by the following members of the ICC and Observers; Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

31. A number of Member States reported on the preparation of the periodic review reports for their biosphere reserves, proposals for new biosphere reserves and the creation and reinforcement of MAB National Committees. Member States reported on meetings, projects and publications they had undertaken this past year, on issues such as transboundary biosphere reserves, biosphere reserve governance, communication and exchange of best practices, education for sustainable development, green economies, alternative energy, and thematic networks such as island and coastal zone biosphere reserves.

32. With respect to support being provided for biosphere reserves in developing countries, the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea reported that the Korea National Commission for UNESCO and the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea have jointly launched a new project to support the nomination of biosphere reserves in developing countries.

33. Egypt suggested that UNESCO should have a television station, in order for MAB to reach a larger audience including youth. The Delegate added that the MAB approach went beyond biosphere reserves and highlighted the importance of branding biosphere reserves products.

34. France reported on the first eco-trophies competition which rewards innovative sustainable development projects in French biosphere reserves and the implementation of a network of eco-actors. The delegate also reported on the successful workshop on transboundary biosphere reserves co-organized by France and Germany in the first week of June 2015. Sweden expressed its interest in collaborating on this issue, and reported on a school challenge related to minimizing food waste.

35. Germany reported that the priorities of the national MAB Programme are periodic review of biosphere reserves, development of position papers for urgent thematic issues (like ESD) and cooperating with biosphere reserves of other countries. A number of research projects on core and development areas (transition areas) as well as for marketing and integrated monitoring are in progress. He thanked France for the successful event on transboundary biosphere reserves. He mentioned the elaboration of the Handbook for managers of African biosphere reserves together with AfriMAB and ArabMAB. Further he reiterated that this ICC must adopt the new strategy 2015 - 2025 and strongly opposed to change the term "biosphere reserve" officially.

36. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presented the results of a study supported by the MAB Secretariat on zoning on European mountain biosphere reserves, which included data from 105 BRs in 22 countries. The study looked at whether biosphere reserves have core areas which are not completely surrounded by buffer zone or transition area, and whether this affected the conservation objectives of the core areas.

37. The Delegate from Saint Vincent and Grenadines suggested that, in subsequent meetings of the ICC, the MAB Secretariat should synthesize the national reports received from the Member States in order to summarize common or cross cutting issues, so that these could be presented to the ICC for an interactive debate. The MAB Secretary replied that, as at all previous sessions of the ICC, this item is an opportunity for Member States to share their experiences and activities with the WNBR and that it would be difficult for the Secretariat to take the initiative of summarizing them at future sessions.

38. AfriMAB, EABRN, WNICBR and EuroMAB gave brief presentations on activities undertaken since the 26th Session of the ICC, highlighting capacity building, meetings and various workshops at which issues such as the Exit Strategy were discussed. The AfriMAB network report also mentioned the prospects of the nomination of new transboundary biosphere reserves and also challenges such as the lack of both human and financial resources. The AfriMAB network also reported the publication of a new management manual for biosphere reserves in Africa supported by Germany.

VI bis. Interim report of the audit conducted by UNESCO office of the external Auditors of the governance of UNESCO and dependant funds, programmes and entities

39. The Rapporteur of the ICC introduced this agenda item. He recalled that the audit came following a decision made at the 37th session of the General Conference to review the governance of UNESCO and dependent funds, programmes and entities, including the MAB Programme. He reported on the process and the contents of the interim audit report, notably its five "avenues for reflection", and noted actions already taken or underway to address these. He mentioned that the report will be presented at the 197th session of the Executive Board and the 38th Session of the General Conference.

40. Some Member States underlined that the follow up of this report should be presented at the next ICC in 2016. A Delegate asked that an agenda item be included on working methods of the MAB Secretariat at the next ICC. Another Delegate also questioned the future of the International Support Group (ISG) which was created for the follow up of the Madrid Action Plan and expressed the importance of the ISG in raising awareness of the MAB Programme among Member States.

41. The MAB Secretariat stated that the ICC should discuss the name and mandate of the

ISG.

VII. Report on MAB communication and branding project (EuroMAB pilot study) and next steps

42. The Secretariat introduced the item by explaining the context and objectives of the communication and branding project: to further clarify the common values and messages relating to biosphere reserves. She informed the Delegates that a communication company, WITHIN, assisted in this endeavour, and that it included the participation of 4 pilot sites in France, Spain, Ireland and Canada.

43. She summarized the main outcomes, including the co-building of a strong purpose statement, core biosphere brand, set of tools and pilot campaigns for the 4 pilot sites.

44. She concluded with some recommendations for consideration by the ICC such as adopting the brand and tool for the WNBR, and to consider the opportunity of the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to train regional communication coordinators on the tools to achieve consistency and widespread use across the WNBR.

45. After the presentation, several Delegates took the floor and expressed strong appreciation for the project and supported the application of this project outside Europe and North America. Some delegations indicated that they would test the tool kit in biosphere reserves in their countries. Delegates asked that this work be linked to the future MAB Strategy and the Action Plan. The importance of this work in terms of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals agenda was noted. Questions were raised regarding the upscaling of the tool kit from individual biosphere reserves to regional and international scales. Some Delegates asked how other regions could benefit from this work. The issue of funding was raised, as well as the questions of translation into other languages, and how effectiveness could be measured locally. The Secretariat indicated that it could make some funds available, but that countries and/or regional networks interested should also provide funding as was done in the EuroMAB region. It was agreed that a working document on communication and branding at national, regional and international scales would be prepared for the Lima Congress to discuss. It was also agreed that a workshop to train those working in biosphere reserves in using and testing the tools would be organized in conjunction with the Congress.

VIII. Update on the Exit Strategy

46. The MAB Secretariat introduced this item by recalling the decision of the ICC during its 25th session in 2013.

47. She recalled that the main objective was to improve the credibility and the quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. She indicated that the Exit Strategy concerns 262 sites in 74 countries, including 4 transboundary sites.

48. She reported that the Secretariat has implemented all the three steps of the Exit Strategy, by sending the first letters in October 2013 for the sites which never submitted a periodic review nor replied to the recommendation received by the ICC (Category A), as well as to the sites which sent periodic review reports but were asked to send a report by 30 September 2015 to demonstrate that the site meets the criteria (Category B). Several reminders were sent,

including the 7 final reminder letters sent by the Chair of the ICC in November 2014 as described in Step 3.

49. She indicated that, if all countries concerned send their reports by the final deadline of 30 September 2015 (Category A and B), the MAB Secretariat expects to receive 185 periodic review reports, to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next session for recommendations to the 28th session of the ICC. She mentioned that the MAB Secretariat expects, in addition, 41 periodic review reports from sites designated in 2003, 2004 and 2005. It is thus expected that the Advisory Committee will have 226 periodic review reports to examine at its next session. She concluded by indicating that the ICC would have all necessary elements at its next meeting to implement the decisions regarding sites not meeting the criteria, as specified in the Exit Strategy.

50. After the introduction, several delegates took the floor to express their strong support for the implementation of the Exit Strategy and the need to respect the process and timeline. One delegate emphasized that it should be considered as a quality control process. It was highlighted that, as agreed by the ICC at its 25th session, the Exit Strategy will conclude in April 2016. However, the next ICC would be held in Lima in March 2016 and would be only two days long. Consequently, there was an urgent need for the ICC to agree when it will deal with decisions with regard to the Exit Strategy. One delegate raised the issue of the unprecedented number of reports in term of workload for the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee and the ICC. Several observers also took the floor to express their support for the process and their hope for concrete results and to highlight the importance of quality control, including for credibility and communication purposes. They described the process and its conclusion as an important milestone in the integration of a common, unique and agreed upon understanding of the mandate of the MAB Programme. Three observers reported on progress in conducting the periodic review process in their countries. One observer suggested that the designation as a biosphere reserve should be provided only for ten years and should not be renewed automatically. One observer asked about the status of the sites under Category B after the submission of their reports at the end of September 2015.

51. After discussion, it was agreed that there will be no change in the deadline for countries to submit their reports (i.e. 30 September 2015) and that the final decisions would be taken by the Council when it next meets at the Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris. It was also noted that the Statutory Framework, which includes clear and specific criteria, was adopted 20 years ago and both the periodic review and the Exit Strategy processes were very clear. Therefore the Council decided on the following timeline:

- Countries and sites concerned by the Exit Strategy should comply with the final deadline of 30 September 2015 to submit pending periodic review reports and any follow-up information;
- The Advisory Committee will examine these reports and additional follow-up information at its 22nd meeting. It will issue recommendations for each site, indicating if the site meets or do not meet the criteria. For sites that the Advisory Committee consider do not meet the criteria, the deadline for countries to respond to these final recommendations will be 30 September 2016 at the latest. The MAB Secretariat will send these recommendations to the countries concerned;
- The 28th session of the ICC will formally recognize the sites which meet the criteria, in line with paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of

Biosphere Reserves.

- The new ICC Bureau to be elected in March 2016 at the 28th session of the ICC will meet, together with the outgoing Bureau, to discuss the current status of the Exit Strategy in Lima, Peru ;
- The ICC Bureau will examine the recommendations of the Advisory Committee at its 22nd meeting and any additional information provided by the countries and received before 30 September 2016.
- The ICC will make its final decisions with regard to the exit strategy at its 29th session in 2017 in UNESCO Headquarters.

IX. Draft MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and development of MAB Action Plan (2016-2025)

52. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-15/CONF.227/8 and the sub-items contained therein namely: I. Draft MAB Strategy 2015-2025; II. MAB Action Plan 2016-2025; III. MAB Strategy Group Proposal for Discussion: a World Network of Biosphere Regions together with the relevant information documents.

53. The MAB Strategy Group (MSG) Rapporteur, Mr Martin Price (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), then outlined in detail the process leading up to the draft strategy text starting from the Final Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan to the MSG announcement on 4 May 2015 that the MSG had successfully concluded the preparation of the Draft MAB Strategy (2015-2025) text. The MSG Rapporteur thanked all Member States, MAB National Committees, Regional MAB Networks, biosphere reserves and members of the MSG's Roster of Experts for their invaluable inputs and comments on the preliminary draft versions of the strategy. He noted that the process had been inclusive, participatory and transparent.

54. The MSG Rapporteur noted that, as can be expected from any consensus document, the Draft MAB Strategy text is not perfect. For example, the MSG could not include all the proposals received in the draft strategy, as this would have resulted in too long a document; and many of these points were action-oriented, rather than strategic. He also recalled in this context that many proposed elements not included by the MSG in the draft strategy had been retained among the elements proposed for possible inclusion in the Draft MAB Action Plan (2016-2025). Opportunities for further improvements would nevertheless be possible, such as the vision and mission statements. The Rapporteur also noted that, following the finalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September, the Secretariat would prepare a document clarifying how the Strategy would contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, and that the Action Plan would explicitly take this into account. He strongly advocated that the MAB Strategy be adopted at this ICC session for two reasons. First, so that the Strategy could be forwarded to UNESCO's Executive Board and General Conference in 2015. Second, to allow for the timely development of the associated MAB Action Plan to be adopted by the ICC at its session in 2016 in Lima, Peru.

55. On behalf of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS), Mr Jozef Vaessen made a short presentation on the lessons learnt from the final evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan and the importance of considering monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and Action Plan (2016-2025) when these documents are finalized and adopted. IOS offered to provide further advice and guidance for this purpose, notably through the

elaboration of a strategy evaluation framework founded in strategic intervention logic which will set out the main areas of action, outputs and link to final outcome. In addition to being an excellent communication tool, the intervention practice would help to tell the 'causal story'.

56. More than 20 Delegates took the floor, congratulating the rapporteur for his presentation, the MAB Strategy Group for their drafting of the draft MAB Strategy, and the Secretariat for their overall support of the process, noting the overall quality of the document. France, supported by St Vincent and Grenadines, noted that MAB had been an influential programme since its inception and that the Strategy needed to reflect the programme's innovation and dynamism and the important role MAB could play to address urgent matters such as biodiversity conservation and climate change, using biosphere reserves to spearhead sustainability globally. France, supported by Germany, St Vincent and Grenadines, Estonia, Sweden and Switzerland, noted that further work needed to be done on the vision and mission statements to reflect the special nature of MAB. France furthermore highlighted MAB's role as a 'motor' for sustainable development. Switzerland asked that the mission and vision reflect that MAB biosphere reserves are sites of excellence for sustainable development.

57. Japan, supported by Malaysia, expressed the importance of adequately reflecting the significance of sustainability science and education for sustainable development in the Strategy.

58. The Republic of Korea, supported by Mexico, inquired about the correlation between the Strategic Objectives and the Strategic Action Areas and how the Strategic Objectives will be achieved.

59. Germany noted it was unfortunate that no input had been received from outside partners of the MAB Programme, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or IUCN. He suggested that the ICC should limit changes to the Strategy to those that are strictly necessary. Germany also remarked that the document was written in UNESCO language not necessarily understandable by the general public or by decision-makers, and suggested, as supported by Estonia and Tanzania, that the Secretariat produces a policy brief summarizing the Strategy, targeting the public at large and decision-makers.

60. Egypt, supported by Estonia, Tanzania and Kenya, asked that the Strategy focus on specific SDGs that apply to MAB and that it highlight the importance of capacity building. Egypt noted that funding was a key issue for MAB, biosphere reserves and regional networks and suggested a partnership with companies such as IATA to raise funds related to green taxes.

61. Thailand welcomed the focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Strategy, and called on the Secretariat to support the creation of an information platform for biosphere reserves to exchange best practices and find funding.

62. Algeria inquired about the open access issues in the Strategy, mentioning that sensitive documents may have to be excluded.

63. Mexico asked that special care be taken to properly distinguish between, on the one side, international conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and Ramsar, and on the other UNESCO programmes. Vietnam agreed on the importance of working with international conventions.

64. Iran, supported by Egypt, expressed its view that strategic objective 1 should focus on the conservation of biodiversity, not on sustainable development, which was covered in other

strategic objectives.

65. Malaysia asked that the Action Plan be circulated to members of the ICC at least one month before the next session of the ICC.

66. The delegate of St Vincent and Grenadines noted that the introduction was too long, and as France said, that the Strategy document, notably the vision and mission statements, needed to show MAB's added value. Canada proposed that a working group be created which would focus on the vision and mission statements. Sweden and Switzerland asked to be part of such a working group.

67. Tanzania, supported by Kenya, asked that South-South and North-South cooperation be highlighted in the document. Kenya expressed its appreciation that the role of the International Support Group had been highlighted in the document, as this was an important support for MAB.

68. Argentina asked that reference to water security in the document be in line with accepted terminology as agreed in the context of the International Hydrological Programme. He also asked that the references to peace parks, environmental/science diplomacy and sustainability science be removed as these terms are not consensus language at the international level.

69. Indonesia asked that UNESCO's work on ethics and bioethics be referred to in the Strategy and that MAB work closely with the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technologies (COMEST) in this regard.

70. The Secretariat took note of the ICC Members' comments, in particular the importance of underscoring the added value and exceptionalism of the MAB Programme. The MAB Secretary welcomed the idea of creating a working group to finalize the strategy document, notably the vision and mission statements. .

71. The rapporteur complemented the Secretariat's comments by noting in response to Algeria that the 26th session of the ICC agreed an open access policy, which recognized that Member States could request that access to certain documents would be limited. He also noted that meta-data would be needed to ensure that documents could be found easily. He noted that the Action Plan would make it clear how its implementation would contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and related targets and indicators.

72. The ICC agreed on the constitution of an ad-hoc open working group to fine-tune the Strategy, and that this would focus on the vision and mission statements and parts of the document that are directly related to the vision and mission statements. The working group would meet on Tuesday 9 June and Wednesday 10 June, when interpretation facilities were available. The group would work in English and French, the two working languages of the Organization. The working group's amendment proposals would be presented to the ICC on Friday 12 June in the afternoon session, when it was hoped that the ICC would approve the Strategy with any agreed amendments.

73. The following ICC Members and Observers participated actively in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the MAB Strategy: Members: Algeria, Belarus, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom; Observers: Botswana, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Viet Nam.

74. The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group elected Ms Boshra Salem (Egypt) as Chair, and met on 9 and 10 June after the ICC sessions to review the Draft MAB Strategy (2015-2025), with an emphasis on the vision and mission statements contained therein, as instructed by the MAB ICC. On 9 June, the Group starting from alternative text proposed by France, Germany and Switzerland, using an initial proposal by France regarding the vision and mission. After constructive discussion, the Group arrived at consensus regarding a revised draft vision and mission statement. On 10 June, in light of the proposed amendments to the draft vision and mission statements, the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group examined the need for changes in the Strategic Objectives and the Strategic Action Areas contained in the Draft MAB Strategy. Some modifications were subsequently made to the Strategic Objectives and related expected results, and text in square brackets was removed.

75. In reporting back to the ICC on 12 June, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group thanked the ICC Members and Observers that had participated in the Group for their efforts, and noted the amendments proposed for the consideration of the ICC that had been made available in English and French on 11 June at noon.

76. The Rapporteur read the proposed new vision and mission statements and outlined other proposed changes. He also mentioned that a glossary had been included by the Secretariat in order to explain terms used throughout the Strategy.

77. The debate that followed was very rich. France, joined by Germany, Algeria, Spain, South Africa and Tanzania thanked the MAB Strategy Group and the Secretariat for the preparatory work on the strategy text and welcomed the openness characterizing the work at the Council and the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group in the further elaboration of the Strategy.

78. Concerned that the introductory first six pages of the Strategy were far too long, France, supported by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, suggested that a short, but improved, Executive Summary would suffice, making the document much more effective, and that the Council therefore should take note of, but not approve the introductory first six pages at this Council session, so that a more succinct and focused introductory section could be prepared and approved at a later date. Luxembourg together with Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Republic of Korea, Iran, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, however, stated the introductory pages should be kept as a preamble, providing valuable background information and context to those readers who might not be fully aware of the history and nature of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

79. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines together with France then suggested that, if the content of the six introductory pages had to be retained, it should be moved to the end of the document, possibly as an Annex. However, the majority of Delegates preferred to keep the introductory text at the beginning as an overall preamble to the Strategy. In so deciding, the Council also entrusted the Secretariat with ensuring that the layout of the printed version of the Strategy would help emphasize and draw attention to the strategic elements. France also noted that the text introduced in the glossary had been provided by the Secretariat and that, for the time being, this text should be marked accordingly and eventually improved.

80. The Council then examined the precise changes to the Draft MAB Strategy proposed by the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group. After examining the revised vision and mission statements and linked changes to the Strategic Objectives, which the Council adopted after some discussion, a few additional minor modifications were also adopted for inclusion in the text.

81. In adopting the text as presented in Annex II to this report, the Council also decided that, in view of the changes agreed on, notably the revised vision and mission statements, it would be appropriate to slightly update the short executive summary contained in the strategy. The Council therefore entrusted the MAB Secretariat to update the executive summary after the Council session, and, as is customary, to make any necessary language editorial corrections and improvements that might be needed.

82. The Council also entrusted the MAB Secretariat to insert a reference to youth as a key stakeholder group where appropriate, as well as to judge the pertinence of other minor enhancements to the overall strategy text that Council Members possibly would submit in writing to the MAB Secretariat after having received the completed final report of the 27th MAB ICC session together with the adopted strategy text.

83. The Council decided that the MAB Strategy 2015-2025, as adopted in Annex II and following the above-mentioned corrections and enhancements, should be presented to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference for endorsement.

84. On a unanimously supported proposal by France, the Council also decided that the Secretariat should produce a short policy brief addressed to decision and policy makers, outlining the main features of the MAB Strategy and emphasizing its high relevance in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015.

85. The MAB ICC Chair then opened the discussion on item 9, sub-item II: MAB Action Plan 2016-2025.

86. France raised the question regarding the process to be adopted for the future elaboration of the Action Plan, notably as the MAB Strategy Group had not been entrusted with this task by the MAB ICC at its 26th session. During the discussion involving interventions by Germany, Kenya, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, it was recalled that the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the MAB Strategy Group had been drafted by the MAB Secretariat, as instructed by the 26th MAB ICC. Furthermore, these ToRs had been approved by the MAB Bureau and shared with Member States, and included the task of developing and presenting the Draft MAB Action Plan at the 28th MAB ICC in Lima. The TOR in question were presented on the screen in the meeting room. The Council decided to endorse the TOR of the existing MAB Strategy Group.¹

87. The MAB Secretary stressed the importance of ensuring an effective process, as not much time remained before the Draft Action Plan would have to be ready (e.g. at least one month prior to the next MAB ICC).

88. Germany inquired about who actually would be consulted in the Action Plan development process, citing WWF, IUCN, WBCSD as examples of relevant and possibly interested stakeholders. France stressed the importance of focussing the Action Plan on priority actions that would fulfil the objectives of the Strategy and on the development of strong links with youth communities in the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

¹ TOR and composition of the MAB Strategy Group available here:

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/MAB_Strategy_Group_TORs.pdf

89. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines asked whether the current members of the MAB ICC Bureau would still be considered to be Bureau members until the subsequent MAB session, due to be held in March 2016, even if they were not members of the ICC after this had been elected at the General Conference session to be held in November 2015. She suggested that the new Bureau members be elected at a brief extraordinary session during the General Conference, as was the case for the councils of other intergovernmental programmes. The representatives of Algeria, Canada, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Kenya, Egypt, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Kazakhstan, Sweden and Mexico exchanged information about practices in other UNESCO programmes and expressed their various points of view on the question raised. Some representatives drew attention to the highly technical nature of the MAB ICC and the importance of ensuring continuity between two sessions, in particular with a view to the preparation of the MAB Action Plan. Germany requested that no decision be taken on the matter without the opinion of the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA). The representative of LA confirmed that as a matter of principle, in order to be a Bureau member of an intergovernmental body, the State had necessarily to be a member of the intergovernmental body in question. In other words, a State could not be a member of a Bureau if it was not a member of the intergovernmental body in question. However, in the case in point, it must be noted that the MAB ICC had already elected the current Bureau in accordance with the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 4 of its Statutes, which stipulated that “*The Council shall elect a new Bureau whenever its own membership is changed by the General Conference in accordance with Article II, above. The members of the Bureau who are representatives of Member States of UNESCO shall remain in office until a new Bureau has been elected*”. Thus, having been elected by all the members of the ICC representing Member States, the members of the current Bureau would remain in office until the subsequent session of the MAB ICC which usually followed the General Conference. Accordingly, the proposal to elect the members of the Bureau of the MAB ICC at an extraordinary session during the General Conference was not retained.

90. With regard to item 9, sub-item III: MAB Strategy Group Proposal for Discussion: A World Network of Biosphere Regions, the Republic of Korea proposed that this item should be included on the agenda of the ICC in 2017. Germany, supported by Argentina, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Switzerland stated that the name biosphere reserve not be changed, as this term is used in statutory documents and already had a value as a brand. Burkina Faso cited the implication of the change of name on certain national legislation related to biosphere reserves. South Africa, supported by Estonia, agreed that the name should not be changed at the international level but that countries should be allowed to use terms that are appropriate at the national level. Sweden noted that it already uses an alternative term, ‘biosphere area’, at the national level. Similarly, biosphere reserves in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are locally referred to as ‘biospheres’. The Council concluded that there was no consensus on changing the name of biosphere reserves, but that individual countries should be able to use appropriate terms at the national level.

X. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

91. Some discussions took place during this agenda item with regard to the deferral of some proposals. The Secretary of the MAB Programme recalled that a deferral was not a negative decision but is rather a call for the country to improve their proposal in line with the technical recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves.

92. Taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (from 2 to 5 March 2015) and the Bureau's further deliberations on 8 and 9 June, the ICC took the following decisions.

93. **Belezma (Algeria).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposal, noting that they had examined the original submission in 2014. The Council recalled that the proposal covered the Belezma National Park situated in the Wilaya 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 Council appreciated that the revised nomination included additional information regarding the development functions of the proposed site.

94. The proposal covers a total area of 26,250 ha superimposed onto 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. The Council acknowledged the revised zonation, with an increase in the total size of the core areas and a corresponding reduction of the transition areas.

95. Having considered the additional information provided by national authorities on national park legislation and management, as well as further additional clarification with regard to the conservation, development and logistic functions in the site, the Council **approved** the site.

96. The Council invited Algerian authorities to consider the extension of the site to include buffer and/or transition zones outside the national park and subsequently to prepare a management plan for the larger biosphere reserve.

97. **Patagonia Azul (Argentina).** The Council 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.

98. 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 protect the biodiversity of this region of Patagonia. The area also includes archaeological and paleontological sites of unique value, including an extensive petrified forest.

99. 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 site 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.

100. Different research groups from universities, research centers 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 it also includes the recently designated Peninsula Valdés and part of the Andino Norpatagónica biosphere reserves.

101. The Council considered that there is significant potential for exchange and learning opportunities with these other biosphere reserves. The Council **approved** the site.

102. **Lake Tana (Ethiopia).** The Council welcomed the submission of this proposal by 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 of global importance for agricultural genetic diversity. The area is characterized by a great 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. Of the 2,031,820 inhabitants of the proposed site, approximately 15,000 live 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.

103. 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; transition area 485,477 ha, incl. 131,179 ha aquatic). The Council noted that, in aquatic parts of the site, some core areas lack buffer zones and that, in such cases, the transition area which is adjacent to core areas takes over the function of the buffer due. However, in these individual cases, the function of the zonation is not affected.

104. 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 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 a 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.

105. The Council acknowledged the revised zonation and the hydrological maps received in response to the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and **approved** the site.

106. **Gorges du Gardon (France).** The Council welcomed this proposal by France. The proposed site is located in the Gard department in southern France. It covers 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 in the buffer zone, which employs numerous inhabitants. In addition, a limited quantity of high-quality olive oil is produced close to Nimes since 2006 (Picholine). *Tuber melanosporum* (truffles) production, herbal plants and aromatics are also produced.

107. 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 focus 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 of Gorges du Gardon* in cooperation with local partners and on-going programmes such as Agenda 21.

108. Several villages adjacent to the core area have no buffer zones; some of these are undergoing high rates of urbanization. The Council acknowledged the clarification of the zonation pattern with regard to effective conservation management with regard to this issue, received in response to the request of the Advisory Committee. It also acknowledged the requested clarification on the governance and coordination mechanism for the proposed area once the Parc naturel regional is established. The Council **approved** the site.

109. **Cacique Lempira, Señor de las Montañas (Honduras).** The Council welcomed this proposal submitted by Honduras. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the western part of the country and covers 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 a vital stopover area for neo-tropical migratory birds.

110. The Celaque Mountain National Park has the most diverse floristic structure of the country's cloud forests. 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.

111. The population of the proposed biosphere reserve comprises 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.

112. The Council believes that there is significant potential for exchange and learning opportunities with the tri-national Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve. The Council **approved** the site.

113. A video message from the President of the Republic of Honduras was presented in which he expressed the commitment of his country to the MAB Programme and biosphere reserves.

114. **Bromo Tengger Semeru-Arjuno (Indonesia).** The Council welcomed this proposal submitted by Indonesia. The proposed site is located in East Java province and has an 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 the Forest Protected Area of Raden Soerjo. There are 1,025 species of flora of which 226 species are orchids 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 IUCN red list species.

115. 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 agricultural development, especially for crops such as ornamental plants, fruits and vegetables. Another important production activity in the buffer zone is animal husbandry: farming of cattle, goats, sheep, horses, rabbits and chicken contributes to the local economy. Two local Universities – University of Brawijaya and University of Airlangga, together with the Indonesian Institute for Sciences (LIPI) have developed a comprehensive sustainability and environmental policy framework, especially focused on implementation of carbon reduction programmes, as well as biodiversity management.

116. The Council noted the on-going research activities in the area and the aim 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 Council **approved** the site.

117. The Council 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.

118. **Taka Bonerate-Kepulauan Selayar (Indonesia).** The Council welcomed this proposal submitted by Indonesia. The proposed site is located in 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 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 mangrove species include 22 to 26 species of 14 families, such as the *Rhizophora stylosa* and *Ceriops tagal*. Protected and threatened animals found at the proposed site include the scale turtle, green turtle, and napoleon fish.

119. The national authorities aim to make this site the leading area in coral reef 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 taken to help them achieve these goals. Despite Selayar Island's remoteness, the presence of an active airstrip in Selayar Island (Benteng) is an important precondition 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.

120. The Council 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 Council **approved** the site.

121. The Council encouraged the national authorities to implement the mechanisms they have proposed, such as enforcing the zonation system through the dissemination of legal information on the proposed biosphere reserve to the surrounding communities. The authorities are also encouraged reinforcement of the sustainability of the traditional lifestyle of the local communities living in the core area.

122. **Tang-e-Sayad and Sabzkuh (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council welcomed this proposal submitted by Iran. The proposed site is a combination of the reserves 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 the melting of glaciers and snow have formed several wetlands in the area, with rare fauna such as the wild cat and tiger snake. 22 fish species, including Pike barb and Mesopotamian catfish, inhabit the Karun River. This is the largest in Iran and runs through the proposed site. During the cold season, bushlands are used by migratory birds such as white stork and greater flamingo.

123. The presence of several rivers and springs in the proposed site has led to an increase in the development of agriculture and animal husbandry. Local handicrafts such as carpet, felt, dhurrie rugs and folk festivals, also offer tourism development potential. 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 handicrafts for both local and international markets. The national authorities also hope to develop the tourism and ecotourism potential of the area, to be managed by the local communities.

124. Shahr-e-Kurd University intends to establish a department of natural resources of central Zagros in Dorak Anari village, located in the proposed region. Due to the specific 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 new research centre will lead to the optimal management and coherence of related research for the site.

125. The Council congratulated the national authorities for the detailed information provided in

the nomination file. The Council noted with appreciation plans to revitalize land in areas which have been degraded as a result of past grazing activities of domestic livestock. The Council **approved** the site.

126. The Council encouraged the national authorities to finalize the management plan of the proposed area for submission to the MAB Secretariat.

127. **Appennino Tosco-Emiliano (Italy)**. The Council welcomed this proposal submitted by Italy. The proposed site is located in the Tuscany and the Emilia Romagna Regions, in north-central Italy. It covers the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine ridge from Passo della Cisa to Passo delle Forbici, the geographical and climatic boundary between continental Europe and Mediterranean Europe. It includes 38 municipalities. The area of the proposed site is 223,229 ha: 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.

128. The area contains almost 70% of Italy's species, including 122 species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, fish, the wolf, the Golden Eagle, and at least 260 aquatic and terrestrial plant species. The main economic activity is agriculture, in diverse landscapes. The tourism economy has recently been developed, 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, 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, to which may be added 68,500 tourists and seasonal second-home owners. The Council acknowledged the existence of a potential network for research, the numerous promotional and communication efforts carried out in the proposed site to manage tourism and conservation activities, and the promotion of education for sustainable development.

129. The Council also acknowledged that the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano national park worked with local and regional authorities and the network of the neighbouring area and established an MOU to involve stakeholders' local action groups, chambers of commerce, trade associations and environmental associations, such as Neve e Natura and Montagna Incantata. It also noted that the main scientific research described focuses on life sciences and conservation and encouraged further work on social aspects.

130. The Council acknowledged the submission, in response to the request of the Advisory Committee, of a further elaborated governance structure that is inclusive and comprehensive and ensures local stakeholders' participation in the decision making processes, as well as additional information on the tourism management. The Council **approved** the site.

131. **Ledro Alps and Judicaria (Italy)**. The Council welcomed the resubmission of this proposal from Italy which was deferred in 2014. The proposed site is located in the Trento region in northern Italy, between the Dolomites natural World Heritage Site and Lake Garda. Its area is 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 site includes two settlements around Lake Ledro and Lake Carera, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is also a highly valued tourist destination, with tourism representing the main source of

income for a permanent population of 15,845. Agriculture is the main economic activity, with viticulture, olive, fruit and vegetable growing, animal husbandry among others.

132. The Council welcomed the additional information provided in response to the 2014 MAB ICC recommendations. It noted that the authorities clarified the issue related to conflicts 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 Council 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 process of establishment. The Council also noted that the tourism management and Park management plans are now clearer. The Council **approved** the site.

133. 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 Council encouraged the Italian authorities to improve the various surveys and to communicate their results to the MAB Secretariat.

134. **Po Delta (Italy)**. The Council welcomed the resubmission of this proposal which was deferred in 2014. The proposed site is located in northern Italy. It comprises 139,398 ha, covering 16 municipalities and populated by 120,000 inhabitants. The proposed area is a plain produced by the action of the Po River 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, fish 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 site is an important tourist destination. Together with agriculture and fish farming, tourism is the main economic activity of local communities. The Council noted with appreciation the efforts to involve local stakeholders in the consultation process.

135. The Council 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 Council **approved the site**.

136. The Council 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.

137. **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. Its area 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 of the 254 fungi species, 63 of the 80 moss species, 15 of 17 of the vegetation types and 114 of the 180 plant formations of the Western Tien Shan. Approximately 2,500 insect species are currently registered on the territory of the proposed site.

138. 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). The territory of the proposed 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 a famous location 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 the observation of rare birds and analysis of their distribution on the territory. Other studies concern 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.

139. The Council acknowledged with appreciation the re-submission of this nomination proposal which it deferred in 2014 with the request that the national authorities: 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.

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

141. The Council welcomed this updated nomination and **approved** the site.

142. The Council encouraged the Kazakhstan national authorities to pursue the possibilities of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with neighbouring countries.

143. **Inlay Lake (Myanmar).** This proposed site is situated in Taunggyi District, Southern Shan State, with an 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 is reportedly the second largest inland lake in Myanmar. Its wetland ecosystem is home to 267 species of birds, including 82 wetland birds, 43 species of freshwater fish, otters and turtles. In addition, freshwater fish from the wetland constitute the major protein food source of the people of Inlay. The lake has diverse flora and fauna species and is a nesting place for the globally endangered Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*).

144. In addition to its ecological importance, Inlay Lake is 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 a famous type of agriculture, 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, including clean air, clean water, cooler climate, tranquility and serenity, fish stocks, ecotourism resources and tourism destinations, part of water supply system for a hydropower plant, sustainable livelihoods and community support.

145. The Council acknowledged with appreciation the re-submission of the nomination which it deferred in 2014 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 as buffer zones whenever possible. The Council noted that, in accordance with its recommendation, the national authorities have revised the zonation, so that the local inhabitants are in the buffer zone and particularly the transition area. It also noted that the updated nomination shows that no development activities are undertaken in the core area and tourism activities are very restricted.

146. The Council welcomed this updated nomination 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 Council therefore **approved** the site.

147. It recommended that the national authorities encourage organic farming with traditional crop varieties which require the use of less fertilizers and pesticides.

148. **Hanma (People's Republic of China).** The proposed site is located in Inner Mongolia and is described as an important part of the Taiga in China. It protects diverse forest and wetland ecosystems. The proposed site covers 148,948 ha: 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 anthropogenic impacts. 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 balance of the Heilongjiang area and along the Jiliuhe River, as well as supporting the rare wildlife.

149. 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, the authorities responsible for Hanma Nature Reserve have been searching for a path to build tourism as the pillar industry. The authorities believe that the development of ecological tourism in the proposed site 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.

150. The Council welcomed the re-submission of this nomination which it deferred in 2014. The Council commended the national authorities for providing additional information on participation of local communities in the management of the site. 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.

151. The Council observed that, in accordance with its 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 Council acknowledged the submission of additional information on the legal status of the outer zone north of the boundary of the proposed core area as well as a document bearing the signature of the authorities of the Heilongjiang province who are in charge of the management of the eastern buffer zone. The

Council therefore **approved** the site.

152. **Gouritz Cluster (South Africa).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposed biosphere reserve located in southern South Africa. The proposed site covers 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) and has 261,240 inhabitants (2007 census). It is a cluster biosphere reserve, divided into four connected sectors ranging from sea level to 2,240m. The Council 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 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 context of climate change.

153. 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 faces 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 addressing. One promising way is to solve youth unemployment by building grassroots models of pro-poor enterprises and employment development connected to biodiversity, which will foster eco-tourism in the region.

154. The Council congratulated the authorities for the improvement of the zonation pattern which now comprises well delimited core areas, buffer zones and transition areas conforming to the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council acknowledged the extensive stakeholder consultations undertaken during the nomination process. The Council **approved** the site.

155. The Council encouraged the authorities to consolidate the overall management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.

156. **Magaliesberg (South Africa).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposed biosphere reserve covering an area of 357,870 ha (58,212 ha core area, 109,561 ha buffer zone and 190,097 ha transition area) located between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg in the east and Rustenburg in the west, with a total of 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 includes floral species such as *Aloe peglerae* and *Frithia pulchra*, unique to the proposed site, and fauna including *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.

157. The proposed site, facing a high level of unemployment and poverty, is adjacent to major urban infrastructure which impacts its development pattern and economy, which is dominated by primary activities (agriculture, mining), urban development and tourism. The Council 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 would also stimulate conservation and promote inter alia sustainable tourism, farming and living (solar power, water saving) practices. A strong brand identity will be developed.

158. The Council commended the authorities for the improvement of the zonation pattern which excludes the Pelindaba nuclear centre and its surrounding area. Based on additional consultation, the revised zonation conforms to the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council also acknowledged the additional information provided with regard to the establishment of a permanent coordinating body derived from the current highly participative Board structure.

159. The Council therefore **approved** the site.

160. **Macizo de Anaga (Spain).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this 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. This is located in the northeast of the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands. The area is 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).

161. Macizo de Anaga hosts a 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 Protection Area and Special Areas of Conservation. Geologically, the massif is one of the oldest areas on the island with rocks dating back 7 to 9 million years. Over this long period, the area has experienced cycles of volcanic and erosive activity, resulting in a rich geological and geomorphological mosaic.

162. In total, 22,249 people live permanently in the area of the proposed biosphere reserve. They 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).

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

164. **Meseta Iberica (Spain/Portugal).** The Council 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 vary from 100 to 2,000 metres 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 pernopterus*), Bonelli's eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), European otter (*Lutra lutra*), and Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus*

signatus).

165. 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 the 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.

166. The Council 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, new incomes for local communities and the cooperation between both countries should reverse the present rural exodus and revitalize this territory.

167. 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, located outside the proposed area. The Council **approved** the site.

168. The Council advised the national authorities to strengthen cooperation with this Natura 2000 protected area.

169. **Langbiang (Vietnam).** The Council welcomed this proposed site which is located in Lam Dong Province. It has an area of 275, 439 ha (core area 34,943 ha; buffer zone 72,232 ha; transition area 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. The biodiversity of this region is very high. 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, and on International Red Lists.

170. 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 standards 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 generate the greatest revenues in the region. There are a number of planned investment projects for the core area and the buffer zone with a view to improving its overall management and protection. Research on fauna and flora and diversity of other resources also takes place.

171. The Council congratulated the national authorities for the detailed information provided. The Council 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 Council lauded the national authorities for empowering the indigenous people through the successful practice of PES scheme and by employing them as

rangers. The Council **approved** the site.

172. The Council advised that the national authorities develop an integrated management plan to cover the three zones of the proposed biosphere reserve. The authorities are also invited to provide a topographical map of the Bidoup Nui Ba National Park which clearly shows its boundaries.

173. **Nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information**

174. **Tlemcen Mountains (Algeria).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of Monts de Tlemcen proposal, noting that it had examined the original submission in 2014. The Council recalled that Tlemcen National Park is situated in the Tlemcen Province, encompassing rich biodiversity, valuable archaeological sites, cultural landmarks and caves. The Council appreciated that the revised nomination included additional information regarding the development functions of the proposed site. As now proposed, the biosphere reserve would cover 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 3,422.5 ha, and the transition area 3,464.04 ha. While the zonation had been revised compared to the original submission through a reduction in the total size of the core areas, so that that are surrounded by buffer zone and transition areas, the Council 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.

175. Therefore, the Council requested the Algerian authorities to submit additional information 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 with justification of the delineation of the zones should be provided.
- A management plan for a larger biosphere reserve which includes areas outside the Tlemcen National Park should be prepared.

176. The Council therefore **approved this proposal pending** the fulfilment of the above requests, with the relevant information to be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by the 15th February 2016. The Bureau would then evaluate this information and, if it agreed that this is sufficient, the site would then become a biosphere reserve immediately. The Secretariat would then announce this and inform the Algerian authorities.

177. **Agasthyamala (India).** The Council welcomed this proposed site which is located in the southernmost end of the Western Ghats with a peak reaching 1,868 m above mean sea level. It covers 350,000 ha, mostly tropical forests, within 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 one of the biodiversity hot spots of the Western Ghats, with 2,254 species of higher plants, including about 400 endemics. It is also a unique genetic reservoir of cultivated plants especially for cardamom, jamune, nutmeg, pepper and plantain. It also includes three wildlife sanctuaries –

Shendurney, Peppara, Neyyar and one Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger reserve.

178. A number of tribal settlements with a total population of 3,000 are located in the core area of the proposed site; non-tribal families live in the fringe area of the forests. The people use a wide variety of biological resources for their sustenance but are rarely involved in commercialization. Through a process which involves participatory planning and the implementation of activities which reduce dependence on the forests 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”.

179. 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.

180. The Council welcomed this proposal and noted the commitment of the national authorities to ensuring 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 is described as undisturbed. The Council 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.

181. The Council 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 Council recommended that it should be given legal protection.

182. The Council therefore **approved this proposal pending** the fulfilment of the above requests and the submission of relevant information to the MAB Secretariat by 15th February 2016.

183. **Nominations recommended for deferral**

184. **Theniet El Had (Algeria).** The Council welcomed the resubmission of Theniet El Had, noting that it had examined the original submission in 2014. The Council recalled that the Theniet El Had National Park, situated in the Ouarsenis mountain range in the west central Atlas of Algeria, is home to rare mammals and several trees, such as Atlas cedar, and plant species of very high conservation value. The Council 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 project would apply to an area of around 8,100 ha spread over three distinct biogeographic areas. However, the Council concluded that, although zonation maps were provided showing the extent of the proposed extension, this was work in progress: the zonation data and other background management information for the proposed biosphere reserve still focused only on the national park. Notably, the zonation data provided indicate that the area of the proposed biosphere reserve would be 3,424 ha (core areas 407 ha; buffer zones 637 ha; transition area 2,380 ha).

185. Therefore, the Council **deferred** this proposal and invited the Algerian authorities 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 with justified delineations. 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.

186. **Khakassky (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, located in the centre of the Altai-Sayan mountains in the Republic of Khakassia. The proposed biosphere reserve is comprised of the two separated units of the existing Khakassky State Nature Reserve, a specially protected natural area representing a unique complex of steppe and taiga landscapes. It has a total area of 2,871,400 hectares (core area: 100,499 ha, buffer zone: 416,353 ha, transition area: 2,354,548 ha). It is included in the WWF “Global-2000” list as one of the virgin or little altered ecoregions in which 90% of biodiversity on Earth is concentrated.

187. The climatic and natural conditions offer a diversity of landscapes and virgin or little altered ecoregions such as lakes, mountains, forest, and 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).

188. 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 Council noted that long-term monitoring, research and the environmental policy strategy of the proposed area are 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 management of tourism, with the intention to develop and implement innovative programs for the sustainable livelihoods of local people.

189. The Council considered that the information provided regarding the functioning of the two separate units as an integrated biosphere reserve was insufficient. It strongly encouraged the authorities to consider the preparation of two separate biosphere reserve proposals, one encompassing steppe and the other mountain taiga ecosystems. It further encouraged the authorities to submit new nomination files with different names for both sites that would be distinguished from the name of the existing protected areas. The Council 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 reserve(s). The Council **deferred** this proposal.

190. **Tajo/Tejo (Spain/Portugal).**The Council noted the submission of the proposal for the Tajo/Tejo Biosphere Reserve by the Spanish authorities as part of a transboundary biosphere reserve nomination. As this nomination file is not complete, the Council **deferred** the proposal and encouraged the Spanish and Portuguese authorities to submit their proposal before 30th September 2015 in order to complete the nomination dossier of the proposed transboundary site.

191. Withdrawal of nomination dossiers of proposals for new biosphere reserves

192. The Secretariat informed the ICC that two countries had sent official letters to withdraw proposals for new biosphere reserves. Subsequently, the Council noted the withdrawal of the nomination dossiers of the following new biosphere reserves proposals: Rio Grande (Bolivia) and Isla Cozumel (Mexico).

193. With 20 new biosphere reserves, including 1 transboundary biosphere reserve, being added to the World Network of biosphere reserves (WNBR), the WNBR is now composed of 651 biosphere reserves, including 15 transboundary biosphere reserves in 120 countries and the first site in one new member of the WNBR, Myanmar.

XI. Periodic review of biosphere reserves and follow-up of recommendations

194. The Secretariat introduced the item by indicating that, at its last session, the Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves examined 41 periodic review reports and 30 follow-up reports. This included 21 replies from countries to the letters sent by the MAB Secretariat for the implementation of the Exit Strategy. Three countries sent additional information that was examined by the Bureau of the ICC.

195. The rapporteur of the Bureau then presented the results of the deliberations of the Bureau which showed the recommendations by category, highlighted in different colours in the Tables of annex 1 and 2 of the document to facilitate the discussions. These categories included: a) sites which meet the criteria, to be formally recognized by the Council, according to paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework; b) sites which do not meet the criteria, so that further measures are required (paragraph 5 of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework); c) sites for which not enough information was available to assess whether the site is or not meeting the criteria.

196. The Council formally recognized that many sites fulfill the criteria of the Statutory Framework and adopted the following recommendations:

197. **Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve (Australia).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002. The Council noted the minor changes in the zones of the biosphere reserve, especially the delineation of a marine core area of 4,450 ha. The site includes numerous biological communities over an extensive geographical area that is centred on a marine bay. The terrestrial component of the reserve consists of a peninsula separating Western Port and Port Phillip Bay, and the southern part of the catchment of Western Port, together with several islands within Western Port.

198. Since the designation of the site in 2002, there has been significant expansion of the urban area, with areas that were formerly farmland rapidly being developed into housing developments. This rapid expansion is having an impact on the biodiversity of the region and

has the potential to change the economic balance of the biosphere reserve, by creating pressures on agricultural activities through the loss of arable land.

199. Human activities such as commercial fishing, livestock raising, land clearance and its impact on water quality, and the enormous demands on the marine environment make it vital to deal with the issue of sustainable use within the region. The Council observed that the national authorities have not developed a comprehensive management plan of the biosphere reserve.

200. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve. It recommended that the national authorities develop a comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve in the near future.

201. **Pendjari Biosphere Reserve (Benin).** The Council welcomed this second periodic review report of this biosphere reserve, designated in 1986. It commended the authorities for their effort to address the recommendations of the Council in 1999. The involvement of the population and participative management of the site had been significantly improved and a “*Comité de Développement*” has been established for its co-management. An efficient Access and Benefit Sharing scheme for hunting activities is a successful incentive to increase conservation awareness. The Council welcomed the partnership with private sector which provides green job opportunities for local communities. In concordance with other sectoral local, national and regional development plans, the current management plan (2004-2013) is under revision for 2015-2020. Since 2000, a clear regulation of agriculture, fishing and harvesting activities has been in place in the biosphere reserve. The encroachment on the protected areas has decreased: a clear indication of the efficient integrated management of the site.

202. A new zonation has been designed, based on broad stakeholder consultation and an updated map and management plan was elaborated in 2002. The zonation map was adopted by a presidential decree in 2005. The total area has slightly decreased to 476,596 ha, with a decreased core area of 102,840.6 ha and an increased buffer zone of 373,756.1 ha. The limit of the transition area is not well defined; however the current location of development areas is defined by the villages adjacent to the buffer zone and the number of inhabitants is declared in the periodic review. The Council concluded that, though the limit of the transition area is not clearly delineated, this does not affect the integration of the three functions.

203. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested the country to provide a three-colour zonation map clearly showing the core area, buffer zone and a delimited transition area by the 30th September 2015. The authorities should also submit a management plan when completed.

204. **Mare aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve (Burkina Faso).** The Council welcomed this second periodic review report of the Mares aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. It commended the authorities for their effort to address recommendations formulated by MAB ICC in 1997. In this regard, the Council acknowledged the reinforcement of staff dedicated to the coordination and the management of the biosphere reserve; the involvement of local communities in design of the management plan; and the implementation of development activities targeting local people. It also noted the research activities and partnerships with universities.

205. The Council noted that the map provided with the periodic review report does not show a

transition area, which is in contradiction with the declared transition area of 28,000 ha in the nomination form.

206. The Council also noted that the authorities used the periodic review form for transboundary biosphere reserves, which focuses on transboundary issues, despite the letter sent from the MAB Secretariat to alert the national authorities of this oversight. Therefore, most of the required information is missing, preventing the Council from being able to assess if the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

207. The Council therefore requested the authorities to submit their periodic review on the official form, together with all required annexes and supporting documents, before 30 September 2015. This periodic review should, inter alia, provide extensive information on the zonation, logistic and development functions and governance of the biosphere reserve.

208. W Biosphere Reserve (Burkina Faso, part of the W transboundary Biosphere Reserve with Benin and Niger). The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the part of W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve on the territory of Burkina Faso. The transboundary biosphere reserve was established in 2002 between Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger. The Council noted that the authorities used the periodic review form for transboundary biosphere reserves, which focuses on transboundary issues, despite the letter sent from the MAB Secretariat to alert the national authorities of this oversight. Therefore, most of the required and critical information at national level is missing, preventing the Council from being able to assess if the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Furthermore, it is difficult to separate information on the transboundary and the national site.

209. The Council requested the authorities to submit the periodic review of the national part of the transboundary biosphere reserve with the required annexes and supporting documents on the appropriate form by 30 September 2015 for its review during the 2016 session. This periodic review should, inter alia, provide extensive information on conservation measures, improved development and logistic functions, and governance structure.

210. Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve (Canada). The Council welcomed this second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1989. The biosphere reserve is located about 80 km east of Quebec City and borders the Saint Lawrence River to the north. The site includes diverse ecosystems including agricultural areas, rivers, estuarine tidal marshes and flats, mountain tundra, and coniferous and mixed forests, the latter covering 80% of the biosphere reserve. The main activities are services, industrial and commercial, agriculture. 30,000 people live in this area, which has some 900,000 visitors a year.

211. The Council noted that several conservation initiatives were initiated or supported by the biosphere reserve. It also noted that more activities are planned in the buffer zones and transition areas. Furthermore, efforts were made to streamline sustainable development in various activities, especially recreation, tourism, agriculture and forestry, but also environmental education. It also noted with appreciation the efforts made over the last ten years to improve the governance by the *Corporation de la Réserve de biosphère de Charlevoix*.

212. The Council noted that the periodic review report was prepared by two experts who made more than 40 recommendations for the site to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework, with specific timeline. It noted that one of these recommendations is to extend the site from 4,600 km² to 6,870 km². However, the Council noted that the zonation is not clear, and noted with great concern the lack of funds and adequate staff to coordinate the biosphere reserve.

213. Based on the information in the report, the Council considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve. Nevertheless, it noted the high potential of the site to meet the criteria, pending adequate funding and staff resources. The Council requested the authorities to provide the Secretariat with a clear zonation map, and encouraged the Canadian MAB national committee to provide adequate support for the biosphere reserve to meet the recommendations and to document options for funding for the biosphere reserve from federal, provincial and private sources by 30 September 2015.

214. **Yancheng Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1992. It includes various types of ecosystems, such as primary coast wetland, estuarine and marine ecosystems, as well as various artificial ecosystems. This area contains one-tenth of the total of China's coastal biodiversity.

215. The Council noted the detailed findings of the on-site ten-year review carried out by a team of experts organized by the Chinese National MAB Committee. This process revealed the achievements in the last ten years in the biosphere reserve, and also the challenges. Based on this review report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and made the following recommendations to the national authorities:

- Cooperate with landowners inside and around the reserve.
- Use a scientific approach for economic development around the biosphere reserve.
- Establish a systematic local survey plan and monitoring method.
- Strictly and scientifically monitor human activity inside the reserve.
- Consider setting up an ecological compensation system.
- Establish an ecological products brand to promote the harmonious development of the reserve and communities.

216. The Council also noted that the diversity of phytoplankton, zooplankton, benthic animals and fish in the marine waters is very high, and recommended that the national authorities consider adding marine coastal areas to the biosphere reserve.

217. **La Amistad (Costa Rica).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1982. The biosphere reserve is located in the southern part of Costa Rica, with high mountain ranges (the highest peak at 3,820 m) and 12 indigenous territories. It borders two other biosphere reserves: Cordillera Volcanica Central to the north and La Amistad (Panama) to the south. It also contains the La Amistad Transboundary World Heritage site and the La Amistad International Park.

218. During the periodic review process, the biosphere reserve readjusted the zonation system following the previous recommendations of the Council, with strong participation from local communities and stakeholders. The biosphere reserve is developing bi-national activities with the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve in Panama. The managing authorities of the biosphere reserve are working closely with the local communities for the approval of the new zonation system. Although the biosphere reserve does not have its own management plan, it implements the three functions of a biosphere reserve.

219. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

220. The Council acknowledged receipt of additional information in response to the request of the Advisory Committee.

221. The National Authorities informed the Council about the new management committee created in 2014 and their management plan, which will be ready in 2016. They also explained that this biosphere reserve is working closely with its Panama counterpart through the Binational Technical Unit under the Costa Rica – Panama Transboundary Convention. The Council noted that the National Authorities have not decided to create a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve at this time.

222. **Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve (Dominican Republic).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The biosphere reserve comprises three National Parks, with a high level of endemism among its flora and fauna.

223. A number of important activities have been carried out recently, including the development of a strategic management plan, which defines the functions and zonation of the biosphere reserve; the creation of a new Dominican Republic National MAB Committee; the establishment of the Caribbean Biological Corridor between Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic, which includes the biosphere reserve; the construction of a wind power plant in 2007 to promote sustainable energy production; the establishment of a new wine industry in Neyba, creating new jobs; and the establishment of the Quisqueya Verde Plan, which promotes reforestation brigades. These activities and the support of the international cooperation agencies (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Spanish Autonomous Authority for National Parks (OAPN) and KfW Bankengruppe have helped to implement a range of activities promoting conservation and sustainable development.

224. The biosphere reserve played a key role in the aftermath of the earthquake that affected Haiti in 2010, as the main terrestrial humanitarian corridor traversed this biosphere reserve. Since 2008, the endorheic Enriquillo lake has expanded; this is affecting surrounding communities. As a result, the community of Boca de Cachon was evacuated due to flood risk. A similar situation occurred in the Haitian Azueire Lake; this is also impacting the neighbouring biosphere reserve, La Selle in Haiti (nominated in 2012). The biosphere reserve has initiated discussions and activities to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve with the La Selle Biosphere Reserve.

225. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council strongly encouraged the national authorities to:

- Improve the zonation, by better defining the buffer zone to protect the core area.
- Consider creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with Haiti.

226. **Cévennes Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1985. It is located in the south of the Massif Central, with a diversity of landscapes shaped by human activities, such as the limestone “causses”, the granite massifs of Aigoual and Mont Lozère, and the schist mountains of the Cévennes. These ecosystems constitute a variety of habitats including pine and fir forests, Mediterranean scrublands, cliffs, rivers and peatlands among others, hosting 70 species of

mammals, 195 species of bird and amphibians inter alia. The main economic activities are agriculture and tourism.

227. The Council noted that the total area has increased from 305,000 to 372,000 ha, with an increase of the core area (15,000 to 93,761 ha) and a decrease of the buffer zone (90,000 to 60,403 ha) and transition areas (200,000 to 114,271 ha) in order to implement a more effective management of the site. The Council also noted with appreciation the involvement of local population in the consultation and decision-making processes. It welcomed the participatory process that resulted in a Charter for the biosphere reserve based on 8 themes, emphasizing the maintenance of natural and cultural heritage resources, support to agro pastoral systems, sustainable valorization of the forests among others.

228. The Council noted that substantive efforts have been made to make the biosphere reserve more visible vis-à-vis its designation as both a national park and a World Heritage Site (inscribed in 2009), notably by the use of the three logos in all communications. It noted with appreciation the comprehensive consultation efforts, and that some local communes did not yet support the biosphere reserve, which translated into territorial discontinuity in the zonation. It also noted the success of the Galeizon as an experimental commune that diffused good practices and support for the biosphere reserve. It also welcomed the twinning and cooperation with the Montseny Biosphere Reserve in Spain, in research, training and education activities.

229. The Council, however, considered that the zonation **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves because of the lack of support of some communes. The Council encouraged the authorities to continue their dialogue with these communes as well as to implement the charter and management plan to secure their support and to ensure territorial consistency and continuity with the zonation. The Council requested that a report on progress made on consultations and consequent updating of the zonation should be sent to the Secretariat by 30 September 2018 (as planned in the Charter and management plan).

230. **General recommendation to Germany.** The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided by Germany, including clear zonation maps for the three sites. It strongly acknowledged the progress made by the authorities in consultation with local stakeholders to address previous recommendations and to ensure a zonation that meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in the three sites. It further encouraged the authorities to pursue their efforts to ensure that the three sites have transition areas that are in conformity with the Statutory Framework criteria and requested updates on progress made on the zonation of the three sites by 30 September 2015.

231. The Council acknowledged that the three sites Waddensea of Lower Saxony, Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein and Waddensea of Hamburg benefit from multiple designation status: biosphere reserves, UNESCO's Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, Natura 2000 and others under national legislation. It also noted that the three management goals of the biosphere reserves are integrated into management plans at local, regional and international levels (Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan, Integrated Landscape and Cultural Heritage Management and Development Plan for the Wadden Sea Region).

232. The Council acknowledged the development of the institutional cooperation among the three Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserves, the improvement of trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation and the revision of the Wadden Sea transnational plan.

233. The Council noted that the German authorities do not recommend creating a single Waddensea Biosphere Reserve, and that the German authorities had provided additional information in this regard.

234. **Waddensea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1993. The Waddensea of Lower Saxony is one of the 3 German biosphere reserves located in the Wadden Sea, the largest unbroken intertidal sand and mud flats system in the world.

235. Along the Lower Saxonian coast and most parts of the East Friesian Islands, the biosphere reserve covers precious ecosystems such as salt meadows, salt marshes, dunes and beaches, habitat for more than 1,000 animal species and flora. This area plays an important role for the survival of bird species as over one million migratory birds pass by twice a year, breeding and wintering. Ecological and socio-cultural monitoring is carried out, as well as projects promoting sustainable development, among them sustainable education, natural tourism and agriculture. Agriculture and the production of renewable energy are the characteristic activities of the area, and form part of the traditional landscape.

236. The Council commended the inclusion of regional stakeholders in the National Park Advisory Board, as a legally defined stakeholder board for the biosphere reserve, and the creation of the biosphere reserve department within the National Park services. The Council encouraged the authorities to continue their efforts to develop sustainable tourism and joint education initiatives. It acknowledged the receipt of the clear zonation map and further encouraged the authorities to work on the updating of the zonation, in particular the transition area, and to send information on the transition area and development function by 30 September 2015.

237. **Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1990 and extended in 2004. The Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein is one of the three German biosphere reserves located in the Wadden Sea, the largest unbroken intertidal sand and mud flats system in the world. More specifically the biosphere reserve extends from the Danish border to the Elbe River estuary. Human activities are fishing, tourism, research, education and agriculture.

238. The Council noted with satisfaction that the authorities had addressed its previous recommendations through appropriate actions. It welcomed the extension of cooperation between various stakeholder groups e.g. the Hallig Biosphere Association, Island and Halligen Conference executive working group, Biosphere Council, national park boards of trustees and the Biosphere Reserve Administration. It also acknowledged that this intensive cooperation had led to many successful projects such as the “Programme to Safeguard and Improve Income Sources for the Hallig Island Communities through Landscape Management and Agriculture, Coast Protection and Tourism”, “The Hallig Islands Program” and others. Moreover, local people have been engaged since their adhesion to the principles for the strategy of sustainable development in 2010. The Hallig Island communities voted in 2011 to develop the Halligen as a carbon-neutral region.

239. The Council recommended further improvement of zonation with close cooperation with the stakeholders by enlargement of transition areas, as mentioned in the report. It also encouraged efforts to increase visibility of the biosphere reserve through biosphere reserve

branding and a communication strategy, using experiences from EuroMAB and the WNBR. The Council acknowledged receipt of a clear zonation map and further encouraged the authorities to pursue their efforts to improve the zonation, in particular the transition area, and to send updated information on progress made by 30 September 2015.

240. **Waddensea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1992. The Waddensea of Hamburg is one of the three German biosphere reserves located in the Wadden Sea, in the largest unbroken intertidal sand and mud flats system in the world. More specifically the reserve is located on the North Sea coast of Germany and is situated close to the mouth of the Elbe River. It is classified as a National Park, a Ramsar site and an EU Special Protection Area for wild birds.

241. It contains estuarine systems such as sand and mudflats with channels, islands and salt marshes, habitat for diverse species of birds and fish but also for the seal *Phoca vitulina*. However, human activities, especially pollution discharged from the Elbe River, created negative impacts on the ecosystem. Tourism is the main economic activity, and the Council noted that it has been well developed through exhibitions, environmental and historical education. It also noted with satisfaction that issues related to expansion of tourism are addressed in a sustainable way by protecting cultural and natural landscape following the sustainable development/ renewable energy strategy for the island.

242. The Council noted that the participatory process in the management of the site is being promoted through island talks and dike inspections, performed by the authorities, experts and local people. It recommended that the biosphere reserve is used as a model for addressing sustainable energy use and climate change in partnership with decision-making authorities and stakeholders in the site. The Council acknowledged the zonation map and that a transition area was in development.

243. It further encouraged the authorities to work on the updating the zonation, in particular the transition area, and to send information on the transition area and a copy of the Strategy detailing further actions and projects for the comprehensive fulfillment of the development function by 30 September 2015.

244. **General recommendation for Guinea.** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report of the Haut Niger and Badiar Biosphere Reserves, both designated in 2002.

245. The Council acknowledged the crisis experienced by both biosphere reserves after the termination in 2003 of the “*Appui à la gestion intégrée des ressources naturelle*” (AGIR) project which provided most resources to the biosphere reserve, and that this has impacted the management of the biosphere reserves. It welcomed the information that the situation has improved since 2010 and that the national authorities have made funds available.

246. However, the Council considered that the periodic review report lacks essential requested information; updated maps in particular the zonation maps, annexes and supporting documents are missing. Therefore, the Council considered that the two sites **do not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

247. The Council encouraged the country to pursue the initiative of establishing a transboundary biosphere reserve Badiar-Niokolo-Koba with Senegal which would benefit mutually from the reinforced management of these sites.

248. **Boloma Bijagos Biosphere Reserve (Guinea Bissau).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review of this site, designated in 1996. It comprises an archipelago of 84 islands, 21 of them inhabited. These islands are known for their strong cultural values.

249. The Council commended the authorities for the extensive information provided and for the outstanding overall improvement in the management of the biosphere reserve with regard to the three functions and the related integrated management of the site. It also congratulated the authorities for a good governance structure which is articulated from local to national level and involves all categories of stakeholders, in particular traditional authorities. It welcomed the establishment of the Institute for Protected Areas (IBAP in 2004) which oversees the management of the biosphere reserve at the national level and of the endowment fund which will, inter alia, provide part of the sustainable financing of the activities of the biosphere reserve.

250. The Council noted with satisfaction the legal protection of the core areas and that the establishment of the third core area in 2005 was initiated by the local communities. The Environment House in Bubaque Island serves as a support for the logistic function by providing the space for training, exhibitions and meetings of various management committees, in particular the annual general assembly of the biosphere reserve. The decisions of the general assembly have to be endorsed by a committee of Elders. Partnerships with international NGOs and research institutions are supporting conservation, development, scientific research and monitoring activities.

251. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. With regards to the increasing threats to the archipelago from global trade (fishing, offshore oil exploration, tourism, narcotics trafficking), the Council strongly encouraged the country to strengthen the management of the entire archipelago. It also requested the authorities to provide a copy of the updated management plan which was mentioned in the report but not attached to it.

252. **Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. It is located in the northern part of the country, and contains twenty-eight terrestrial and five marine-coastal ecosystems, grouped into three broad eco-regions. It includes tropical moist forest and tropical wet forest, as well as important coastal marine areas. The area was inscribed as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site in 1982.

253. The biosphere reserve is one of the most important protected areas of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The cultural values of the biosphere reserve are of great importance for over 2,000 indigenous people preserving their traditional way of life. The number of inhabitants living in the core area is uncertain due to the presence of an illegal settlement, which should be cleared in the coming months.

254. Although activities are under development in the biosphere reserve, the management plans and zonation system do not reflect clearly the value of the three functions of a biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the national authorities:

- Provide a new zonation system in line with the objectives of the MAB Programme.
- Define clearly the management committee.

- Present a management plan for the biosphere reserve.

255. The Council examined the additional information provided by the National Authorities in response to the request of the Advisory Committee. The authorities informed the Council of the “Studies in view of the redefinition of boundaries of Ríó Plátano Biosphere Reserve” by the International Assistance Panel of World Heritage Programme, which will lead to the homogenization of the zoning system, given the dual designation as both biosphere reserve and World Heritage Site. The country also stated that an Ad-Hoc Technical Committee had been established as the management system body to coordinate the biosphere reserve, and that this committee had prepared the management plan for the biosphere reserves for 2013 to 2025.

256. The Council congratulated the National Authorities for their responsiveness to the recommendations. After reviewing this new information, the Council acknowledged that although significant progress is being made, this Biosphere Reserve **still does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested the national authorities to provide the new zonation system and an updated management plan for 2013 – 2025 in line with the objectives of the MAB Programme by 30th September 2015.

257. Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve (former North Bull Island) (Ireland), extension and renaming. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1981. North Bull Island is a small island in Dublin Bay. The extended biosphere reserve comprises Dublin Bay and adjacent land, including part of Dublin, the capital city of Ireland. It has a rich diversity of ecosystems such as well-developed salt-marshes, lagoons and dune systems. The biosphere reserve is designated as a Ramsar site as it is an important nesting and wintering area for bird species.

258. The Council noted that the report proposed a change of name to Dublin Bay and that the total surface area will increase from 1,008 ha to 30,536 ha to encompass the entire Bay and adjacent land. More specifically, it noted that the changes concern the core areas: 5,029 ha (formerly 80 ha), the buffer zones: 8,241.05 ha (formerly 186 ha) and the transition areas: 17,266.36 ha (formerly 742 ha). The Council acknowledged the ambitious proposed enlargement of the site.

259. The Council noted that the existing biosphere reserve has promoted educational and recreational values, and receives multiple visitors and schools through a national programme called “green schools”. The Council welcomed the establishment of the Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership, comprising five institutions: Dublin Port; Dublin City Council; the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (which includes the National Park Wildlife Services); Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council; and Fingal County Council. The Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership will formulate a Biosphere Strategy and facilitate, promote and support the programmes and activities of the biosphere reserve in a democratic, inclusive and accessible way in order to integrate local communities.

260. The Council commended the authorities for preparing this periodic review through creating a partnership including regional stakeholders. The Council encouraged the authorities to pursue efforts to develop a sustainable green city and raise the environmental awareness of the citizens of Dublin. The Council commended the new zonation which includes both terrestrial and marine core areas.

261. The Council welcomed positively the change of name and considered that the proposed extended site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council thus recommended that this extension and the new name be approved. The Council further suggested that the authorities promote socio-ecological research activities within the biosphere reserve, especially regarding the tourism industry, urbanization and the activities of Dublin Port.

262. **Hustain Nuruu Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia)**. The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The Council noted that the report covered activities implemented from 2004-2013. It noted the high conservation value of this biosphere reserve and commended the authorities for the numerous activities and actions that have been undertaken to ensure the conservation function of this site.

263. The Council also commended the national authorities for the extensive consultations and collaborations with various stakeholders. The Council noted that this biosphere reserve fulfils very well its sustainable development functions. The Council also noted that this site implements the three major functions of a biosphere reserve. However, the Council observed that no zonation maps were included in the periodic review report and, even though a management plan was reported to exist, it was not included in the report.

264. The Council concluded that, without clear zonation maps, it was not possible to assess whether the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The national authorities are therefore requested to submit a zonation map clearly showing the core area, buffer zone and transition area and also to submit a new report using the official periodic review form available at the MAB website. The national authorities are requested to submit the above documents to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

265. **Delta du Saloum Biosphere Reserve (Senegal)**. The Council welcomed this well prepared second periodic review report of this biosphere reserve, designated in 1981. The area has outstanding natural, cultural and socio-economic features and has also been inscribed on the World Heritage list and designated as a Ramsar site.

266. The Council commended the improvement of the management of the biosphere reserve with regards to the zonation, management plan and involvement of local communities since the last report in 1999. The establishment of new Marine Protected Areas and Community Natural Reserves in addition to the existing Delta du Saloum National Park increased the conservation function of the biosphere reserve. A new zonation has been subsequently set up and a management plan has been developed. A strong momentum has been gained through the involvement of stakeholders for the management of the biosphere reserve. Local charters and agreements are regulating access and use of natural resources.

267. Development function with green jobs and sustainable activities has been developed along the years such as agriculture, market gardening, fishing and crafts making. Tourism has become an increasing source of income for the population. Environmental education programmes are implemented. Research and monitoring have been undertaken with the support of universities and research institutions in various areas of natural and social sciences. All these activities listed above are implemented in an integrated manner which supports the sustainable development of the area. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of the Biosphere Reserves.

268. The Council requested the country to provide, by 30 September 2015, the management

plan which is mentioned in the report and a map with a topographic layer so terrestrial, coastal and marine parts of the biosphere reserves can be distinguished. The Council strongly encouraged the country to pursue the Niimi-Saloum transboundary biosphere reserve initiative with Gambia.

269. **Samba Dia Biosphere Reserve (Senegal).** The Council welcomed the submission of this well prepared second periodic review of this biosphere reserve designated in 1979 and commended the country for the efforts to address recommendations formulated by the MAB ICC in 1999 and also for the participative process of this report.

270. The Council noted with satisfaction that a number of research activities have been carried out which have contributed to improve the management of the biosphere reserve. Agriculture, livestock production, agroforestry and craft are the main human activities. It is reported that the Palm tree (*Borassus akeassii*) population has increased, which is an evidence of the efficient management of the area. However, the use of its leaves for furniture may impact this good result. The rehabilitation project of the Samba Dia Biosphere Reserve provided necessary resources to improve the three functions of the biosphere reserve. Participation of communities is the common approach for the management of the area. A number of community based organizations are now active in the area.

271. Despite these good results, the Council noted that the zonation of the biosphere reserve is not complete as the buffer zone and transition area are missing. Therefore, the Council concluded that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

272. The Council requested the authorities to delineate a buffer zone and transition area for this biosphere reserve and to submit an updated zonation map together with a management plan to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

273. **The Karst Biosphere Reserve (Slovenia).** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2004. It is located in the south-eastern Slovenia and encompasses the Škocjan Caves Regional Park, the cave system of the Škocjan Caves, the Reka River and a classical karst region. The diversity of landscapes provides habitat for rare and endangered species of birds and bats, grey wolves, lynx, and brown bears, as well as manifold flora species.

274. The site is managed by a Regional Park administration in close cooperation with stakeholders, directly involved in permanent committees. It welcomed this management approach as an insurance of stakeholder participation which could serve as model for other biosphere reserves. It also welcomed the various projects targeted towards biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and emerging promotion of local products as well as training of biosphere reserve ambassadors as MAB Programme promoters. The Council also acknowledged the intensive networking in educational projects at various levels.

275. The Council noted the success of the international Comenius project “To Do It” focused on sustainable development promotion and education, as well as the establishment of a Promotion and Congress Centre with a library with a unique focus on UNESCO programmes and activities, as well as projects of International network of schools, which may be shared with other biosphere reserves. The Council acknowledged the multiple designation status of the biosphere reserve (Natura 2000, World Heritage Site, and Ramsar) and its active participation in the respective networks.

276. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council encouraged the authorities to consider the possibilities to extend the biosphere reserve to surrounding municipalities in the North, East and South in order to further strengthen sustainable development activities. The Council commended the authorities for the very well-prepared periodic report. The Council recommended that The Karst Biosphere Reserve be used as a model for cooperation and networking in the field of sustainable development education.

277. **Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas (Spain)**. The Council welcomed this third periodic review report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1983. It recognized that the national authorities had taken into consideration the Council's recommendations.

278. A new zonation has been proposed, including the totality of the Natural Park Sierras de Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas, and an updated map including the new zonation proposal has been provided. The biosphere reserve has developed a management plan which is currently awaiting its approval. The biosphere reserve has experienced positive socio-economic development, especially in activities that leverage the resources of the biosphere reserve: agriculture, livestock, forestry and tourism.

279. Tourism, a key sector in the economy of the biosphere reserve, has been strengthened through the implementation of sustainable quality criteria issued by the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, Natural Park Brand, Integrated Quality System Tourist Destination, Q of quality, ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. The biosphere reserve has strengthened and rehabilitated certain areas, especially priority habitats and those with Species of Community Interest, such as *Gypaetus barbatus*, previously thought to have disappeared.

280. The population of the biosphere reserve has been involved in its sustainable management through forums, the creation of an environmental volunteers' network and environmental education programmes. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

281. **Sierra de Grazalema Biosphere Reserve (former Grazalema Biosphere Reserve) (Spain)**. The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1977. To promote better links with the Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, which borders the biosphere reserve, and to help facilitate identification of the biosphere reserve area, a request has been made to rename this biosphere reserve as the Sierra de Grazalema Biosphere Reserve.

282. In 2004, the biosphere reserve joined the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism. Since then, the biosphere reserve has begun to develop a participative action plan with other local actors, with the objective of encouraging and enabling environmentally friendly tourism practices, including: ecological farming and the sustainable use of natural resources, the creation of a high-quality cheese label, and the sustainable use of cork. Today, tourism is one of the main economic drivers of the biosphere reserve. In 2006, the Natural Resources Management Plan and the Master Plan for Use and Management were approved. These define the objectives, guidelines and regulations for proper management of the biosphere reserve. The Sustainable Development Plan, which focuses on the development of a series of sustainability programmes, was also approved.

283. In 2012, the Royal Decree-Law 17/2012 of 4 May established a series of urgent

environmental measures. It indicated that, in the event that different protection categories overlap, their regulatory measurements and planning mechanisms must be coordinated and unified to ensure consistency. The Grazalema Biosphere Reserve is currently working on this issue as the following different protection categories currently overlap in its area: Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, Special Bird Protection Area and Special Conservation Area. The biosphere reserve also forms part of the Intercontinental Transboundary Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean (Spain and Morocco), which promotes knowledge exchange and cooperation. It also collaborates with the Andalusia Network of Biosphere Reserves and the Spanish Network of Biosphere Reserves.

284. The authorities have taken into consideration the recommendations made by the ICC in 2004. The zonation system is well defined and fulfils the three functions of a biosphere reserve. The Council therefore concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and approved the new name.

285. **Babia Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report of the Babia Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2004. The biosphere reserve is located in the northwest of the province of Leon and has large valleys and meadows rich in flora and fauna. The biosphere reserve is surrounded by several other biosphere reserves (Somiedo, Las Ubiñas-La Mesa, Valles de Omaña y Luna and Valle de Laciana), which form part of the Cantabrian mountain chain.

286. In 2009, the Management and Administration Consortium of the Babia Biosphere Reserve was created to meet the guidelines and objectives of the Seville Strategy and the Madrid Action Plan. The consortium is composed of different stakeholders, including municipal authorities, universities, associations and entrepreneurs, and develops projects that advance the sustainable management and economy of this mountain area. Since then, the biosphere reserve has worked actively to promote its functions and cultural values. In particular, the work of the biosphere reserve to promote cultural practices related to livestock rearing, which prevent wildfires and diminish the rural exodus, should be noted. The Babia Management Plan 2012–2020, which entered into force in 2013, consists of an Action Plan and a Participation Plan. Some strategic objectives have been shelved temporarily because of funding restrictions as a result of the economic crisis in the territory.

287. Recent discussions have centered around a new zonation proposal based on flora, fauna, geology and landscape studies undertaken by different organizations, including the University of León. This new proposal would allocate specific land uses to the core area, buffer zones and transition areas, from among the following categories: reserve use, limited use, compatible use and general use. The Council encouraged analysis of this approach with a view to redefining the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Council concluded that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves due to its current zonation.

288. **Bundala Biosphere Reserve (Sri Lanka).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2005. The Council acknowledged the submission of a management plan and an operational plan of the Bundala National Park, which covers all the core area, and parts of the buffer zone and transition area.

289. The Council noted the proposed changes in the zonation of the biosphere reserve, which will exclude one lagoon from the core area. A highly developed area has been excluded from the buffer zone and parts of the transition area. The total area has thus reduced from 24,838 ha

to 18,242.3 ha. The Council also noted that this biosphere reserve has a management committee composed of diverse stakeholders. The biosphere reserve has been very active with respect to the three biosphere reserve functions.

290. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council noted that the marine transition area is very narrow, and encouraged the national authorities to consider expanding this.

291. **Mae Sa-Kog Ma Biosphere Reserve (Thailand).** The Council welcomed this second periodic review report for the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. The Council noted that the total size of the biosphere reserve has increased from 42,064 to 51,051 ha. The core area has increased from 11,446 to 29,411 ha whereas the buffer zone has decreased from 30,618 to 10,213 ha. An area of 11,436 ha has been added to the transition area.

292. The biosphere reserve consists of various forest types and has high biodiversity, for example, Hill Evergreen Forest contains 112 plant species; Mixed Deciduous Forest contains 76 plant species; Dry Dipterocarp Forest contains 69 plant species; and Riparian area contains 87 plant species. A Watershed Research Station under the Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University, located in the biosphere reserve, conducts research in the fields of watershed science, forest structure and ecology in the area.

293. The Council concluded that the zonation of this biosphere reserve does not conform to the zonation criteria for biosphere reserves and thus it **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are therefore requested to revise the zonation of this site according to the Statutory Framework criteria and to provide maps showing the new zonation to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015. The national authorities are also requested to provide maps of the three national parks and indicate their location on the zonation map.

294. **Sakaerat Biosphere Reserve (Thailand).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for the Sakaerat Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. It is situated on the edge of Thailand Khorat Plateau about 300 km north-east of Bangkok. It was created around the Sakaerat Environmental Research Station (SERS), which was established in 1967 primarily as a site for research on dry evergreen and dry dipterocarp tropical forest. Other vegetation types in the biosphere reserve include bamboo forests, forest plantations and grasslands.

295. About 5,300 people live within the biosphere reserve, and are almost all Thai Buddhists. They make their living from crop plantations and growing paddy rice but also illegally use the forests for plant and mushroom gathering, hunting, and tree cutting. This had a detrimental effect on the forests, but has been greatly reduced by community education and outreach programmes since 2003.

296. The Council noted that the local economy has changed significantly from small family farms, to larger cooperative rice paddy fields, cassava plantations, and sugar cane fields. The cooperatively owned fields are typically managed cooperatively by local landowners. The fields are within the transition zone and are the primary source of income for most inhabitants of the biosphere reserve. Sakaerat Environmental Research Station (SERS) is responsible for the management and protection of the core area and buffer zone under the auspices of the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (TISTR).

297. The Council acknowledged the zonation map which clearly shows the core area, buffer zone and transition area. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the national authorities develop a more comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve.

298. **Danube Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Romania/Ukraine).** The Council welcomed this first joint periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1998 (a national periodic review report was submitted in 2003 by Romania and in 2010 by Ukraine). The transboundary biosphere reserve contains multiple lakes, channels, and islands within the Danube Delta, the largest European wetland, declared as both Natural World Heritage and Ramsar site in 1991 and well-known for its diversity of bird and fish species (312 species of birds and 90 species of fish), as well as the threatened monk seal. The main economic activities are agriculture, hunting, fishing and tourism; both countries are in economic transition.

299. The Council noted that numerous international projects have resulted in the exchange of knowledge, scientific data, education, sustainable tourism activities promotion, green energy use in each biosphere reserve. It also noted with satisfaction the good practice exchange with the renaturalization of the Yermakov Island in Ukraine as well as the international cooperation of Romania, Ukraine and Moldova through a project on managing biodiversity and sustainable development in the protected areas. It also noted with appreciation that these three countries elaborated a joint statement on adaptation to climate change in the region which was signed in 2013 by representatives of the government, academic and public organizations.

300. The Council noted that there is no information on the existence of a joint management structure that would coordinate joint activities and projects for the benefits of local communities and managers.

301. The Council concluded that the site does **not address the Pamplona recommendations** for transboundary biosphere reserves and requested the following actions:

- To document processes of involvement of individual sites and stakeholders in the preparation of the periodic review;
- Clarification of new established zones in Romania Ceplace Island and Prundu cu Păsări Islands and changes in zonation in the Ukraine part of the Transboundary site;
- To establish a joint management body for the transboundary site taking into account the local conditions;
- To increase the visibility of the transboundary site in the various projects being implemented and planned;
- To initiate cooperation with other transboundary biosphere reserves within the WNBR.

The authorities are also requested to provide the following information:

- A joint zonation map of the transboundary biosphere reserve and joint description of the different zones using the same methodology and statutory framework terminology for both sites;
- A joint working plan with specified objectives, milestones and vision for the transboundary biosphere reserve, especially with regard to scientific projects and sustainable development activities and implementation of the results in practice;

302. **Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed

this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The biosphere reserve is located on the central Oregon Coast of Cascade Head Experimental Forest, established in 1934 to represent typical Sitka spruce-western hemlock forests. This area has more than 350 species of wildlife and four federally listed endangered species, such as spotted owl and Oregon silver spot butterfly. Agriculture and forestry are the main economic activities. Environmental education and training programmes are conducted by the Sitka Center for Art and Humanity, and various institutions conduct research or monitoring in the biosphere reserve, such as the US Forest Service and Oregon State University, thus involving multiple stakeholders. The area has served for more than 25 years as the end point for the Oregon Transect, a study area that runs from the Pacific Coast east to the desert, crossing numerous environmental gradients and ecosystems. Long-term data are used extensively for modeling.

303. The Council noted that the focus is mainly scientific research and monitoring with strong conservation and logistic aspects, but that the development function of the biosphere reserve is limited.

304. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:

- A new periodic review report using the official periodic review form;
- Land use maps and a zonation map with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

305. **Everglades and Dry Tortugas Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The biosphere reserve includes two different National Parks located in Florida: Everglades National Park and the Dry Tortugas National Park. The Everglades National Park is the largest subtropical wilderness and the most threatened U.S. national park east of the Rocky Mountains, inscribed as a World Heritage Site and designated as a Wetland of International Importance. The Dry Tortugas National Park, located to the west of Key West, is composed of seven islands surrounded by many coral reef and sea grass formations, accessible only by boat or seaplane and known for its myriad bird and marine life as well as its shipwrecks, its legends of pirates, its military past and Fort Jefferson.

306. The biosphere reserve combines unique ecosystems and high cultural value. The two national parks contribute, in particular, to excellent conservation and research activities with the cooperation of several state and federal agencies, universities and organizations. Both national parks undertake outstanding work with the public, especially on the issues of nature conservation, education and outreach.

307. The Council noted that the focus is dominated by the national park objectives, with strong and excellent conservation and logistic aspects, but that the development function of the biosphere reserve is not very clear. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:

- Updated periodic review report using the official form;

- A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area;

308. The authorities should also consider the possibilities of extending the site upstream of the Everglades to better secure its conservation values and sustainable development.

309. **H.J. Andrews Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The biosphere reserve is located in the Cascade Range of western Oregon, in the drainage basin of Lookout Creek, a tributary of the Blue and McKenzie Rivers. In the mountainous landscape of the Pacific Northwest, its conifer forests are among the tallest, oldest (450 years old) and most productive in the world. This ecosystem provides a wide range of habitats for more than 4,000 species of invertebrates.

310. The biosphere reserve contributes to research activities of many institutions, including the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station, Oregon State University and the Willamette National Forest. The site is part of the Long-term Ecological Research Network, providing data and information for basic and applied research involving ecosystem functions, vegetation succession, nutrient dynamics and forest-stream interactions, studies of large wood and carbon cycling. It serves as a science benchmark for multiple themes and provides a foundation for regional studies.

311. The Council noted that the main focus was on scientific research and monitoring, with strong conservation and logistic aspects, but that the development function of the biosphere reserve is not very clear.

312. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

313. The Council requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:

- Updated periodic review report using the official form;
- A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

314. **Hubbard Brook Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The biosphere reserve is located in the White Mountain National Forest near Woodstock, in New Hampshire. The entire area is forested, chiefly with deciduous northern hardwoods, and the reserve is dedicated to long-term study of forest and its associated aquatic ecosystems. This ecosystem provides a wide range of habitats. Ecological studies and research programmes, emphasizing small watershed hydrology and biogeochemistry as well as the influences of natural and anthropogenic disturbances, are very active, conducted by the USDA Forest Service and a world-wide network of partners and cooperators.

315. The Council noted that fundamental forest ecology research is in place, and that it represents an important source for best management practice for north-eastern North America. It also noted that the site is managed by the Northern Research Station of US Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Station scientists.

316. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council

requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:

- Updated periodic review report using the official form;
- A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

317. **Isle Royale Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1980. The biosphere reserve is an island, located in the north-west corner of Lake Superior in the State of Michigan. Thus, the Park is accessible only by boat or seaplane, and well-known for its introduced wolves and moose. It is a refuge for western and arctic plant species and is almost entirely designated as wilderness. The area is well protected as a National Park and wilderness reserve. The Council noted that The National Park cooperates with universities in research studies of large mammals, ungulate browsing, watershed monitoring, island biogeography and island genetics.

318. The Council noted that there are no people living in the site, but that it is one of most visited wild areas in the USA. The Council also noted that education programmes have been implemented by several institutions such as the Interpretation division of Isle Royale National Park, Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association and Isle Royale Institute.

319. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:

- Updated periodic review report using the official form;
- A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

320. **Luquillo Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Luquillo Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, this site is situated in North-East Puerto Rico in the Luquillo Mountains as part of the Luquillo Experimental Forest (LEF). The area is also known under the designation El Yunque National Forest (EYNF). The LEF participates in the Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) programme and constitutes the only tropical rain forest in the U.S. National Forest System.

321. The biosphere reserve fulfils critically important biodiversity conservation, monitoring and research functions of high value, evidenced by a rich list of scientific publications, university partnerships, and active participation in numerous international environmental programmes, including the UNESCO-IHP coordinated 'Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy Programme' (HELP). The biosphere reserve is actively engaged in education, training and public awareness initiatives and contributes to development benefits

322. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council considered therefore that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Consequently, the Council requested the authorities to:

- Revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function.

- Submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form by 30 September 2015.

323. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, this site is situated in southernmost Arizona at the border with Mexico. It is renowned for its organ pipe cactus, rarely found in other parts of the US, and is home to a very rich flora, including many other cacti species, and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. Several of these are rare and/or endangered, like the Sonoran Pronghorn. Biodiversity is monitored by the park's Ecological Monitoring Program and the Sonoran Desert Network. The National Park Service is the key institution for conducting monitoring and research activities (biodiversity, climate, hydrology, social science on border and interdiction activities) that also involve several academic intuitions, including Arizona State University.

324. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Consequently, the Council requested the authorities to:

- Revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function.
- Submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form by 30 September 2015.

325. San Dimas Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The Council noted that the biosphere reserve is managed by the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service and, under the current management regime, there are no opportunities to demonstrate sustainable development with the involvement of local communities.

326. The site was established for research purposes and thus is used for education field tours for students from local universities; some university students also carry out their field studies in this area. The Council commended the national authorities for the strong research and conservation functions of this biosphere reserve. However, as indicated in the periodic review report, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Consequently, the Committee requested the authorities to:

- Revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function;
- Submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form by 30 September 2015.

327. Three Sisters Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Council welcomed the first periodic review report of this site designated in 1976. It is located in an undisturbed landscape of the Oregon's central Cascade Range. It has an area of 97,356 ha and is managed by the US Forest Service. The site is named after three renowned volcanoes with glaciers that have been observed to be changing over time.

328. The Council acknowledged the importance of the site as a national wilderness area and forest ecosystem protected by law passed by the US Congress, supporting the conservation of a rich coniferous forest lying between 1,500 and 2,000 meters above sea level and ornamental plants including some that are considered as sensitive species. The site is a haven for several threatened, rare and endangered wildlife species of birds (owls, cranes, etc.) and is still the home of some Native American people.

329. The Council commended the current collaboration with the US Environmental Protection Agency and local communities, who participate in management and monitoring. The Council appreciated the extensive use of the site for research and the resulting publications, particularly in the monitoring of invasive weeds, climate change and water of the superficial water bodies, as well as the organization of youth camps for colleges and education of the general public. It acknowledged the use of the reserve for rural tourism by the neighbouring communities (McKenzie Bridge, Blue River and McKenzie River Valley).

330. The Council, however, noted the absence of information on the activities in the transition area, on the characteristic zonation or other maps to support the periodic review report, and the limited tourism activity. The Council considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the authorities submit to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015:

- a zonation map clearly showing the core area, buffer zone and transition area;
- land use maps;
- a management plan for the area.

331. **Virginia Coast Reserve Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. The Council noted with appreciation the immense contribution of this site to biodiversity conservation and the targeted effort of the management authority of the site to restore the population of the bay scallops. It also acknowledged the capacity development activities for the local watermen and the economic activities that are thriving in the biosphere reserve.

332. The logistic and educational functions of this biosphere reserve are well outlined in the report, which also cites research carried out by various universities and other research institutions. The Council observed that this site performs the various functions of a biosphere reserve. However it noted with concern that the report did not use the official periodic review form and zonation maps were not submitted.

333. To ensure standardization and to enable the Council assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the national authorities are requested to submit to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015:

- a zonation map clearly showing the core area, buffer zone and transition area;
- a new periodic review report using the official periodic review forms.

334. **Chaktal Biosphere Reserve (Uzbekistan).** The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1978. The Council noted that this biosphere reserve has very high conservation values and its conservation functions are implemented well. There are about 300 plant species, mainly woody plants. Some are of medicinal and commercial value.

335. The Council noted that this biosphere reserve has a core area and a buffer zone but no transition area. It acknowledged that the site is extensively used for research. A total of 800 publications on the flora and fauna of the biosphere reserve is reported. Human intervention is almost non-existent and prohibited by law. It also noted that human activity in the buffer zone is highly restricted and that only a few local tourists are admitted into the area.

336. The national authorities have indicated in the report that the biosphere reserve cannot serve adequately the three functions stated in the Statutory Framework. According to the legislation of Uzbekistan, the biosphere reserve corresponds completely with the first function. However, the second and third functions cannot be implemented. The authorities also documented the need to improve on consultation efforts and local participation.

337. The national authorities are commended for submitting this periodic review report. The Council, however, concluded that this biosphere reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are requested to revise the zonation to include a transition area and to provide proper zonation maps. The authorities are also advised to enhance the development function in order for this site to fully function as a biosphere reserve. The Council requested the national authorities to send all the necessary information to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

338. **Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve (Vietnam).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2004. It is a National and International Important Marine Protected Area, and has been proposed for designation as a Global Geopark and World Natural Heritage Site. There is a geological transitional frontier that dates back to 360 million years ago. Cat Ba island is the largest limestone island in Southeast Asia.

339. The Council noted that during the past 10 years, 21 state-funded programs and projects have been conducted for the conservation and protection of the forests and biodiversity monitoring, and there have been numerous international support projects. It noted that wildlife poaching and landscape modification have been controlled. It also observed that there has been rapid development of beekeeping. Raising honeybees is considered to be one of the professions for poverty alleviation for farmers because of low initial investment but high profits. There are seven permanent research stations near the biosphere reserve; over 100 research articles by 158 scientists have been published in 46 domestic and international journals.

340. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested more information on the legal status of the eastern side of the core area indicated as C2 on the zonation map. The information should be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

341. **Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve (Vietnam).** The Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2004. The core areas are characterized by mangrove vegetation and casuarina plantation habitats, sand dunes, siltation sites and water bodies. The number of bird species is reported to be over 200, and there are some 100 species of mangrove plants.

342. The Council noted with appreciation the many activities that have been implemented by the national authorities, such as the establishment of a biosphere reserve management board in 2008, comprising representatives of the three provinces in which the biosphere reserve is located. It noted that this biosphere reserve is managed by these three provinces with the

participation of local communities, based on principles of management that comply with the provisions of the current law of Vietnam. However, a management plan for the biosphere reserve has not been developed.

343. The Council also observed that the biosphere reserve supports the livelihoods of the local communities. Mushrooms produced by the local communities in the buffer zone have been registered as a labeled commodity. Scientific research projects, development projects, and many Masters and PhD theses based on research work carried out in the biosphere reserve have been produced.

344. The Council concluded that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the national authorities develop a management plan for this biosphere reserve for submission to the MAB Secretariat in the near future.

345. **Follow-up recommendations**

346. **Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve (Belarus).** The Council thanked the Belarus authorities and welcomed the updated map with a topographic layer of the precise location and delimitation of the three zones of the biosphere reserve, following its recommendation in 2014. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

347. **Belovezhskaya Pushcha Biosphere Reserve (Belarus).** The Council thanked the Belarus authorities and welcomed the updated map with a topographic layer of the precise location and delimitation of the three zones of the biosphere reserve, following its recommendation in 2013. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

348. **Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta Biosphere Reserve (Colombia).** The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to its recommendations in 2011 and 2014. The Council noted a new map with a clear zonation. The Council also recognized that the Colombian authorities sent the requested list of sustainable development projects to be implemented in the area, as well as the management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

349. **Cinturón Andino Biosphere Reserve (Colombia).** The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to its recommendations in 2011 and 2014. The Council noted a new map with a clear zonation. It also recognized that the Colombian authorities sent the requested list of sustainable development projects to be implemented in the area, as well as the management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the authorities should delineate appropriate buffer zones for the core areas which are in direct contact with transition areas and report on this in the next Periodic Review to be submitted in 2021.

350. **El Tuparro Biosphere Reserve (Colombia).** The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to its recommendations in 2011 and 2014. It noted a new map with a clear zonation. The Council also recognized that the

Colombian authorities sent the requested list of sustainable development projects to be implemented in the area, as well as the management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the authorities should better define the buffer zone surrounding the core area and report on this in the next Periodic Review to be submitted in 2021.

351. **Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)**. The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to the recommendations it had made in 2011 and 2014. The Council noted a new map with a clear zonation. It also pointed out that the Colombian authorities sent the requested list of sustainable development projects to be implemented in the area, as well as the management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda. The Council considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the authorities should delineate a buffer zone and transition area in the coastal and marine area and report on this in the next Periodic Review to be submitted in 2021.

352. **Taï Biosphere Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire)**. The Council welcomed the updated information on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation. It welcomed with appreciation the extensive information provided on the issue of refugees who temporarily settled in the transition area of the biosphere reserve during the Liberian civil war. The authorities reported that refugee camps had not been established and that the refugees were hosted by relatives on the Ivorian side during the war. Their activities did not impact the transition area and they have relocated to Liberia.

353. The Council noted with concern the new proposal for the zonation, in which the buffer zone which surrounds the core area will be replaced by a “*zone d'aménagement et d'expérimentation*”, which does not protect the core area. The explanation for this change is not satisfactory. It also noted that, due to a misunderstanding of the communities who encroached on the former buffer zone, the buffer zone now consists of four clusters which are included in the core area so that the zonation is not functional. It also noted the difference between the zonation terminology used nationally and the general terminology used for biosphere reserves within the WNB.

354. The Council welcomed with satisfaction the “*Plan d'Aménagement et de Gestion*” (PAG) which has been elaborated with the involvement of local communities through public consultations. One of the seven programs of the PAG focuses on participative management and provides support to local development. This strongly facilitates community participation and sharing of benefits from natural resources within the biosphere reserve. The PAG supports the logistic functions of the biosphere reserve. The current PAG (2006-2015) has been updated for 2014-2018.

355. The Council commended the authorities for the improvement of the enforcement of the regulation of the site's conservation function while intensifying collaborative mechanisms with local communities for the prevention of illegal activities. Partnership with politicians, administration and justice is fostered. The Council also congratulated the authorities for the good progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the MAB ICC and in the management of the biosphere reserve.

356. The Council, however, concluded that based on the information received, the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Council therefore requested the authorities to provide a new map with a zonation which conforms to the biosphere reserve criteria. In addition, the management plan should be revised so that it fully integrates the three functions of a biosphere reserve. The Council noted that the periodic review report of the site, expected by 30 September 2015, could be a good opportunity to address these pending issues.

357. **Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia).** The Indonesian national authorities submitted a periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2013 for the consideration of the Council. Based on this report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. It recommended that the national authorities consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and develop an integrated management plan in order to seek to reduce human pressures and to promote additional sustainable development initiatives in the site.

358. With regard to the responses provided by the national authorities, the Council noted that they have established a coordination and communication forum whose task is to implement coordination and communication among various stakeholders, through allocation and sharing of roles and responsibilities in implementing the Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve management plan. It also noted that an integrated management and action plan of Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve 2014 -2023 was finalized at the end of 2013. Activities on ecosystem restoration, environmental education and livelihood development have been implemented.

359. Considering these submissions, the Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

360. **Komodo Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia).** The Indonesian national authorities submitted a periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2013 for the consideration of the Council. Based on this report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. It recommended that the national authorities consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and provide information thereon to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, together with a clarification of the rationale for the rectangular zonation patterns of the buffer and transition zones.

361. With regard to the responses provided by the national authorities, the Council noted that a management institution for the site, “Nusa Tenggara Timur Indonesia” has been established, and this forum will be legalized under the decree of the Regent of Manggarai Barat Regency. It also noted that an integrated management plan for the biosphere reserve for 2014-2023 was developed in 2013. This plan can be adjusted to the needs and conditions of developing the biosphere reserve. The Council also acknowledged the information clarifying the rationale of the zonation of the biosphere reserve and concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

362. **Lore Lindu Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia).** The Indonesian national authorities submitted a periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2013 for the consideration of the Council. Based on this report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. The Council invited the authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and to develop an integrated management plan in order to reduce illegal logging and poaching in the site. It recommended activities such as public awareness, education and the generation of alternative income and job opportunities, considering the high rate of migration into the area.

363. With regard to the responses provided by the national authorities, the Council acknowledged that a management plan and information on the management body of the biosphere reserve was included in the report submitted last year. It also noted that the management plan included activities geared towards alternative livelihood development, and the involvement of local government and the private sector in order to develop more opportunities for local communities. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

364. **Siberut Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia).** The Indonesian national authorities submitted a periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2013 for the consideration of the Council. Based on this report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. The Council recommended that the national authorities consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and develop an integrated management plan in order to seek to reduce human pressures and to promote additional sustainable development initiatives in the site.

365. With regard to the responses provided by the national authorities, the Council noted that a management institution has been established for this biosphere reserve. It also noted that a management plan based on scientific assessment to enhance the quality of life of the people living around core area (Siberut National Park) has been elaborated; therefore there will be a balance between human needs and the conservation of natural resources. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

366. **Tanjung Puting Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia).** The Indonesian national authorities submitted a periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2013 for the consideration of the Council. Based on this report, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. The Council invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

367. With regard to the responses provided by the national authorities, the Council noted that a management plan for the whole biosphere reserve has been established and an action plan for the biosphere reserve has been implemented since 2013. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

368. **General background information on the nine biosphere reserves for which periodic reports were submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2013.** The Council noted that the national authorities of Iran submitted periodic review reports for nine of the biosphere reserves in their country in 2013. Based on these reports, the Council recommended that the authorities seek to establish for each biosphere reserve a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve, and to increase efforts with regard to research, education, public awareness and consultation with local people. The Council also asked for more detailed maps for each biosphere reserve and its zones. In conclusion, the Council noted that these biosphere reserves partially fulfilled the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Council requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

369. In response to these recommendations, the national authorities of Iran have submitted additional information for the nine biosphere reserves for the consideration of the Council.

370. **Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council noted the reported areas for the three zones of this biosphere reserve, but noted that a zonation map has not been provided. The text for the additional information provided for this site was in the Persian language. The Council therefore requested that the national authorities translate this information into English and to submit this together with clear zonation maps to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015. This will enable the Council to assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

371. **Arjan Parishan Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council noted the reported areas for the three zones of this biosphere reserve. It also noted the submission of a zonation map and an organizational chart of the management body of this site. Consultation and awareness creation activities were also mentioned in the report. However, a management plan for the biosphere reserve was not submitted and the report did not provide information with regard to sustainable development initiatives.

372. The Council therefore recommended that the authorities provide additional information on the sustainable development functions of this biosphere reserve by 30 September 2015, to enable it to assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are also encouraged to submit a management plan to the MAB Secretariat in the near future.

373. **Geno Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council noted the reported areas of the three zones of this biosphere reserve. It also noted the submission of a zonation map. The Council also acknowledged the research and scientific studies that have been undertaken in the biosphere reserve. However, the Council observed that there is no information about a management body and management plan for this biosphere reserve.

374. The Council requested the authorities to provide information on sustainable development activities being undertaken in the biosphere reserve to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015. This will enable the Council assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council also encouraged the national authorities to provide extensive information on the management body and plans for this site in the near future.

375. **Golestan Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council acknowledged the submission of zonation maps and shape files for this biosphere reserve, and noted that the buffer zone does not give enough protection to the core area. A management body is reported but no information has been provided with regard to an existing management plan. The Council therefore requested that the national authorities revise the zonation of this biosphere reserve in order to better protect the core area and to ensure its conservation function. The authorities are encouraged to submit the information on the revised zonation to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015, to enable the Council assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are also encouraged to formulate a management plan for the biosphere reserve.

376. **Harra Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** With regard to the responses and additional information provided, the Council acknowledged the extensive information on the scientific studies and research work that has been undertaken in this biosphere reserve. The Council also noted the information on the zonation sizes and the submission of a zonation map

which clearly outlines the three zones. However, information with regard to a management body and a management plan for this biosphere reserve was not provided.

377. Also, there was no information to enable the Council assess the sustainable development function of this site. The Council therefore encouraged the national authorities to provide the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015 to enable the Council assess whether this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves during its 2016 session. The authorities are also encouraged to elaborate a management plan for the biosphere reserve in the near future.

378. **Kavir Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** Based on the responses and additional information provided, the Council acknowledged the various education, public awareness and consultation activities which the national authorities have undertaken in this biosphere reserve. Sustainable livelihoods based on ecosystem approach are also being promoted. The Council also noted the provision of a zonation map and the information on the sizes of the three zones. It also noted the organization chart for the management body of the biosphere reserve. The Council however noted that there is no information on an existing management plan and the zonation does not conform to the Statutory Framework criteria.

379. National authorities are requested to revise the zonation for this biosphere reserve and to submit the updated zonation map to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015. The Council concluded that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council encouraged the national authorities to formulate a management plan and to present this to the Secretariat in the near future.

380. **Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council acknowledged the well-prepared report submitted by the national authorities for this biosphere reserve, including information on activities on public awareness, education and sustainable development. Detailed information on research activities and various studies carried out was also reported. The Council noted that a zonation map was provided. Even though information on a management body was submitted, a management plan for the site has not been provided.

381. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended that the national authorities elaborate a management plan and submit it to the MAB Secretariat in the near future.

382. **Touran Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council acknowledged the information submitted for this biosphere reserve, including information on activities on public awareness, education and sustainable development.

383. Detailed information on the research activities and various studies carried out were also reported. Community workshops were organized to introduce the environmental management plans for this area. The Council also observed that a zonation map clearly showing the three zones has been submitted.

384. A management body for this biosphere reserve was reported to be in existence; however, no management plan was included in the report. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the national authorities to submit a management plan to the MAB Secretariat in the near future.

385. **Urmia Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The Council acknowledged the information submitted for this biosphere reserve. It noted that reports on activities of public awareness creation, education and sustainable development have been provided. The Council also acknowledged the enormous environmental challenges in this area.

386. A zonation map has been submitted, together with information on the areas of the various zones. The Council, however, noted that information on a management body and plan was not provided. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the national authorities to submit information on the management body and a management plan to the MAB Secretariat in the near future.

387. **Sahamalaza Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve (Madagascar).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the authorities of Madagascar on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation. It welcomed the revised zonation map. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

388. **Mananara Nord Biosphere Reserve (Madagascar).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the Madagascar authorities on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation.

389. It welcomed the revision of the map where the areas/zones are well delimited (in particular the marine part and the island of the biosphere reserve) and named according to the MAB terminology. It noted with satisfaction the explanation of the former “enclave” which is now included in the buffer zone in conformity with its management status, and the new national legislation adopted in 2003. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

390. **Boucle du Baoulé Biosphere Reserve (Mali).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the Malian authorities on the status of the implementation of its 2013 recommendation. It noted the information provided on the status of the zones, using a terminology which does not conform to the zonation criteria for biosphere reserves. The additional information and the quality of the map provided were not sufficient for the Council to assess the implementation of the recommendation.

391. The Council commended the authorities for the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding between the cities within the biosphere reserve and the Direction of the biosphere reserve, but noted a need to improve the involvement of local communities in the governance structure and in the management of the biosphere reserve. It noted that the management plan for the biosphere reserve is in preparation. The Council encouraged the authorities to pursue their effort to ensure the involvement of local communities in order to promote conservation, development and logistic integrated activities for the proper functioning of the biosphere reserve.

392. The Council concluded that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested the authorities to provide clear maps with a zonation according to the Statutory Framework. The Council also recommended that the standard zonation terminology should also be used in the management plan.

393. **Aïr and Ténéré Biosphere Reserve (Niger).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the authorities of Niger on the status of the implementation of its 2009 recommendation. The Council acknowledged the effort made by Niger to promote the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve with Algeria. Consultations between the two delegations began during the last MAB ICC and the respective authorities are in contact.

394. The Council acknowledged with concern the security issue in the area which may delay the process. It noted that the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve might be a means to promote peace and reduce conflicts in the area. Such a transboundary site would also be the most credible means to study and perform various experiments on the mitigation of desertification. The Council congratulated Niger for leading the process and encouraged Algeria to get more involved in the process as well.

395. **Katunsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the Russian Federation on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation. It noted with thanks the further explanations and additional documents and concluded that the biosphere reserve has an appropriate zonation in place. The core area is surrounded from the west and north by a buffer zone and from the east by the Belukha Nature Park, designated as a buffer zone. The southern border of the core area is formed by the state border and the Karagaiskiy National Park of Kazakhstan, which can be considered as a proper buffer zone.

396. The Council concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended that Katunsky Biosphere Reserve be used as a model for the mitigation of human impacts on the environment by providing support to alternative sources of income for local communities.

397. **Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed this updated information from the Russian Federation on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation.

398. The Council welcomed the additional information related to the creation of the biosphere reserve Department of Ecological Education, the formal partnership with Urals State Pedagogical University, and participation in the “Education Development in the Sverdlovsk Region” programme. It also welcomed the participation in the “Development of Tourism in the Sverdlovsk Region” programme. The Council welcomed the statement that stakeholders were showing growing voluntary dedication to the biosphere reserve. Nevertheless the Council questioned the argument that there is little need for a “Biosphere reserve Supervisory board”, in which stakeholders and inhabitants would be represented. The Council considered that such governing bodies are useful to ensure a participative approach to biosphere reserve management on regular basis and not only in urgent situations. Multiple examples and experiences from the WNBR demonstrate that an inclusive biosphere reserve governing body is an efficient tool to avoid conflicts. The Council requested that the authorities provide an updated zonation map (both in electronic and paper format according to the requirements of the nomination form) to the Secretariat.

399. The Council encouraged the authorities to:

- further focus on the development function of the biosphere reserve;

- support actions, projects and management tools that will enable joint work of the managers of the biosphere reserve, local people and other stakeholders on a regular basis.

400. **Commander Islands Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed the additional information of the Russian Federation on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation.

401. The Council welcomed the information provided on the creation of “Integrated medium-term management plan” for the site, with all relevant stakeholders participating in all aspects of the process. The Council welcomed the examples of successful projects completed on the biosphere reserve, such as the UNDP/GEF project on “Strengthening of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas of Russia“, participation in the “Environmental summer camp for children in Kenozersky National Park“ and “Environmental education program for school children of Nikolskoye rural settlement”.

402. The Council welcomed the assurance that the multi-stakeholder Biosphere Reserve Scientific and Technical Council will continue to participate in the activities of the biosphere reserve as well as to activities that are initiated by the stakeholders, including the indigenous people.

403. The Council encouraged the authorities to:

- further focus on the development function of the biosphere reserve and continue work on projects that include broad variety of stakeholders;
- support actions, projects and management tools that will enable joint work of the biosphere reserve authority, local people and other stakeholders on biosphere reserve management on a regular basis.

404. **Nijegorodskoe Zavolje Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed the updated information from the Russian Federation on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation. The Council also welcomed the good cooperation with several partners, including local authorities, as well as the establishment of working groups to coordinate the biosphere reserve activities.

405. The Council encouraged the efforts to integrate the results of the biosphere reserve projects and research into the development projects of municipalities and to cooperate with other biosphere reserves. The Council welcomed the efforts for establishing decision-making bodies involving the local self-government (Vladimir rural administration of Voskresenskiy district of Nizhny Novgorod region) for inclusion in the boundaries of the biosphere reserve.

406. The Council looks forward to receiving information about the logistic and development functions of the biosphere reserve, as well as the management plan, by 30 September 2015.

407. **Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council welcomed the information provided by the Russian Federation on the status of the implementation of its 2014 recommendation.

408. The Council considered that the information provided was not detailed enough and requested a more comprehensive report (with as much detail as the information provided in a

nomination form) on the activities in each zone of the biosphere reserve. The Council requested that the information be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

409. Several countries took the floor regarding specific sites which the Council identified as not meeting the criteria, or for which information was insufficient. Delegates provided clarification, reported on progress made for each site concerned, including meetings held recently, and confirmed that pending information would be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015. One delegate requested support through a technical visit of the MAB Secretariat to the concerned biosphere reserve. It was also noted that the Advisory Committee should consider the cultural and socio-economic context of each site when examining reports, and take into consideration the sensitivity of local communities when issuing recommendations. Some Delegates stated that field visits, technical support from the MAB Secretariat, UNESCO field offices and regional networks as well as capacity building were essential in the periodic review process. All delegates who took the floor indicated their commitment to meet the Statutory Framework criteria and to send information requested.

XII. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management

410. The Secretariat introduced this item and informed the Council that it had received six eligible case studies from six countries by 30 November 2014 and that only four of these met the criteria for consideration. The Council was informed that the Bureau endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee made at its 21st meeting and that Mr Bandi Namkhai (Mongolia) was the 2015 winner for his case study on “Hustain Nuruu Biosphere Reserve of Mongolia”. Mr Bandi Namkhai was then invited to present his case study to the Council.

411. After the presentation, a Member State requested that, for the next session of the Council, the list of all candidates for the Michel Batisse Award be annexed to the document.

XIII. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme

412. The MAB Secretariat received 36 eligible applications from 28 countries for the 2015 MAB Young Scientist Award Scheme. Nineteen of the applicants were females. Applications were received from the following countries: Argentina, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, India, Iran, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Poland, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Ukraine, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

413. A Member State requested that the members of the Council should be provided with the complete list of all applicants, including the title of their studies, at subsequent sessions of the Council. Another Member State proposed that the MAB Bureau should first assess all applications in order to generate a shortlist of applicants. The applications of candidates from this short list should then be made available to the Council for their review to enable them make an informed decision, together with the Bureau members, on the final award winners.

414. The Secretary of the MAB Programme informed the Council that, due to the large number of applications received and considering the limited time available during sessions of the Council, the Council had decided in previous sessions that it was more efficient to entrust the selection of the MAB Young Scientist Award winners to the MAB Bureau, after which the Council would endorse the Bureau's recommendation.

415. The Council then endorsed the winners of the 2015 MAB Young Scientist Award. The winners and the title of their research studies are:

Winner	Country	Title of Study
Ms. Victoria Gonzalez Carman	Argentina	Understanding the human dimensions of by-catch of large marine vertebrates in a small-scale fishery of Argentina.
Mr Vitaliy Turych	Ukraine	Forest ecosystems of the Ukrainian part of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve West Polesie under the Global Environmental Changes.
Mr The Nguyen Duc	Vietnam	Outbreak of the coral eating snails (<i>Drupella sp</i>) in the Cat Ba World Biosphere Reserve Vietnam – looking at the habitat utilization and prey selection.
Mr Richmond Ametefe	Ghana	Impacts of socio-economic activities of communities on water resource management in Songor Biosphere Reserve.
Ms. Sameh Chaabani	Tunisia	Pine Forest under alert in the MAB Chaambi National Park, Tunisia : Tree-level impact assessment of long-term climate change and recent social troubles
Ms. Angela Mwatujobe	Tanzania	Contribution of local communities in biosphere reserves conservation.

XIV. Intersectoral/Interprogramme panel: exploring concrete joint actions/projects within the Post-2015 agenda

416. The Chair opened the session and welcomed the panel members: Ms Michela Miletto, Coordinator a.i. of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP); Mr Bernard Combes from the Education Sector; Mr Alexandros Makarigakis, Disaster Risk Reduction Coordinator from UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector; Mr Alexander Schischlik, Head of the Youth section from the Social and Human Sciences Sector; Mr Hong Tianhua, from the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST) under the auspices of UNESCO; and Mr Kishore Rao, Director of the World Heritage Centre (WHC).

417. The Secretariat then explained the format of the session, asking that the participants highlight their contributions to the post-2015 agenda and possible concrete joint actions with MAB in that context.

418. Ms Miletto briefly introduced WWAP's work, notably its World Water Development Report (WWDR). She noted that this year's edition would focus on water and sustainable development. She proposed a number of possible collaborations with MAB in the coming years, notably in water assessment (which could be carried out in biosphere reserves), monitoring (using indicators from biosphere reserves) and reporting (the 2017 WWDR would be on nature-based solutions to water).

419. Mr Combes briefly highlighted the longstanding cooperation between the education sector and MAB in the context of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (UN

ESD). He underscored in particular the latest pilot projects for ESD in nine biosphere reserves around the world (Indonesia, Cambodia, India, Costa Rica, Chile, Oman, DRC, Tanzania, Ethiopia).

420. Mr Makarigakis presented the results of a survey on disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in biosphere reserves, which focused on exposure to natural disasters, risk assessments for natural disasters, and awareness raising and education on natural disasters. He noted that 80 percent of biosphere reserve managers considered DRR important. However, this did not translate into many risk assessments or awareness-raising in biosphere reserves, and therefore there was much room for further work and collaboration.

421. Mr Schischlick noted that 60 percent of the world's population was under 30 years old, and that UNESCO was focusing on promoting youth as 'youth change-makers' for sustainable peace and development. He noted that UNESCO's work in this area was articulated on three axes: promoting youth policy formulation; youth capacity development; and involving youth in civic engagement. The next Youth Forum of the UNESCO General Conference in October 2015 would focus on Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet. He recommended a youth biosphere reserve network.

422. Mr Hong presented the work of HIST, underscoring its three core areas of activity: research on using space technologies to assess environmental impact on biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites, such as deforestation; capacity building of biosphere reserve managers to use these space technologies; and public awareness-raising through international conferences.

423. Mr Rao presented the work of the Culture Sector and the WHC, noting that the Centre was unique in terms of considering natural and cultural sites. He underscored the role of culture in enabling and driving development and indicated the entry points for culture in the Sustainable Development Goals, notably through the environmental goals, and in relation to sustainable cities. He also highlighted the great potential for collaboration between MAB and the WHC in sites that have a dual MAB-WHC designation.

424. Seven Member States took the floor to thank the panelists, make comments and ask for clarifications. France asked that youth be mobilized in the development of the MAB Plan of Action, particularly with the support of the UNESCO Youth Forum, and asked what would be the process for the Dordogne Basin Biosphere Reserve to become a WWAP pilot. In response, the WWAP coordinator welcomed the opportunity to work with the Dordogne Basin Biosphere Reserve, and also mentioned the opportunity to make twinning arrangements with a developing country pilot study basin. Egypt asked for sustainable development toolkits to be developed for schools, notably in biosphere reserves. She also expressed the hope that youth could be mobilized through MAB regional networks and highlighted the importance of remote sensing in arid and semi-arid zones.

425. Mr Hong from HIST agreed noting that remote sensing could be very useful in those zones. Algeria pointed out the important links between disaster risk reduction and the UNFCCC and the Ramsar Convention. Germany noted that its national commission for UNESCO had produced a position paper on ESD in biosphere reserves. He asked how UNESCO ensured collaboration between its different programmes. Various panel members pointed out mechanisms that UNESCO had put in place to ensure such collaboration. Finally, he highlighted the important work being done in the Trifinio Transboundary Biosphere Reserve with regard to water, ESD and DRR. Burkina Faso noted the importance of eco-museums in

biosphere reserves. Japan underscored the importance of cooperation among UNESCO Sectors in the promotion of sustainability science in general, including in biosphere reserves. Kenya recommended emphasis on youth participation in biosphere reserves and on promoting research on biosphere reserves by youth, such as through the provision of MAB Young Scientists Awards.

XV. Panel on MAB-Private sector partnership: exploring concrete actions

426. The Secretariat opened the session by welcoming the panelists: Ms Georgina Flamme from the Abertis Foundation; Mr Jamison Suter from the Société des Mines de Fer de Guinée (SMFG); Mr Dolly Priatna from the Asian Paper and Pulp group (APP) Indonesia; Mr Claude Fromageot from the Yves Rocher Foundation; and Mr Vincent Defourny, director of partnerships and fundraising at UNESCO. He noted that although MAB had a long history of collaboration with the private sector, this was the first a private sector panel was held during a session of the ICC.

427. Ms Flamme underscored the importance of the corporate social responsibility work of the Abertis Foundation, in particular to reduce the group's carbon footprint. She then detailed some of the work being done by the Category II Centre on Mediterranean biosphere reserves in Barcelona, the first private-public Category II Centre of its kind, in which the Foundation was involved.

428. Mr Suter described SMFG's project in the Nimba Mountains in West Africa – where there is a biosphere reserve on the Guinean side, as well as a Natural World Heritage Site – to put in place a mining operation for high grade iron in the biosphere reserve's buffer zone. He described the area as extremely biologically diverse, but also with high levels of poverty, with local people having very few options for economic development. He explained SMFG's social and environmental policies relating to assisting local communities in the area to develop economically while preserving the environment.

429. Mr Priatna described the work being done by APP in the Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve in Indonesia. He noted that the biosphere reserve was innovative as a public-private partnership between APP, the Environment and Forestry Ministry of Indonesia and other partners. APP focused on ensuring that no natural forest would be cleared, reducing greenhouse emissions, and working with local communities.

430. Mr Fromageot highlighted Yves Rocher's close connection to nature and plants, which formed the basis of the company's business. He noted that the sensitization of staff, supported by a specific organization and policy at the company level, were key components of Yves Rocher's involvement in green business. He underscored that the Yves Rocher Foundation worked very closely with the local communities where it did business, citing Madagascar as an example of Access and Benefit Sharing agreement under the Nagoya Protocol for supporting local economies.

431. Mr Defourny highlighted the work of UNESCO's partnerships and fundraising division in promoting joint work with the private sector. He mentioned the recent climate business summit as a good example of such collaboration. He also noted that biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development offered multiple areas for collaboration with the private sector.

432. Six delegates took the floor to comment. Malaysia, Egypt and Ghana expressed concern that SFMG would be mining in the buffer zone of the biosphere reserve, very close to the core zone, and asked for further explanations as to how the company would ensure that the environmental concerns would be addressed. Mr Suter noted that his company was very concerned with managing risk, including environmental risks. In response to Ghana, he noted that biodiversity offsets would be used as a last resort. Switzerland asked how this collaboration with private sector was coordinated with other similar initiatives of other UNESCO programmes and conventions, especially the PACTe initiative of the World Heritage . France asked how SMFG's experience of mining with regard to the Monts Nimba Biosphere Reserve could be used by this multinational company at other sites around the world. Mr Sutter responded this would be up to the MAB programme since its company is not dealing with conservation issues as such. He added that experience is shared on a case by case basis within the company and with shareholders. Kenya asked how UNESCO's field offices were involved in fundraising.

433. The Secretariat noted that a new focus was being put on fundraising at the local level with the private sector, through UNESCO field offices.

XVI. Information on the IUCN project “Improving the integrated management system of protected areas with multiple international designations”

434. Dr. Thomas Schaaf, a former Secretary of the MAB Programme and currently a consultant working with the IUCN, presented an IUCN project being funded by the Korean Self-governing Province of Jeju and the Republic of Korea. The project is currently preparing a Guidance to improve the management systems of protected areas with multiple international and overlapping designations: Biosphere Reserves, natural World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks and Ramsar sites. He cited two sites with such multiple designations: Ichkeul National Park in Tunisia and the Jeju Island, the latter being the only one site with all four designations. He noted that there are at least 185 sites designated both under the Ramsar Convention and as biosphere reserves, 90 sites designated both as World Heritage Sites and as biosphere reserves, and 13 sites which are both Global Geoparks and biosphere reserves. However, the degree to which these designations overlap varies greatly between sites.

435. He mentioned several benefits of the multiple international designation for these sites such as increased visibility and prestige, increased protection against other land uses, enhanced attraction of tourists, and pride among local inhabitants. However, these sites also face a number of challenges, including different reporting requirements and reporting cycles; thus entailing additional workloads for site managers; multiplicity of institutional responsibilities under different national authorities which may be in charge of a specific designation or confusion among local people regarding the specific purposes of the different labels.

436. He stated that the guidance document to be produced as a result of the study will be launched at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii (USA).

437. Nine Member States took the floor to thank Dr. Schaaf for his presentation. Iran asked why the study did not include national-level designations. Dr. Schaaf informed the Council that the study focused on the international designations only as per the Resolution adopted at the 2012 World Conservation Congress. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encouraged the harmonization of the diverse reporting requirements of the different

designations. The Republic of Korea appreciated the progress of the study, and recalled that on Jeju island there was competition among the different designations for local funding. However, after many years, the management of these multiple designations have been harmonized through the establishment of a single coordinating body.

438. Spain stated that there is a lot of confusion about the sites with multiple designations in particular regarding Global Geoparks and advised that UNESCO National Commissions should be the coordinating body for these sites. The delegate also questioned how existing Geoparks would be included in the proposed UNESCO global Geopark network. France questioned how governing bodies, such as the MAB Council, could intervene or make inputs to the IUCN final recommendations or guidelines. The delegate pointed out the political dimension of the various designations with regards to the management of multiple designated sites. Dr. Schaaf noted that the draft would be placed on the IUCN website for comment, and that comments would be taken into account when preparing the final publication.

439. Germany indicated that the IUCN Guidance could relate to the proposed MAB guidelines to be discussed under the next item. Belarus inquired if the IUCN study also dealt with transboundary biosphere reserves; and Dr. Schaaf confirmed that indeed they will be included in the study.

440. Mexico noted that biosphere reserves are not only protected areas and mentioned the overlapping situation Ramsar sites within biosphere reserves in their country and asked if the study would cover this issue. Dr. Schaaf confirmed that this was being addressed. Switzerland considered the advantage of enforcing the conservation value of internationally designated areas and that international support is needed to improve synergies.

441. The Geoscience Section of the UNESCO Secretariat confirmed that Geoparks are not yet UNESCO designated sites and are not necessarily protected areas. She further outlined the procedures related to Global Geopark designation.

442. Dr. Schaaf responded to all the questions. He thanked the Council for its comments and shared his contact details for further comments and questions. (see list of participants)

XVII. Propositions for developing biosphere reserve application guidelines

443. The Secretariat introduced document SC-15/CONF.227/16 on the proposal for developing an operational and application guidelines for the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

444. The Secretary recalled that, even though the MAB Programme is guided by documents such as the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the continued growth in the number of biosphere reserves and their diversity with regard to national conservation and development contexts has led to challenges, particularly related to the technical assessments of biosphere reserve nominations. It has therefore become imperative to develop application or operational guidelines to guide Member States with regard to issues such as the zonation of biosphere reserves, infrastructure development in and around biosphere reserves, the use of the MAB logo, and the branding of products from biosphere reserves.

445. The proposed document will also provide guidelines on transboundary biosphere reserve cooperation. It will be a living document to which amendments and updates can be made when necessary. He explained that the guidelines could be a technical tool to complement the Statutory Framework and the Lima Action Plan. He noted that this proposal had been discussed with the members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR). The IACBR fully supported the proposal and advised that it be presented to the MAB Council for its consideration.

446. If the Council endorses the proposal, the MAB Secretariat will present a zero draft to the IACBR for their review, after which it will be submitted to the MAB Bureau. The revised draft will then be submitted to the Council for its consideration. The Secretary also mentioned that an Expert Group may be constituted to work on the drafting of the guidelines.

447. Kenya welcomed the proposal and stated that operational guidelines for the MAB Programme and its biosphere reserves were long overdue. He cited many issues with regard to zoning and strongly emphasized the copyright implications with regard to the use of logos, such as the one currently being used by the AfriMAB network.

448. The Republic of Korea suggested that the proposed guidelines would effectively be operational guidelines and not application guidelines. She noted that the National MAB Committee of the Republic of Korea is designing an operational guidelines for their biosphere reserves and would be willing to lend their experience to the development of the proposed guidelines. She also noted that other countries have their own national guidelines. She added that the guidelines should address issues such as multiple designations and the national use of different terminologies for biosphere reserves.

449. France supported the drafting of the operational guidelines in so far as it would be useful for the management of sites. He advised that they should be drafted based on experiences on the ground. In terms of transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) cooperation, France offered to share information gathered on good experiences, for instance during the recent workshop on TBRs. France also offered to make concrete contributions with regard to the following themes: zoning, participatory approaches, local economic activities, modes of governance, management policies. The delegate asked for clarification on how the guidelines will be drafted, by whom, and which funds will be allocated for the process.

450. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) advised that the guidelines should not be a document, but that they should be modular and made available on a website, and also in multiple languages. He also noted that, given the diversity of situations in different regions of the world, it would not always be appropriate to have uniform approaches, for instance to the minimum area of specific zones within a biosphere reserve. He questioned whether this was the right time to develop operational guidelines, considering that the MAB Secretariat has a particularly high workload at present, including developing a new Action Plan, organizing the Lima Congress, and collating at least 200 periodic reviews. He proposed that the process of preparing the guidelines should not begin until after the adoption of the Action Plan. Germany supported this proposal from the UK.

451. France recognized the high workload of the Secretariat, but stated that there is no link between the Action Plan and the guidelines. The guidelines will be based on existing documents such as the Statutory Framework and also on practical experiences to enable Member States to better prepare their biosphere reserve nominations and periodic review reports.

452. Sweden stated that the guidelines should be comprehensive but short, and be developed in an open process involving practitioners and stakeholders involved with development and biosphere reserve management. This process should not start until after the Lima Congress. United Republic of Tanzania suggested that the MAB Secretariat launch the development of the guidelines during the Lima Congress in order to take advantage of the large number of practitioners who will be present.

453. Malaysia mentioned that the guidelines will enhance and facilitate the nomination process but cautioned against making it complicated.

454. Kuwait acknowledged that MAB requires a lot of financing to grow large and make an impact. In view of this, the delegate proposed that the Secretariat should develop a resource mobilization strategy and to set up a small working group to drive this strategy.

455. South Africa welcomed and supported the development of the operational guidelines and asked that templates with regard to reporting should be included in the guidelines.

456. Estonia noted that it had already developed national guidelines and was concerned that general guidelines could move away from national specificities.

457. Cote d'Ivoire supported the development of the guidelines, but cautioned on collaboration with the private sector especially mining companies. The guidelines should therefore clearly outline the level of cooperation with such companies. Egypt also suggested that the guidelines should outline how biosphere reserves should collaborate with the private sector.

458. Algeria supports the idea of developing guidelines. They will remove ambiguities and misunderstandings during the preparation of nominations and periodic review forms but also when reviewing the outcomes of evaluations. Details are awaited on many issues including the issue of zoning and recommended minimum area for a biosphere reserve.

459. Austria has national criteria for biosphere reserves which will be updated in line with the new MAB Strategy. Austria offered to share experiences.

460. Germany suggested finding a more appropriate name for these guidelines as the currently proposed name can create confusions.

461. The Secretariat thanked the delegates for their interventions. He took note of all the suggestions made and thanked the Council for its endorsement of the elaboration of the guidelines. He noted that the process of elaborating the guidelines could begin immediately but that the process did not have a specific timeframe. He suggested that the Council could approve a proposed structure for the guidelines at the World Congress in Lima. He further noted that the title of the guidelines ('operational' or 'application' guidelines) could be decided at a later date if the Council agreed.

XVIII. Information on the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves

462. The Secretariat introduced document SC-15/CONF.227/17 on the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, A New Vision: UNESCO'S Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development, to be held on 14 - 17 March 2016 in Lima, Peru.

463. The Secretariat explained that the Honorary Committee of this Congress would be composed of the President of Peru, UNESCO's Director-General, Mr Mario Vargas Llosa, winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Minister of Environment of Peru, the Mayor of Lima, and other Ministers present at the Congress. The Organizing Committee would be composed of the Chair of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme (MAB/ICC), the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences at UNESCO, the Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO and Secretary of the MAB Programme, the Director of the National Service of State-Protected Natural Areas (SERNANP) of the Ministry of Environment of Peru and President of the MAB Committee of Peru, and the Vice Presidents of the MAB/ICC from Ghana, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Technical Committee would comprise the Executive Secretary of the MAB Programme in Peru and the International Secretariat of the MAB Programme.

464. The Congress will last four days. Working papers based on the five Strategic Action Areas of the New MAB Strategy will be presented on the first day to set the scene for the Congress sessions and discussions. Subsequently, the draft Lima Action Plan (LAP) will be presented, followed by presentations of ten case studies of biosphere reserves from different regions.

465. During the next two days, there will be three series of workshops. The first will be organized according to MAB's regional networks. The second will consider specific themes and ecosystems such as climate change, mountains, drylands, forests, urban areas, wetlands, and islands and coastal zones. The third will consider specific themes such as governance, economies in and around biosphere reserves, scientific networking, youth engagement and branding. Workshops will address their respective topics in connection with the relevant SDG targets, the working papers and the draft LAP. The last day will include presentation and discussion of the results of the workshops and latest LAP draft, a discussion on the implementation of the LAP, and the endorsement of the LAP. The meeting will conclude with the Lima Declaration and the closing ceremony.

466. The MAB Secretariat and the Technical Committee will update the progress on technical preparations for the Lima Congress monthly on the UNESCO MAB web site, and communicate routinely by MAB Circular Letters.

467. The ICC unanimously approved the holding of the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held in Lima, Peru from 14th to 17th March 2016.

468. Peru thanked the Secretariat for having accepted the offer of the Peruvian Government to hold the 4th World Congress on Biosphere Reserves. This shows the commitment of the Peruvian Government to the MAB Programme and its involvement in international environmental issues and sustainable development. In particular, Peru noted its organization of the 20th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2014 which highlights its commitment to this issue. Peru also thanked the Member States for their confidence, and particularly the MAB Secretariat. Peru concluded by welcoming all participants to Peru.

469. Sweden said that the third group of workshop sessions should be longer, which was taken into account by the Secretariat.

470. Saint Vincent and Grenadine mentioned that funds are required for delegates from countries which are not able to afford to participate at their own cost. Iran put emphasis on the need for the participation of managers and also request financial support for this.

471. In response, the Secretariat thanked Peru for its commitment and for organizing this event, the first World Congress of Biosphere Reserves to be held outside Europe. The Secretariat said that it will work hard to find financial support in order to ensure that the largest number of participants can attend this meeting (1200 - 1400 participants). All participants will have to be invited by the MAB Secretariat; requests for invitations will be made through national MAB Committees or, in their absence, National Commissions for UNESCO.

472. Canada noted the importance ensuring that young people participated in the Congress and offered financial support in this context.

473. The rapporteur noted that not all the workshop topics have been defined, leaving room for new ideas or themes to be proposed to the Secretariat.

474. Egypt asked that this World Congress should take global issues into account.

XIX. Date and venue of the 28th session of the MAB-ICC

475. The ICC unanimously approved holding of the 28th Session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme in Lima, Peru from 18 – 19 March 2016, after the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves.

476. The main agenda items of this shorter Council session will include the election of the Bureau of the Council, reports by the Secretary of the MAB Programme as well as countries and networks, the approval of new biosphere reserves, recognition of biosphere reserves that meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework (through the periodic review process), discussion on the Lima Declaration, and the adoption of the Lima Action Plan.

XX. Other matters

477. As an outcome of the 11th 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, 30 March 2015), the Council discussed the status and name of the ISG.

478. The suggestion of the Secretariat was to change the name of the ISG into "International Support Group for the MAB Programme" by keeping the same acronym 'ISG', and to rotate in the Chairmanship of the ISG.

479. The ICC unanimously approved both suggestions, and the Permanent Delegate of Germany was invited to serve as the Chairman of the ISG. The Delegate from Germany stated that the Permanent Delegate was honoured by the Council's trust in him, and accepted the invitation on behalf of the Permanent Delegate.

480. Some outgoing members of the Council made short statements. Luxembourg wished to thank all members for their support and stated that he hoped that his country would submit a

nomination for its first biosphere reserve in the future. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) stated that the meetings of the Council over the past four years had made considerable and excellent progress in ensuring the future of the MAB Programme. Nevertheless, much work lay ahead, particularly with regard to the preparation of the Lima Action Plan and its subsequent implementation, and decisions regarding quality control – specifically the conclusion of the Exit Strategy and the effective long-term implementation of the periodic review process. The UK would continue to contribute to this work to the best of its ability. The Republic of Korea stated that he had enjoyed contributing to the work of the Council at this key time and commended the Secretariat for its active organization of the session.

XXI. Adoption of the Report

481. Mr Martin Price, Rapporteur of the Council, presented the draft report of its 27th session to the Members and Observer Delegations section by section, and paragraph by paragraph where appropriate. A small number of modifications, additions and deletions introduced by delegations were noted.

482. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed during the review of the report on 12 June 2015, the last day of the 27th session of the Council.

XXII. Closure of the Session

483. On behalf of the Director General, Ms Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences Sector, delivered a statement at the closing session of the MAB ICC. She expressed her great pleasure to address the MAB Council for the first time in her capacity as Assistant Director General of the Natural Science Sector. She mentioned the 2012-2013 biannual activity report of the MAB Programme and underscored the wide range of activities described in the report.

484. She recalled that following the MAB ICC's decision, twenty new biosphere reserves including a new transboundary site between Spain and Portugal were added to the WNBR, which now comprises of 651 sites, including 15 transboundary biosphere reserves. She congratulated all the countries for their newly designated sites and particularly welcomed Myanmar, the newest member of the WNBR with its first biosphere reserve. She stressed that the WNBR continues to grow and has been contributing to build knowledge and experiences on sustainable development. She acknowledged that the WNBR is a strong network of inspiring sites which are essential to make the world a better place for all.

485. With regards to the MAB strategy (2015-2025) agenda item, Ms Schlegel acknowledged that despite the heavy agenda, delegates reviewed the document thoroughly during extended working sessions. She commended the delegates for their hard work and commitment. She thanked the delegates for their contributions and welcomed the consensual adoption of the MAB strategy. She added that the MAB strategy is an important document for the future of the programme within the next decade. She added that it will be a major contribution of UNESCO towards the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) to be adopted by the UN general assembly in New York next September. She informed the Council that she will report this as a laudable achievement of the MAB programme to the Executive Board and to the General Conference.

486. She mentioned the interesting outcomes of the dialogue between MAB and other UNESCO programmes/conventions and Private sector which took place during the panel sessions. She stressed the importance of in house and external partnership for the implementation of UNESCO activities.

487. She welcomed the information provided on the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves scheduled for March 2016 in Lima, Peru and warmly thanked the Peruvian government for their strong support to the MAB programme and for hosting this very important global event.

488. She ended by saying that she looks forward to meeting the MAB community during the Lima Congress in 2016 and wished all delegates a safe journey back home.

489. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the Council noted that this session had made important strides. The number of biosphere reserves, including the first site in Myanmar, had continued to increase. He stressed the importance of quality control in ensuring the future and credibility of the MAB Programme and the members of its World Network of Biosphere Reserves. He described the new Strategy and coming Action Plan as a new dawn for the MAB Programme: agreements on 'who we want to be' and 'what we want to achieve'. He thanked the countries that were leaving the Council after this session for their contributions. He also expressed his sincere and warm thanks to the Secretariat, the technical support staff and the interpreters.

490. Finally, the Chair declared the 27th session of the MAB ICC closed.

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**Conseil international de coordination du Programme sur l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB) /
International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**

Vingt-septième session / Twenty-seventh session

**Siège de l'UNESCO, Paris, salle XII (Bâtiment Fontenoy)
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PANELISTS

1. **Intersectoral/interprogramme panel: exploring concrete joint actions/projects within post 2015 agenda – 10h00 to 11h15**

Ms Michela Miletto , SC/IHP – World Water Assessment Programme:
(Coordinator a.i. of WWAP Secretariat) – Perugia - Italy

Mr Alex Makarigakis , SC/ EES – DRR (UNESCO HQ)

Mr Bernard Combes, ED/ESD (UNESCO HQ)

Mr Kishore Rao, CLT/WHC (UNESCO HQ)

Mr Alexander Schischlik , SHS/EGC/ADS (UNESCO HQ)

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**2. Panel on MAB-Private sector partnership: exploring concrete actions –
11h30 to 13h00**

UNESCO BFM/CFS: Mr Vincent Defourny (UNESCO HQ)

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Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, Chief of Section SC/EES/ESP
Mr Peter Dogse, Programme Specialist
Ms Melody Ocloo, Assistant Programme Specialist
Mr Alberto Hernandez Salinas, Assistant Programme Specialist
Ms Maria Cardenas, Consultant
Ms Sandra Ménard, Assistant
Ms Kremena Nikolova, Assistant
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Ms Sylvie Venter, Senior Assistant to the Director
Ms Augusta Goussoutou, intern
Ms Athina Tzevahirtzian, intern
Mr Vincent Van Ryssegem, intern

International Oversight Service:

Mr Vaessen Josef, Principal Evaluation Specialist

ANNEX II

MAB STRATEGY 2015-2025²

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Text approved by MAB ICC on 12 June 2015 and incorporating revisions proposed by members of the ICC on that date, together with minor language editing by the MAB Secretariat and the Rapporteur of the MAB Strategy Group.

Executive Summary

Over four decades, people across the globe have explored local solutions to global challenges in biosphere reserves designated under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, generating a wealth of experience and innovative potential for a sustainable future which emphasizes the conservation of biodiversity. In the coming 10 years, MAB will amplify its support to Member States in conserving biodiversity, restoring and enhancing ecosystem services, and fostering the sustainable use of natural resources; building sustainable, healthy, and equitable economies, societies and thriving human settlements; and empowering people to mitigate and adapt to climate change and other aspects of global environmental change. MAB will harness lessons learned through sustainability science and education and use modern, open and transparent ways to communicate and share information. MAB will ensure that its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) consists of effectively functioning models for sustainable development, by implementing an effective periodic review process so that all members of the network adhere to its standards; by improving governance, collaboration and networking within the MAB and WNBR; and by developing effective external partnerships to ensure long-term viability. The MAB and its WNBR will work towards the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to implementing the Post-2015 agenda, both within biosphere reserves and through the global dissemination of the models of sustainable developed in biosphere reserves. This will be done through the implementation of the present Strategy, which includes a vision and mission and a series of Strategic Objectives and Strategic Action Areas, and an associated Action Plan, to be finalized in 2016.

Preamble

As the MAB Programme has evolved, biosphere reserves have become its principal means of implementation. The biosphere reserve concept has proved its value beyond the protected areas that each biosphere reserve contains, and is increasingly embraced by scientists, planners, policy-makers, businesses and local communities to bring diverse knowledge, scientific investigations and experiences to link biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development for human well-being. To understand and address the key challenges facing our world – poverty, climate change, water and food security, loss of biological and cultural diversity, rapid urbanization and desertification – the MAB Programme, through its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) and its regional and thematic networks will strategically address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sustainable development actions in biosphere reserves, carried out in partnership with all sectors of society, to ensure the well-being of people and their environment. The experience of the WNBR, MAB Networks and interdisciplinary approaches will be used to develop and test policies and practices that address issues affecting different ecosystems, and ensure the delivery of the goods and services they provide. The MAB Programme is an important means to mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their vital interlinkages, in order to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

UNESCO

Founded in 1945, at the end of the Second World War, UNESCO celebrated its 70th Anniversary in 2015. For seven decades, UNESCO has embodied high aspirations, hopes and an ongoing struggle for a better life, built on ideas of human dignity, mutual understanding and solidarity of humanity. These ideals and values are spelled out in the Organization's Constitution, which is

the key to understanding UNESCO's history. Its pioneering work has helped change the way people everywhere understand each other and the planet we live on. UNESCO led the movement to protect the environment and sounded the alert over the planet's shrinking biodiversity, explicitly linking this to human development through the MAB Programme. As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO will, in the foreseeable future, continue to contribute across continents to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, the improvement of health, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, scientific activities, culture, communication and information.

The MAB Programme

Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that, from its beginning, has aimed to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments. MAB combines the practical application of natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

In practice, the MAB Programme is implemented in biosphere reserves. They may contain terrestrial, coastal and/or marine ecosystems, which should be representative of their biogeographic region and of significance for biodiversity conservation. Each biosphere reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use, towards sustainable development at the regional scale. While biosphere reserves are nominated by national governments and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located, their global status as biosphere reserves is internationally recognized. Biosphere reserves are models to test and apply interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes in social and ecological systems, and their interaction, including conflict prevention and the conservation of biodiversity.

The MAB Programme's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) was launched in 1976. As of 2015, it comprises 651 biosphere reserves in 120 countries, including 14 transboundary biosphere reserves on the territory of two or more countries. As specified in the 1995 Statutory Framework for the WNBR, biosphere reserves should strive to be sites of excellence to explore and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale. To do this, each biosphere reserve should combine three interconnected functions – conservation, development and logistic support – through appropriate zoning, comprising 1) one or more legally-constituted core areas, devoted to long-term protection; 2) adjacent buffer zones; 3) an outer transition area where sustainable development is promoted and developed by public authorities, local communities and enterprises. Thus, biosphere reserves integrate biological and cultural diversity, particularly recognising the role of traditional and local knowledge in ecosystem management. They focus on a multi-stakeholder approach, with a particular emphasis on the involvement of local communities in management, and often have highly innovative and participative governance systems.

At the global level, the MAB Programme is governed by its International Coordinating Council (ICC), under the overall authority of the UNESCO General Conference and its Executive Board. The next level of governance is represented by regional and thematic networks. Governance at the national level is ideally through MAB National Committees.

MAB and other UNESCO Programmes and Conventions

UNESCO has developed several international programmes to assess and manage the Earth's resources better. UNESCO's primary objective – besides working together with its Member States to develop and promote education, science, culture, communication and information in all countries of the world – is to achieve mutual understanding among nations and peoples. Towards this goal, the Member States of UNESCO have established two programmes that recognize the global importance of natural and cultural heritage. The first, in 1971, was the MAB Programme. The second, in 1972, was the Convention for the Conservation of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which established a World Heritage List of Cultural and Natural Sites, inscribed for their outstanding universal value. For these sites, the main concerns are the conservation and management of exceptional natural and cultural sites, as well as raising awareness for heritage preservation.

In addition to these globally-important sites designated under UNESCO, others are designated under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), signed in 1971. This intergovernmental treaty provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Many biosphere reserves are also designated as World Heritage Sites, under the Ramsar Convention, and/or as Global Geoparks. Such multiple designations emphasize even further the global importance of these sites and offer opportunities for synergies between these global programmes all of which, like the MAB Programme, have ongoing review processes to ensure that activities in the constituent sites continue to move towards defined goals.

Given the diverse objectives of biosphere reserves and the stakeholders involved in them, there are clear opportunities for synergies with other UNESCO programmes, particularly the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST). There are also good opportunities for collaboration with the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the UNESCO Institutes, Centres, Chairs and networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet). A further context for collaboration is with regard to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In all of these contexts, collaboration with UNESCO's Communication and Information sector is essential.

Global Context for the MAB Strategy

Sustainability issues are at the centre of the international debate, as human activities continue to fundamentally alter the Earth's systems, with profound impacts on freshwater resources; on the ocean, atmosphere and climate; and on ecosystems, habitats and their biodiversity. These trends are underscored in the Rio+20 Outcome document, "The Future We Want", which also recognizes that they will have significant impacts on all societies; that they have economic, cultural and social drivers; and that they are likely to be accentuated in the coming decades. The global community is advancing on establishing and implementing a comprehensive set of related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets to simultaneously address human needs and environmental change. These explicitly take into account other global imperatives, such as the targets set under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its protocols and the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The MAB Strategy within UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy

Peace and equitable and sustainable development are the overarching objectives in the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4). Africa and gender equality are Global Priorities. UNESCO emphasizes the critical importance of greater knowledge sharing in order to induce the transformative changes needed to address the complex and inter-related challenges of sustainable development. UNESCO is therefore promoting international scientific cooperation and integrated scientific approaches to support Member States in effectively managing natural resources, reducing knowledge divides within and among countries, and building bridges for dialogue and peace. Building on its experience in leading intergovernmental and international science programmes and on their global observation capacities, UNESCO seeks to contribute to shaping the research agenda of global and regional scientific cooperation, based on the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want" and the post-2015 development agenda. The important role of MAB and its WNBR is emphasised in UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2014-2021, notably in relation to UNESCO's Strategic Objective 5: 'Promoting international scientific cooperation on critical challenges to sustainable development', as well as Strategic Objective 4: 'Strengthening science, technology and innovation systems and policies – nationally, regionally and globally'.

The Seville Strategy, Statutory Framework and Madrid Action Plan

The evolution of the MAB Programme and its WNBR has been steered by a series of meetings, beginning with those of a MAB Task Force in 1974 and continuing with the First International Biosphere Reserve Congress in Minsk, Belarus in 1984, which led to an Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves. A second international conference on biosphere reserves took place in Seville, Spain in 1995, and started a new era for the WNBR. The actions decided at that meeting were incorporated into the *Seville Strategy* and the *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*, both approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1995. The Seville+5 meeting, held in Pamplona, Spain in 2000, followed through on the strategic recommendations from Seville and led to decisions on various actions, particularly with regard to transboundary biosphere reserves.

The Third World Congress of Biosphere Reserves took place in Madrid in 2008. This agreed the *Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves* (MAP), building on the *Seville Strategy* and aiming to capitalize on the strategic advantages of the Seville instruments and raise biosphere reserves to be the principal internationally-designated areas dedicated to sustainable development in the 21st century. The MAP articulated actions, targets and success indicators, partnerships and other implementation strategies, and an evaluation framework, for the WNBR for 2008-2013. It took fully into consideration the recommendations of the Review Committee that evaluated UNESCO's Natural Sciences and Social and Human Sciences Programmes.

In 2013-14, UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service evaluated the MAP. Particular challenges limiting this process included the broad scope of the MAP, lack of clarity in the formulation of particular elements, and the lack of an implementation logic. The validity of conclusions was further constrained by low response rates, with significant regional variations. Despite these limitations, five main recommendations of areas for improvement were made: 1) strengthen the value of the WNBR for biosphere reserves and actively involve them in the activities of the WNBR; 2) strengthen the clearing house function of the WNBR; 3) develop the WNBR's global role as a platform for new ideas; 4) raise the profile of the WNBR; 5) strengthen the financial and human resource base of the WNBR.

The MAB Strategy 2015-2025

The MAB Programme with its WNBR constitutes an important and valuable partner and instrument for research and experimentation on the ground, to build knowledge on practice-based sustainable development and share it globally. Thanks to this practical approach, the MAB Programme supports the efforts of UNESCO Member States to address critical issues related to biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate change, and other aspects of global environmental change. Adopted by the MAB ICC at its 27th session, this MAB Strategy provides a comprehensive while succinct framework to achieve these goals and contribute to the global Sustainable Development Goals. This MAB Strategy is developed in line with the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014–2021, the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of the WNBR, and with due consideration to the recommendations emerging from the final evaluation of the MAP. The Strategic Objectives and Strategic Action Areas of this MAB Strategy will be implemented through the associated MAB Action Plan (to be presented to the Fourth World Congress on Biosphere Reserves in 2016); their implementation will be assessed using a specific Evaluation Framework.

Vision and Mission of the MAB Programme

Our vision is a world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere.

The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) serve this vision within and outside biosphere reserves.

Our mission for the period 2015-2025 is to:

- develop and strengthen models of sustainable development in the WNBR;
- communicate the experiences and lessons learned, facilitating the global diffusion and application of these models;
- support evaluation and high-quality management, strategies and policies for sustainable development and planning, as well as accountable and resilient institutions;
- help Member States and stakeholders to urgently meet the Sustainable Development Goals through experiences from the WNBR, particularly through exploring and testing policies, technologies and innovations for the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Strategic Objectives

MAB's Strategic Objectives for 2015 – 2025 derive directly from the three functions of biosphere reserves identified in the Statutory Framework for the WNBR and the key global challenge of climate change, identified in the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves. These Strategic Objectives are to:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserve Biodiversity, Restore and Enhance Ecosystem Services, and Foster the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources 2. Contribute to Building Sustainable, Healthy and Equitable Societies, Economies and Thriving Human Settlements in Harmony within the Biosphere 3. Facilitate Biodiversity and Sustainability Science, Education for Sustainable Development and Capacity Building 4. Support Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change and other aspects of Global Environmental Change
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Strategic Objective 1. Conserve Biodiversity, Restore and Enhance Ecosystem Services, and Foster the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is a critically important challenge. Biodiversity provides insurance and supports human well-being through a range of **ecosystem services**. Loss of biodiversity results in reductions in ecosystem services, creating direct threats to human well-being, and is an important indicator of an unbalanced system where vital components are affected. Habitat loss and fragmentation due to human development and unsustainable consumption and production patterns are among the major causes of diminishing biodiversity globally. The current scales of unprecedented exploitation of our natural resources call for their improved governance and stewardship.

Expected results

- 1.1. Member States actively support their biosphere reserves as models in contributing to the implementation of global conventions and other **Multilateral Environmental Agreements** and the achievement of relevant SDGs.
- 1.2. Alliances at local, national and regional level are established to support biosphere reserves to carry out their biodiversity conservation function and provide benefits to local people, thus contributing to the achievement of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity and its **Aichi Biodiversity Targets**.
- 1.3. Effective, equitable and participatory planning for sustainable development in biosphere reserves specifically takes into account the rights, needs and capacities of young people as well as women and indigenous and local communities, and their ownership and access to, and sustainable use of, natural resources in and around biosphere reserves.
- 1.4. States, local government, international organizations, and the private sector support biosphere reserves through the effective use of the **ecosystem approach**, to ensure the continued delivery of **ecosystem services** both within biosphere reserves and to the wider communities which rely on their provision for their health and well-being.
- 1.5. The role of the MAB Programme is strengthened in research and experimentation towards models and solutions of sustainable development, and promoting their global diffusion.

Strategic Objective 2. Contribute to Sustainable, Healthy, and Equitable Societies, Economies and Thriving Human Settlements in Harmony within the Biosphere

A burgeoning world population, increasingly concentrated in rapidly expanding urban areas of all sizes, notably in coastal regions, has resulted in the overexploitation and unsustainable use of limited natural resources, accelerating pollution and environmental degradation, with significant impacts on human well-being. Healthy, equitable societies and economies, and thriving human settlements, are essential elements of the quest for long-term sustainability and social development. To achieve this requires in-depth knowledge of natural and cultural heritage, socio-economic realities and innovative approaches to increase resilience. Through its WNBR, MAB is uniquely well placed to support the transition to thriving economies and sustainable societies, not only in individual Member States, but also through transboundary biosphere reserves. These provide opportunities for cooperation and understanding: enabling environments which foster the harmonious coexistence of people, and of people and nature, and promote a culture of peace with regard to the use of, and benefits from, shared natural resources.

Expected results

- 2.1. Biosphere reserves act as, and are recognized and supported by, all levels of government as models for promoting sustainable development and advancing the implementation of the SDGs relating to equitable and healthy societies and settlements.
- 2.2. Biosphere reserves act as models for exploring, establishing and demonstrating sustainable economic systems that positively affect the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use.
- 2.3. Biosphere reserves act as models to explore, establish and demonstrate innovative approaches that foster the resilience of communities and opportunities for youth, through livelihood diversification, green businesses, and social enterprise, including responsible tourism and quality economies.
- 2.4. Functional mechanisms are established to ensure that those who facilitate the provision of ecosystem services from biosphere reserves are equitably compensated and supported by those who utilize and benefit from these ecosystem services, often in distant urban areas.
- 2.5. Biosphere reserves contribute directly to the health and well-being of those who live in them and those who are related to them.
- 2.6. Transboundary biosphere reserves are reinforced through multi-scale dialogue and capacity building specific to transboundary issues.

Strategic Objective 3. Facilitate Biodiversity and Sustainability Science, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Capacity Building

Sustainability science is an integrated, problem-solving approach that draws on the full range of scientific, traditional and indigenous knowledge in a trans-disciplinary way to identify, understand and address present and future economic, environmental, ethical and societal challenges related to sustainable development. At a biosphere reserve level, this requires collaboration between all the different stakeholders, including scientists, policy makers,

members of local communities, and the private sector. **ESD** promotes the inclusion of key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning, to motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour through acquiring new skills, competencies and values and take action for sustainable development. Biosphere reserves, particularly through their coordinators, managers, and scientists have key roles to play in operationalizing and mainstreaming sustainability science and ESD at local and regional levels, in order to build scientific knowledge, identify best practices and strengthen the interface between science, policy and education and training for sustainable development.

Expected results

- 3.1. MAB and its WNBR are fully engaged with international, regional, national and sub-national research initiatives and programmes that contribute to the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.
- 3.2. The establishment of an international network of scientists working in biosphere reserves and with their managers/coordinators and other stakeholders.
- 3.3. Each biosphere reserve has an active research programme, based on the principles of sustainability science, which provides the basis of participatory decision-making and management in the biosphere reserve.
- 3.4. Traditional knowledge is used as a “knowledge input” for managing biosphere reserves while recognizing the importance of both empowering indigenous and local communities as guardians of unique knowledge and of maintaining cultural identity.
- 3.5. Training and capacity building activities in biosphere reserves and at national, regional and global levels addressing the interlinked issues of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and the socio-economic and cultural well-being of human communities.
- 3.6. ESD activities take place in all biosphere reserves, including all partners of civil society. Biosphere reserves also serve as ESD hubs from which the models are disseminated.
- 3.7. Increased partnerships between biosphere reserves and UNESCO Education Sector programmes, such as the **Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD**, the **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet)**, and the **UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme** and other relevant education and capacity-building bodies of the United Nations.

Strategic Objective 4. Support Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change and other aspects of Global Environmental Change

Climate change continues to be of paramount concern for the future of humankind. It is now extremely likely that human activities have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. According to the 5th Assessment Report of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, warming of the climate system is unequivocal; many of the observed changes since the 1950s have been unprecedented over decades to millennia. The specific values of, and opportunities for, biosphere reserves in relation to climate change were recognized in the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) and the Dresden Declaration on Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change (2011), aiming at placing greater focus

on the capacities of the MAB Programme and its biosphere reserves for mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and for integrating their contributions effectively into national and international climate strategies and policies. This requires simultaneously addressing the complex interactions between climate change and other aspects of global environmental change, such as loss of biodiversity, urbanization, desertification, degradation of land and water resources, and stratospheric ozone depletion.

Expected results

- 4.1. The WNBR functions as a global network of regions to promote learning and pilot innovative actions to monitor, adapt to, and mitigate the effects of climate change and other types of global environmental change.
- 4.2. Member States actively support their biosphere reserves as models in implementing the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the ***Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)***.
- 4.3. Member States and other decision makers recognize and promote biosphere reserves as priority sites in developing and implementing strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation, in particular through 1) energy efficiency and the development and adoption of renewable and clean energy, including energy saving through responsible consumption and 2) approaches related to carbon sequestration and ***REDD+*** (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).
- 4.4. Member States actively promote the transfer of approaches developed in biosphere reserves to other countries and regions.

Strategic Action Areas

MAB's Strategic Action Areas for 2015 – 2025 are:

	<p>A. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves comprised of effectively functioning models for sustainable development</p> <p>B. Inclusive, dynamic and results-oriented collaboration and networking within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves</p> <p>C. Effective external partnerships and sufficient and sustainable funding for the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves</p> <p>D. Comprehensive, modern, open and transparent communication, information and data sharing</p> <p>E. Effective governance of and within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves</p>
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The first three of these Strategic Action Areas have specific foci: A – on individual biosphere reserves in the context of the countries in which they are located; B – on networking within the MAB Programme; C – primarily on partnerships outside the MAB Programme. The Strategic Action Areas, together with their respective strategic lines of action, are outlined below.

Strategic Action Area A. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves comprised of effectively functioning models for sustainable development

By 2025, the WNBR aims to be an integrated global network of learning and demonstration sites for innovation in sustainable development. Once biosphere reserves reach their optimum functionality, they will represent a key interface between science, policy and society at local, national, regional and global levels, to the benefit of their populations, the Member States in which biosphere reserves are located and much wider constituencies. As models, biosphere reserves should contribute to sustainable development, including conserving biodiversity and reducing poverty. The WNBR is a unique forum for the co-production of knowledge for sustainable development between the inhabitants of biosphere reserves, practitioners and researchers. The WNBR must consist of fully functioning, well managed sites that comply with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. Ensuring this has been the aim of the exit strategy adopted by the ICC in 2013.

Strategic lines of action

- A.1. Procedures and processes for selecting, designating, planning and implementing biosphere reserves are open and participatory, taking into account local practices and traditions and cultures, and involving all relevant stakeholders.
- A.2. States and other entities with territorial and governance competences explicitly integrate biosphere reserves into national and regional development, territorial planning, environment and other sectoral legislation, policies and programmes, and support effective governance and management structures in each biosphere reserve.
- A.3. Biosphere reserves and national MAB Committees have partnerships with universities and research institutes, to undertake applied research and provide practical learning and training opportunities that support the management and sustainable development of biosphere reserves.
- A.4. Financial sustainability of biosphere reserves is much improved, with a diverse funding base.
- A.5. The periodic review process supports an effectively functioning WNBR, generating a dynamic process of adaptive management of biosphere reserves.

Strategic Action Area B. Inclusive, dynamic and results-oriented collaboration and networking within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Inclusive, dynamic and results-oriented collaboration and networking are essential for MAB and its WNBR to provide effective contributions towards the SDGs and related targets. At the international level, collaboration will especially focus on South-South and North-South-South triangular cooperation, as a catalyst for dialogue and co-production of scientific knowledge, in synergy with local and indigenous knowledge brokers, and for *science diplomacy*. Collaboration and networking shall target all four strategic objectives. The importance of MAB's regional and thematic networks should be emphasized in this context. The regional networks

have variable working methods and statutes, which address regional needs and should be flexible in order to be relevant and efficient in the context of their regions, and the thematic networks typically should be self-organized.

Strategic lines of action

- B.1. Global and regional capacity building and training programmes directed to managers/coordinators of biosphere reserves and other stakeholders facilitate the delivery of the Strategic Objectives.
- B.2. Networks are strengthened through enhanced participation of Member States – including UNESCO National Commissions, MAB National Committees, and relevant Ministries – and other public stakeholders, as well as universities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and stronger cooperation with relevant stakeholders.
- B.3. Networks have the infrastructure and adequate resources to fulfill their potential to implement their objectives.
- B.4. Networks foster collaboration in research, implementation and monitoring, including through exchanges between biosphere reserves.
- B.5. Networks communicate and disseminate their aims and activities effectively, both internally and externally.
- B.6. An increased number of twinning arrangements between biosphere reserves foster transboundary and transnational cooperation.

Strategic Action Area C. Effective partnerships and sufficient and sustainable funding for the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Effective partnerships aimed at strengthening biosphere reserves, networks and the MAB Secretariat, and to promote the implementation of plans and strategies, particularly through sustainable financing mechanisms, are a priority for the MAB Programme. While the basic operational resources of the Programme and members of the WNBR must be provided from regular budgets for all levels of implementation, there is a clear need to bring in new partners – such as research groups, private sector enterprises or groups, museums, seed banks, and civil society organizations – either to strengthen existing partnerships or create new ones. In doing so, each country's administrative organization must be respected and local communities must not lose their independence and influence, especially if the partners are from other regions. To increase organizational, including financial, resilience in MAB and individual biosphere reserves, different means of funding should be explored. In addition to financing, new partnerships should increase public awareness of the values and benefits of biosphere reserves as well as the involvement of local communities. UNESCO has one of the most famous and best-recognized global 'brands': a key challenge is how to use it to raise funds for the WNBR and its biosphere reserves.

Strategic lines of action

- C.1. A comprehensive business and marketing plan for the WNBR, regional and thematic networks, national MAB Committees and individual biosphere reserves is prepared, taking into account the priorities of bilateral and multilateral donors and the private and philanthropic sectors. (Key elements are identified below; others may be included in the action plan)

- C.2. The MAB Secretariat and National Committees strengthen collaboration and partnerships both within UNESCO and with key international organizations.
- C.3. The MAB Secretariat assists biosphere reserves and regional networks to build expertise in developing their own revenue, and to share this expertise.
- C.4. Private sector partnerships generated around the MAB Programme at local, national and international levels.
- C.5. An increased number of projects and activities support biosphere reserves and networks funded through national and regional funding mechanisms, especially those that emphasise the need for multi-national partnerships.
- C.6. Deeper involvement of, and guidance provided to entrepreneurs active in biosphere reserves, especially those supporting social enterprises and green economies.
- C.7. A strengthened global Biosphere Reserve brand is established, supplementing local biosphere reserve brands.
- C.8. Joint promotion of biosphere reserve products/services between biosphere reserves is enhanced.
- C.9. Every biosphere reserve generates some of its own revenue.

Strategic Action Area D. Comprehensive, modern, open and transparent communication, information and data sharing

The success of the MAB Programme depends on effective and open communication, data and knowledge exchange, based on a clear and shared vision of the biosphere reserve concept, both among the different actors on the Programme – biosphere reserves, national committees, networks and the Secretariat – and externally. Contemporary communication and information, social media, and data sharing tools have huge potential for the Programme. While the MAB Secretariat, National Committees, regional and thematic networks and individual biosphere reserves are starting to make good use of these tools, there is an urgent need to widen their application not only within the MAB Programme but also to engage diverse external audiences. Yet many countries still have poor access to modern communication facilities, which implies a continued focus on traditional means of communication and information exchange. The task to communicate more effectively depends not only on how well MAB mobilizes communication tools and instruments, but also on MAB's success in producing outcomes and services that are appreciated and available in as many languages as possible, starting with UNESCO's official languages. Good outcomes will attract press and media attention, so they communicate on our behalf.

Strategic lines of action

- D.1. Full implementation of the open access policy to MAB and WNBR-related documents, data, information and multimedia materials.
- D.2. A comprehensive communication strategy complemented by an action plan (Key elements are identified below; others may be included in the action plan).

- D.3. The MAB Secretariat has a coordinated publication programme and effectively implements the MAB web site (MABNet), as the key communication, data and information hub for MAB.
- D.4. Biosphere reserve coordinators/managers, National Committees, and regional networks ensure wide access to information concerning biosphere reserves.
- D.5. Increased use of video conferencing, social media and new information and communication technologies for knowledge sharing, communication, technical cooperation, and capacity building.

Strategic Action Area E. Effective governance of and within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

The MAB Programme is governed by its International Coordinating Council, under the overall authority of the UNESCO General Conference and its Executive Board. The Statutory Framework of the WNBR remains the basis for its governance. Well-structured and effectively implemented and managed governing mechanisms are at the foundation of a successful MAB Programme. MAB National Committees have critical roles to play in implementing the vision and mission of the MAB Programme. Important lessons have been learned from many years of experiences working with the Seville Strategy and from the implementation and evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of actions and governance mechanisms are essential in order to ensure timely and effective adaptation to change.

Strategic lines of action

- E.1. The governments of Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO support the implementation of the MAB Programme, including through well-defined institutional support.
- E.2. Each MAB National Committee has a transdisciplinary membership, including representatives from the public, private, research and education sectors, and a wide range of other stakeholders, including representation from biosphere reserves.
- E.3. Member States regularly update the MAB Secretariat and regional networks regarding implementation of the MAB Strategy and Action Plan within their country.
- E.4. Each regional network has a defined governance mechanism, including annual assessment of performance.
- E.5. New thematic networks, if any, have well-defined objectives and plans, an inbuilt review mechanism and a sunset clause.
- E.6. The International Support Group (ISG) of Permanent Delegations to the MAB Programme continues to contribute to communications and advocacy to the benefit of the Programme.

Evaluation Framework

The MAB Strategy will be implemented through the associated MAB Action Plan (see below) and assessed using a specific Evaluation Framework founded in strategic intervention logic. This will connect the strategic objectives and the strategic action areas contained in the present strategy with the key activities and outputs of the Action Plan. Under the Framework, performance indicators will be developed, together with corresponding sources of verification and monitoring, and included in an evaluation plan that sets out roles and responsibilities of the key actors involved in the performance and achievement of the Strategy and the Action Plan. The Evaluation Framework and subsequent monitoring and evaluation will be developed and conducted in close cooperation with UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS).

MAB Action Plan

The MAB Action Plan (2016-2025) will provide a comprehensive set of actions for the effective implementation of the MAB Strategy. The Action Plan will be presented to the Fourth World Congress on Biosphere Reserves and the 28th MAB ICC in Lima, Peru, in March 2016.

Glossary³

Aichi Biodiversity Targets

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets are a set of 20, time-bound, measureable targets agreed in Nagoya, Japan (October 2010) by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to reach several strategic goals by 2020, namely to: address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993. It has 3 main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Ecosystem approach

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted in November 1995 the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for action under the CBD as a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems.

Ecosystem services

Ecosystems provide a wide range of services without which human life would not be possible, such as provision of food and water. Ecosystem services also protects and sustain human

³ Glossary text inserted by the MAB Secretariat. This text will be checked with the relevant organisations (e.g., Convention Secretariats) and against standard references before the final version of this document is published.

welfare through flood and disease control and by providing cultural services including recreational, spiritual and cultural benefits.

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. ESD means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. ESD consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.

Global Action Programme on ESD

The Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD seeks to generate and scale-up ESD action. It is intended to make a substantial contribution to the post-2015 agenda. The overall goal of the GAP is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. The GAP has two objectives: to reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development – and make a difference; and to strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development. The GAP focuses on five priority action areas: Advancing policy; Integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches); Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers; Empowering and mobilizing youth; and Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

Global Framework for Climate Services

The international community decided to establish the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) in 2009 to promote operational climate services at the national and regional levels. This intergovernmental partnership is supported by the United Nations and other international organizations with diverse, cross-cutting mandates. It is overseen by the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services, which reports to the World Meteorological Congress. The GFCS has four initial priority sectors: agriculture and food security, water, health and disaster risk reduction.

Multilateral environmental agreements

Multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) are agreements between states on specific environmental issues, such as biodiversity and climate change, that typically include obligations involving general principles and more specific actions to be taken in order to achieve an environmental objective. Examples of MEAs include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention),

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) is a mechanism that has been included under negotiation by the UNFCCC in order to promote the mitigation of climate change by enhancing

forest management in developing countries and thereby also the net emissions of greenhouse gases.

Science diplomacy

Science diplomacy implies scientific collaboration among states to find solutions to common problems and the promotion of international academic, technical, or research partnerships and exchanges. Science diplomacy can thus contribute to peace and security through enhanced international relations and understanding

Sustainability science

Sustainability science promotes problem driven cross-disciplinary approaches to advance understanding of human-environment interactions and systems, and of how those interactions affect the challenge of sustainability. The field is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It draws from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, medical and engineering sciences, from the professions, and from practical field experience in business, government, and civil society. Sustainability science approaches are characterized by: use of problem-driven methodologies promoting dialogue between science and society; a focus on the interactions between social and natural systems; and integration of multiple forms of knowledge leading to sound policy and sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of targets negotiated among states to orient future national and international development efforts in favour of sustainable development. The SDGs were discussed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20) and thereafter elaborated through the UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet)

Founded in 1953, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), commonly referred to as UNESCO Associated Schools, is a global network of 10,000 educational institutions in 181 countries. Member institutions – ranging from pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools to teacher training institutions - work in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education in practice.

UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

Launched in 1992, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme promotes international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work. The Programme supports the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in key priority areas related to UNESCO's fields of competence – i.e. in education, the natural and social sciences, culture and communication.