

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

**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**

Twenty-second session

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)**

31 May – 4 June 2010

[http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-  
URL\\_ID=6793&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

**Final Report**

**I. Opening by the Chair of the ICC**

1. The twenty-second session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) from 31 May to 4 June 2010.

2. Participants included representatives of the following Members of the ICC as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> sessions: Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Benin, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe.

3. In addition, observers from the following Member States were present: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Monaco, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Peru, Poland, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. The Holy See was also represented.

4. The following United Nations organization was represented: the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The following international non-governmental organization was present: the International Council for Science (ICSU). The full list of participants is presented as Annex 1 to this report.

**II. Opening remarks by the Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO**

5. Mr Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, as the representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, warmly welcomed the MAB-ICC delegates. He stressed that while the MAB Programme itself, as it prepares to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, has undergone changes over the years, its underlying focus on the relationship between people and the environment remains as pertinent today as when MAB was established in the early 1970s.

6. In view of the fact that biosphere reserves around the world today are being established and managed to address an increasing range of complex issues, concerns and opportunities, such as in the areas of climate change and the building of green economies, Mr Erdelen referred to the important role of the 22<sup>nd</sup> MAB-ICC to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan that sets out to provide a road map for this purpose, and for reviewing new biosphere reserve proposals.

7. He assured the MAB-ICC that UNESCO will do its utmost to assist its Member States to build a strong MAB Programme and to seize opportunities provided by the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) for promoting international and regional sustainable development cooperation. In accordance with the request from the Delegate of Egypt the full text of the presentation of the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences is included as annex 4 to this report.

### **III. Report of the Chair of the ICC**

8. HE Mr Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forest Economy and Environment of Congo and the outgoing Chair of the ICC, gave an exhaustive report on his entire tenure (2008-2010) focusing particularly on the activities undertaken since the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the ICC held in May 2009. Mr Djombo highlighted the importance of the creation of the International Support Group for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), the efforts to better position the particular role of the biosphere reserves facing the challenges of sustainable development, biodiversity loss and climate change.

9. Mr Djombo stressed the experience of ERAIFT whose advantages lead to the signature in Jeju of the memorandum of cooperation between this regional School based in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the University of Para, Belem in Brazil and the Indonesian Institute of Science as well as the signature of a memorandum of understanding on the Mayombe initiative between Angola, Congo and DRC for launching an experimental forest carbon sequestration programme.

10. Mr Djombo was pleased that biosphere reserves had been recognized as places for sustainable development learning and are leading key activities illustrating this role during the second part of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) from 2010 to 2014.

11. Mr Djombo suggested that the 'drive belt' between the National Commissions for UNESCO within Member States and MAB National Committees expand and that the programmes for the advances of scientific knowledge related to biodiversity in particular forest, dryland, mountain, rural, marine and coastal ecosystems be allocated significant budgets. Consequently he proposed that communication be targeted as a means to ensure the visibility of the MAB Programme in order to foster strong strategic partnerships and sustainable financing of its projects.

12. Mr Djombo concluded his report in thanking the Council, the Bureau and the Secretariat, as well as the members of the Permanent Delegation of Congo to UNESCO and his collaborators assuring them that he would continue to support MAB and its WNBR for sustainable development.

#### **IV. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur**

13. The MAB-ICC elected the following Members to the Bureau of the MAB-ICC:

Chair:

Republic of Korea (Mr Chung-II Choi)

Vice-Chairs:

Argentina

Austria

Benin

Egypt

Russian Federation (Rapporteur - Mr Valery Neronov)

#### **V. Adoption of the agenda and timetable**

14. The Council adopted its agenda and time table as contained in Annex 2 to this report.

#### **VI. Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), decisions and recommendations of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC and other related matters**

15. The Secretary of the MAB Programme reported on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), including the decisions and recommendations of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the MAB-ICC held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea from 25 to 29 May 2009. Noting that the implementation of MAP was now in its 28<sup>th</sup> month, the Secretary drew attention of ICC Member and Observer Delegations to documents SC-10/CONF.201/3 and SC-10/CONF.201/INF/3, the latter in particular comprising a tabular progress report with respect to each of the 31 targets of MAP.

16. The Secretary paid special tribute to the Chair of the MAB-ICC during 2008-2010, HE Mr Henri Djombo, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Forest Economy of Congo, for raising the profile of MAB and the WNBR both in Africa and internationally. He listed several activities undertaken by the MAB Secretariat in co-operation with many partners in Africa and highlighted the importance of the African Biosphere Biocarbon Forum convened in Brazzaville during 20-24 April 2010 under the aegis of HE Mr Djombo for follow-up projects focusing on sustainable development and climate change in biosphere reserves of Congo Basin countries. He informed the Delegates of the continuing success of ERAIFT due to train another 90-100 Africans at the MS and Ph.D. levels in integrated land and resources management in the tropics during 2009-2013 in addition to 81 already trained during the last phase that ended in 2008. He regretted the postponement of an AfriMAB meeting originally scheduled for mid-May 2010, and noted that among the regional and sub-regional networks of MAB and WNBR, AfriMAB needed special attention with regard to sustainable financing and partnerships, in line with the UNESCO-wide priority of Africa.

17. The Secretary noted the improved visibility of MAB and WNBR within UNESCO, thanks to the Resolution (35 C/Resolution 31 - Contribution of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the its World Network of Biosphere Reserves to Sustainable Development) introduced by Germany and supported by well over 30 countries at the last session of the General Conference in October 2009 and to the commitment shown by the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, to implement the draft decision. In highlighting selective strengths and constraints in the implementation of MAP, the Secretary singled out progress with regard to

target 2 (increased co-operation with existing international programmes), target 9 (all biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations) and target 21 and 22 (related to UN DESD and exchange of educational resources), respectively, as satisfactory. On the other hand he expressed his concerns in achieving progress with regard to target 7 (functional MAB National Committees in each country, managed in a manner assuring adequate representation of biosphere reserve co-ordinators and other key stakeholders), target 3 (integrated information and communication strategy) and target 25 (improved financial mechanisms for biosphere reserves and regional networks) and stressed the pivotal role of UNESCO National Commissions, MAB National Committees and authorities responsible for individual biosphere reserves for the effective implementation of MAP.

18. The Secretary noted that the Mid-Term Evaluation of MAP due for the end of 2010 will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the implementation of MAP and invited Delegates to express their views and opinions for the plan for the evaluation included in document SC-10/CONF.201/14. He concluded his presentation by drawing attention to the fact that the 23rd session of the MAB/ICC in 2011 will coincide with the organization of possible special events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the MAB Programme and that two ICC Member States had expressed interest in hosting both the ICC session as well as 40th anniversary commemorative events of MAB.

19. Several Delegates welcomed the quality of the information provided and called for special efforts to raise the visibility of MAB and WNBR, raise public awareness on biosphere reserves, establish training courses for biosphere reserve authorities at masters or other appropriate levels and improve the financing of the MAB Programme. The Secretariat pointed out the role of ERAIFT and some partnerships such as that between the Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve of Viet Nam and the University of Queensland, Australia in providing post-graduate level training but acknowledge the need for more particularly targeting provincial and local-level authorities responsible for the management of biosphere reserves. Benin in particular stressed that MAB, and in particular its ERAIFT Project are contributing significantly to capacity building in Africa and hence deserved to be considered for improved financial allocations within UNESCO's Regular Programme budget.

20. Countries like India and Spain provided information on national level direct and indirect budget support provided for MAB and biosphere reserve activities. The relevance of the MAB Programme and biosphere reserves for the potential Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as well as to the next round opportunities under the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) were highlighted, and the Secretariat requested the assistance of countries like the Republic of Korea which is hosting the next meeting on IPBES in Korea during 7-11 June 2010 to raise the potential of IPBES working closely with MAB and biosphere reserves with other participating countries and organizations. The Secretariat informed the ICC that UNESCO will be represented at the Korea meeting.

21. Several countries, like Indonesia and Benin, expressed interest in promoting the "biosphere schools project" being pilot-tested by the Secretariat in countries like Guinea-Bissau and Mexico for supporting schools in buffer zones and transition areas of biosphere reserves. Benin noted with interest possible collaborative work of MAB and IOC on the ocean realm. The possibility of organizing the work of the AfriMAB network via sub-regional networks linked to respective sub-regional economic commissions of Africa was highlighted by some African Member States.

## **VII. Reports on activities since the 21<sup>st</sup> MAB-ICC with special references to the Madrid Action Plan**

### **A. Member States of UNESCO**

22. Member States of UNESCO reported on their progress since the 21<sup>st</sup> MAB-ICC on implementing the Madrid Action Plan. Written reports submitted in advance have been published on the MABNet and all written reports submitted to the Secretariat at the time of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC will be added to this webpage. Oral reports were given by Spain, Jamaica, Italy, Turkey, Mali, Germany, Russian Federation, Egypt, Republic of Korea, Colombia, Portugal, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Argentina, Indonesia and as well as the Observer Representative of Canada. Many updates related to progress towards completing periodic reviews of biosphere reserves, the national structure of MAB National Committees, political and public recognition of biosphere reserves, fund raising strategies and successes, relevant trainings and workshops, and progress towards new transboundary cooperation were highlighted. The ICC invited the Member and Observer States to consider providing written reports in the future specifically related to relevant MAP targets chosen by Member States and send them to the MAB Secretariat preferably three (3) months in advance to enable the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis for the Council sessions. ICC however stressed the need to keep the workload of UNESCO Member States by an increasing range of reporting requirements being proposed for monitoring the implementation of the MAP as light as possible and suggested that the Member States be allowed flexibility in the level of quantitative and qualitative details and other information they wish to include in their reports to the Secretariat.

### **B. Regional, sub-regional, MAB/biosphere reserve, ecosystem and other thematic networks**

23. The Secretariat presented document SC-10/CONF.201/5 related to point 7.2 of the agenda on networks, and Mr Robert Lee from the UNESCO Office in Jakarta reported on his Office's plans to develop the BREES (Biosphere Reserves for Environmental & Economic Security) initiative using biosphere reserves in Asia and the Pacific.

24. Succinct reports on recent progress and actions of these regional or interregional networks were presented, which are summarized below:

25. The ArabMAB network report was presented by the Chairperson of MAB Egypt. The 6<sup>th</sup> ArabMAB network meeting and a training workshop on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan in the Arab region was held in the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon, 11-13 May 2010. The 6<sup>th</sup> ArabMAB meeting decided to enlarge its Bureau from 5 to 7 and to entrust Yemen with the Chairmanship. Recent ArabMAB work concentrated on training workshops and assistance for the preparation of new biosphere reserve nominations within the region; ArabMAB Members are invited to send new biosphere reserve nominations to the network before submitting them to UNESCO. ArabMAB is also suggesting the establishment of networking among all regional MAB Networks, a proposal it already made at the last session of the ICC held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in May 2009.

26. The AfriMAB network activities were briefly introduced by the representative of Mali, who encouraged African States that do not have MAB Committees to establish such committees and use other appropriate modalities to promote MAB and biosphere reserves and stated that the AfriMAB network was elaborating a charter and a work plan for the coming years on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP).

27. The EABRN (East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network) report was presented by the Republic of Korea. Mention was made on the creation of the Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves, which had been established at the last ICC in 2009 in Jeju, Republic of Korea. Since then, Korea has established a regional centre for this network. In

September 2010, the first meeting of this ecosystem network will be held in Jeju, Republic of Korea and a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between the Republic of Korea, Spain and the Menorca Biosphere Reserve of Spain. Furthermore, Korea informed that EABRN had held its last meeting in November 2009 in China with participation of the Russian Federation, Japan, Republic of Korea, DPR Korea, Mongolia and China to discuss the implementation of MAP. Further topics included the extension of EABRN. In addition a training workshop on GIS for biosphere reserves had been recently organized by China.

28. In this context, the Russian Federation welcomed the work of EuroMAB and the EABRN Network. Russia emphasized that the Altaisky Biosphere Reserve had become a good model for implementation of the MAP. Russia also mentioned the recent meeting held in Central Asia in Almaty, Kazakhstan in May 2010, with the participation of five (5) countries, i.e. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. One main outcome of this meeting is the possible future creation of a new "Central Asian Biosphere Reserve Network" involving five (5) countries of this region, i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

29. The IberoMAB network was presented by the Chairperson of MAB Spain on behalf of the President of the IberoMAB network who was unable to attend the ICC.

30. The holding of the 1<sup>st</sup> IberoAmerican Biosphere Reserve Conference from 9 to 13 November 2010 in Puerto Morelos, Mexico was the principle topic of this presentation. The ICC was informed that this conference would bring together some 300 people from MAB National Committees and biosphere reserves from Latin America and the Caribbean and the Iberian Peninsula. It will prepare the Yucatan Declaration for the COP 16 on Global Climate Change in Cancun, Mexico due to be convened during November-December 2010 to draw attention of COP 16 to biosphere reserves as learning places for sustainable development. The meeting will be supported by the Governments of Mexico and Spain, the Spanish Foundation for Biodiversity and UNESCO. At the time of the Conference the 14<sup>th</sup> IberoAmerican Network (IberoMAB) meeting will also be convened.

31. Spain has always supported the IberoMAB and the REDBIOS Networks. The latter will have its next meeting in September 2010 in the island Biosphere Reserve of Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands of Spain.

32. The EuroMAB report was presented by the representative of Slovakia. He reported on the last EuroMAB meeting held in October 2009, in which the EuroMAB network discussed strategic actions for the implementation of MAP, set priorities and shared experiences on sustainable development and know-how on biosphere reserves. A EuroMAB Steering Committee, comprising Canada, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden and Turkey had been created. The next meeting of the network will be held in Sweden in 2011.

33. Turkey spoke on MAB regional and sub-regional events one of which had been on the role of the UNESCO Programme in Central Asia supported by Turkey and the other a sub-regional workshop organized in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Venice and the UNESCO Cluster Office in Moscow, held in Antalya, Turkey, in order to identify priority areas for new biosphere reserves. Cooperation, sustainable development and the research function of biosphere reserves for educational activities and capacity building were some of the themes discussed. Difficulties in the Caucasus region centre on the lack of conservation at the local level and the lack of recognition of biosphere reserves. The lack of financial support to these initiatives was also mentioned.

34. Italy informed that it had hosted a regional meeting of coastal biosphere reserves, which was organized by UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Venice and took place in Sicily in November 2009, bringing together six (6) Mediterranean countries that have established or plan to establish coastal biosphere reserves.

35. A statement was made by the representative of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) who highlighted UNWTO's interest to collaborate with the MAB Programme on tourism and biodiversity. The UNWTO Consulting Unit for Tourism and Biodiversity established with support from Germany in the City of Bonn will serve as the UNWTO Focal Point for co-operation with MAB and biosphere reserves.

36. The Council took note of these reports and thanked the representatives for presenting these interesting activities. It underlined the need to establish solid and constantly functioning MAB National Committees in order to guarantee the constant involvement of the countries in all MAB-related affairs and to participate regularly in these networks.

37. The Delegate from Argentina drew attention to information document on the MAB Programme and the Oceans. The Secretariat committed to keeping the Council informed of progress in this connection particularly with regard to collaboration between MAB and IOC and other partners such as the World Association of Marine Stations (WAMS). Any ocean initiative going beyond collaboration with IOC, such as that related to the work of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, must require prior intergovernmental consultation with Member States.

38. Finally, the ICC thanked the efforts of countries like Chile which had offered to voluntarily undertake an evaluation of the implementation of MAB in the IberoMAB region and encouraged countries to consider offering similar assistance to the work of other networks.

#### **VIII. Review and updating of statutory documents of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)**

39. The Secretariat drew attention to the revised version of the document SC-10/CONF.201/6 (apologizing for the erroneous numbering of the document as SC-09/CONF.201/6) which included five annexes as follows:

- (i) Annex 1: Statutes of the MAB-ICC (current version and amendments introduced and approved up to the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the ICC in May 2009);
- (ii) Annex 2: Rules of Procedure of the MAB-ICC (current version and amendments introduced and approved up to the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the ICC in May 2009)
- (iii) Annex 3: Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) (current version and amendments approved by the IACBR at its last meeting in January 2010).
- (iv) Annex 4: Implementing the MAB Programme and Promoting the Actions of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) which integrates the current version of the Guidelines for the Establishment of MAB National Committees but expands on many dimensions of national level implementation of the MAB Programme and the actions of the WNBR; and
- (v) Annex 5: The Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) with compatibility of each of the 31 targets of the MAP and their related actions with regard to the provisions of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

40. Many of the Delegates while noting that the annexes being made available just prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC did not facilitate their reflections and consultations with their national authorities on proposed amendments in annexes 1-3, the draft document in annex 4 and the analysis presented in annex 5, respectively, welcomed the Secretariat proposal to set up a working group within the framework of the International Support Group (ISG) established by the ICC at its last session in May 2009. The Secretariat recalled that the ISG is an open-ended group allowing the participation of both ICC Member and Observer Delegates of UNESCO. The ICC recommended that the ISG establish a working group under the Chairmanship of the ICC Vice-Chair for the Arab Region, the Distinguished Delegate of Egypt

to UNESCO, Mr Mohamed El-Zahaby, to review all amendments and proposals made in annexes 1-5 described above so as to finalize proposals for the consideration of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the ICC to be held in 2011. The drafts of the documents approved by the 23<sup>rd</sup> ICC session in 2011 would then have to be submitted to the consideration and approval by the autumn session of the Executive Board and/or the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2011. The ICC instructed the Secretariat to circulate the documents contained in annexes 1-5 to ICC Member and Observer Delegations resident in UNESCO soon after the conclusion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC seeking written comments on each one of them until the end of August 2010. The written comments obtained from ICC Member and Observer Delegations of UNESCO would be integrated into the preparation of updated drafts of the documents contained in annexes 1-5 that would form the basis for the deliberations of the working group to be established within the framework of the ISG and under the Chairmanship of the Delegate of Egypt to UNESCO. The outcome of the working group which should form the drafts for the working documents on the topics of each of the annexes 1-5 for discussion by the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the ICC should be made available for review and consultation by UNESCO Member States with their National authorities sufficiently ahead of time of the dates of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC in 2011.

## **IX. Communication Strategy and clearing house mechanism**

41. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/7 on Communication strategy and clearing-house mechanism. It reported on progress made since last MAB Council on the implementation of Target 3 of the MAP and on the five (5) actions within this target and based the “Integrated information and communication strategy” adopted by the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Council in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in May 2009.

42. As regards implementation of action 3.1 on the “creation of a web-based information clearing-house and information centre, to exchange and share technology, research, training, education and cooperation opportunities, findings and experiences, and to help to solve problems at local, regional and international levels”, the Secretariat introduced the pilot MAB community Platform for the WNBR designed with the support of the Communication Sector, particularly its Division of Informatics and Technologies and the Bureau of Public Information of UNESCO. The web platform would be a complement to the reference website and would serve two main functions: a) exchange of information and know-how between MAB practitioners; and b) a cooperation platform within the WNBR. As a result, the web platform would serve to raise awareness to the work and practices in the WNBR as well as increase visibility of the WNBR and the MAB programme among the various communities of practitioners and the general public.

43. The pilot phase of the MAB Community Platform would last six (6) months, with volunteers from the different regions testing the various tools and their functionality. Technical updates and improvements of the platform would be made with the support of in-house UNESCO partners referred to above as well as using experiences of other existing community platforms within and outside of UNESCO. A draft guide for users has been prepared and would be validated during the test period. Training of moderators from members of the WNBR is also planned, through e-learning as well as regional workshops.

44. Some Delegates raised questions about costs, accessibility for remote sites, language aspects, amount of work needed, as well as responsibilities for posting the data, linkages with other web initiatives and networks such as the research platform on biosphere reserves being developed in Germany.

45. Many Delegates expressed their strong support for this initiative which is addressing needs expressed by their biosphere reserve coordinators, facilitating sharing of information, knowledge and good practices and indicated that this tool was long-awaited for and



congratulated the Secretariat for launching the pilot phase. Spain shared its experience on a similar web platform that is being used for the Spanish national biosphere reserve network as well as at the sub-regional level, which is successfully networking researchers and practitioners as well as informing the general public. Germany also mentioned the on-going work being developed for a web research platform on biosphere reserves and the willingness to cooperate with the initiative.

46. The Secretariat further informed the Council that during the next six months of the pilot phase, it would carefully monitor accessibility and language issues, and would use the feedback from the different users for improving both the user's guidelines and the performance of the community platform. It further informed the Council of on-going dialogue for establishing a partnership with Google Earth for biosphere reserves to be visible on the Google map layer and the need to verify the geographical coordinates of these in the coming months. It also mentioned that the electronic working group responsible for updating of both the periodic and nomination forms would also have to look at data and information requested for communication purposes targeting different audiences, including the general public. This web-based MAB community platform could become the main source of information on WNBR and the MAB programme, and the main source of communication of information targeting the general public, when the clearing house is expected to be fully operational in 2013.

47. The ICC while endorsing the continuing work on the platform and other related tools also drew the attention of ICC Member and Observer Delegations to consider the feasibility to provide the MAB Secretariat human and/or financial support for the enhanced implementation of target 3 actions.

## **X. World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)**

### **A. Implementing the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) Target 9: All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations**

48. The ICC took note of information and statistics provided in document SC-01/CONF.201/8 based on the assessment undertaken by the Secretariat with regard to the status of sites in the WNBR satisfying Statutory Framework requirements adopted by UNESCO in 1995, including steps taken by selected countries to withdraw pre-Seville (i.e. pre-1995) sites whose transformation into post-Seville (i.e. post-1995) biosphere reserves was deemed neither feasible nor desirable by the Member States concerned. The ICC noted that MAP is still under implementation and that no assessments of whether or not biosphere reserves meet MAP requirements should be attempted until the full implementation of MAP is completed by 2013.

49. The ICC set 2013 as the deadline for the 114 biosphere reserves that have never undertaken any periodic review in accordance with the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the World Network adopted by UNESCO in 1995 to take necessary steps to complete reviews and inform the Secretariat of the recommendations of the review as well as the steps that the concerned Member States intend to take to implement the recommendations.

50. On the basis of the information provided by ICC and Observer Member States that successfully carried out the transformation of pre- to post-Seville sites using detailed consultative processes with all stakeholders concerned, the ICC noted that such transformations may take as long as 4-6 years. Hence, the ICC determined that 2013, as set out in the MAP, may be too early a time frame to expect the transformation of all of the more than 300 pre-Seville sites to adapt to Statutory Framework requirements of WNBR (1995). Nevertheless, the ICC considered the 2013 deadline as a fair one for all concerned UNESCO Member States to fully consider the steps and the time frame needed to undertake such transformations for individual biosphere reserves within their respective territories and inform

the Secretariat of the outcome of their considerations. The Observer Representative of China informed the ICC that the periodic review of the four (4) sites that the Secretariat had requested his country to undertake will be done before the end of 2010.

51. The proposal of the Observer representative from France to convene a workshop to exchange information, knowledge and lessons learnt by countries in transforming pre- to post-Seville sites was welcomed and the ICC took note of the offer from the Member representative of Egypt to host such a workshop.

52. Several ICC Member Delegates expressed their concerns regarding pre-Seville sites that cannot be transformed into the post-Seville biosphere reserve model but would still retain international significance for research and demonstration studies on issues and problems of the environment. The ICC was sympathetic to the proposal from the Member Delegate of Austria made at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Council in May 2009 for creating a set of "MAB research sites" separate from the WNBR but emphasized that criteria and quality standards for the inclusion of sites in a new set of MAB research sites need to be established.

53. The ICC encouraged all Member States that have undertaken periodic reviews of biosphere reserves but have not yet implemented the recommendations of the reviews for undertaking necessary zoning, management and the other changes to the biosphere reserves to communicate with the Secretariat, as well as with potential donor organizations difficulties and constraints they face in the implementation of the recommendations. The ICC welcomed the establishment of the small electronic working group as recommended by its 21<sup>st</sup> session, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Robert Barbault, Chair of the French MAB National Committee, and selected experts from all regions of the world to address questions related to the revision of the nomination and periodic review forms, and noted that the group could be expanded to include other interested country experts in the future. The ICC suggested that the electronic working group consider all information contained in document SC-01/CONF.201/8 as well as others in their discussions.

## **B. Biosphere reserves and relevant legislative frameworks at the national level**

54. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/9 and showed the location on the web page where the survey, "model law" and case study by Member States have been made available.

55. Several delegates enriched the discussions on this item and provided information on their continuing efforts to accommodate mention of biosphere reserves within existing national legislation on protected areas, sustainable development and other appropriate themes.

56. While some Delegates expressed the need for an international convention as a prerequisite for establishing and mobilizing adequate support for biosphere reserves at the national level, other Delegates were of the view that given the importance of community level consultations, stakeholder dialogue and other participatory approaches to the design and establishment of biosphere reserves, international convention type of approaches may not be suitable for biosphere reserves. The Delegates in general preferred that while the Secretariat may provide guidance and suggestions it should avoid prescriptive approaches to the implementation of MAP or other frameworks for implementing the biosphere reserve concept.

57. Some Delegates expressed interest in the "model law" and the importance of further testing it but stressed the importance of flexibility in its application and adaptation at the national and regional levels due to the diversity of situations and contexts.

58. The Secretariat in reacting to the observations, suggestions and comments of Delegates stressed that the essence of a biosphere reserve is not merely protection or conservation but the building of a mutually beneficial relationship between conservation and development using

research, monitoring, capacity building and participatory management approaches as tools to build conservation-development linkages. Furthermore the Secretariat, referring to the presentation on the Indonesian Biosphere Reserve of Giam Siak Kecil - Bukit Batu highlighted the increasing interest of sub-national authorities at provincial and local levels to look at biosphere reserves as areas for experimentation with conservation-development linkages or sustainable development options. The Secretariat committed to collating and communicating information on the question of national legislation for biosphere reserves on the basis of country-specific examples and experience on a regular basis.

**C. Biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development including the future work of the task force on quality economies**

59. The Secretariat introduced item 10.3 referring to document SC-10/CONF.201/10 on the provisions contained in the MAP related to biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development and the suggestion to transform the Task Force on Quality Economies into several ad-hoc open-ended Sustainable Development and Green Economy Learning Platform Working Groups on themes, such as: biosphere reserves as learning platforms for education for sustainable development; labeling, branding and marketing of biosphere reserve goods and services; tourism and biosphere reserves; and ecosystem services opportunities for biosphere reserves, such as bio-carbon markets. Several delegates took the floor emphasizing the importance of the developmental aspects of biosphere reserves and generally welcomed the concept of working groups.

60. Indonesia noted an important project related to the *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity of interest for economic development and education.

61. Turkey stressed that what really makes MAB and biosphere reserves different are the buffer zones and transition areas with their focus on development and that this function is critical. Turkey has therefore launched projects on labeling and branding of biosphere reserve products in order to help local communities to gain visibility and raise income.

62. The Republic of Korea highlighted the importance of information on the economic benefits of establishing biosphere reserves and exchange of experiences of good practices related to labeling of biosphere reserves goods and services highlighting the good number of activities already being undertaken in the country for this purpose.

63. Ethiopia emphasized the important role biosphere reserves can play in climate change mitigation, in particular through bio-carbon sequestration in forests, and suggested that REDD and REDD+ initiatives involving biosphere reserves be encouraged. It was noted that it could be difficult for biosphere reserves with already well-protected core areas to benefit from international financial support, including for REDD projects, through funding mechanisms such as the GEF, due to the way these funding mechanisms are operationalizing the additionality criteria. Ethiopia therefore suggested that the Council could possibly seek to assist biosphere reserves with arguments related to additionality in their project formulations to help them overcome this obstacle. Ethiopia also stressed the role of science and research in support of sustainable development and that it needed to be given due attention in the deliberations of future working groups.

64. The Russian Federation recalled the importance of education for sustainable development and suggested that education, public awareness and training on renewable energy sources be useful for local communities in biosphere reserves, including information on possible funding sources for investments in renewable energy in biosphere reserves.

65. India stressed that information related to the economic benefits from conservation and sustainable, green economic income opportunities in biosphere reserves are key in raising their visibility and welcomed the establishment of working groups. Recalling the world-wide focus on

climate change, India felt the time was right to look for innovative funding opportunities for biosphere reserves, such as linked to REDD as well as green development mechanisms.

66. Egypt recalled a meeting held in Egypt in 2005 on quality economies and labeling in Arab biosphere reserves stressing the importance of legal protection of biosphere reserve labels and brands.

67. Argentina emphasized that economic development issues go right to the core of the MAB Programme, recalling that the reception the previous evening had highlighted some of the good products produced by biosphere reserves. Argentina also raised some procedural questions related to the establishment, timetable, working methods and reporting of the working groups.

68. After some discussion, including on priority themes, timelines, coordination and reporting procedures, the Council adopted the concept of *ad-hoc* open-ended Sustainable Development and Green Economy Learning Platform Working Groups contained in SC-10/CONF.201/10, and invited Member States to communicate to the MAB Secretariat expressions of interests to establish, coordinate, participate in, or facilitate such groups. Furthermore, the Council instructed the MAB Secretariat to report back to the 23<sup>rd</sup> MAB-ICC with information on groups established, their membership, agendas, as well as on the eventual preliminary results of their deliberations.

#### **D. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to designated biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR**

69. Taking into account the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (27-29 January 2010) and the Bureau of the MAB-ICC (31 May-1 June 2010), the Council took the following decisions concerning approval and deferral of new proposals as well as approval of a selected number of extensions and name changes to biosphere reserves that are already part of the WNBR:

##### **New nominations approved by the Council**

###### **Kafa, Ethiopia**

70. The Council congratulated the Ethiopian authorities on this very well-prepared proposal, one of the first in the country. It recognized the scientific, ecological, economic and cultural assets of the site, especially the Kafa Zone, which contains more than 50% of the remaining Montane Forests in Ethiopia and gives origin to the genetic diversity of *Coffea arabica* which plays a vital role in both cultural and socio-economic life of the area and the country.

71. The Council commended the authorities for the extensive stakeholder involvement, including local communities, governmental and non-governmental institutions as well as the private sector. It commended the German government agencies for their support in preparing this nomination proposal and appreciated the commitment of the German Development Agency and the Ethiopian Government to fund the coordination of the biosphere reserve until the management entity is in a position to generate its own funds.

72. The Council took note of the new map indicating the 'candidate core areas' as part of the buffer zone and invited the Ethiopian authorities to provide the envisaged management plan and management entity for the biosphere reserve once it is completely developed.

###### **Yayu Coffee Forest, Ethiopia**

73. The Council congratulated the Ethiopian authorities on this very well-prepared proposal. It commended the participatory nature of the nomination process and the use of the biosphere reserve model for sustainable development of the area. The Council recognized the importance of the site for conservation and sustainable use of coffee forests which harbour the wild *arabica* plant and other useful plant species critical for the livelihoods of the local population.

74. The Council appreciated the establishment of the management unit and management plan for the proposed site. It commended the German government agencies for their support in preparing the proposal.

#### **Middle Zambezi, Zimbabwe**

75. The Council congratulated the Zimbabwean authorities for the resubmission of this nomination, the first from the country. The Council noted with satisfaction that the authorities had provided all the information requested by its twenty-first session in May 2009, enabling the fulfilment of the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

76. The Council commended the consultation process involving the local communities which resulted in the better understanding and creation of various socio-economic, ecological and cultural benefits and future opportunities provided by the biosphere reserve model for sustainable development of the entire area.

#### **Dena, Iran**

77. The Council noted that the proposed biosphere reserve contained globally significant ecosystems in the Central Zagros Mountains, comprising a great diversity of topographical and climatic conditions and substantial biodiversity, and was home to important rural and nomadic populations practicing traditional livelihood strategies. Sustainable range management and eco-tourism are priorities for the development of the area. The Council commended the substantial revisions undertaken since deferral of the nomination at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the MAB-ICC in May 2009.

78. The Council looked forward to learning more about local community participation in the biosphere reserve management.

#### **Gwangneung Forest, Republic of Korea**

79. The Council noted that the proposed biosphere reserve contained well-preserved deciduous hardwood forest as well as farmlands and private forests. It was also pleased to note the presence of the World Heritage Site "Royal Tombs of Joseon Dynasty" within the biosphere reserve as well as the Korea National Arboretum. The Council congratulated the Republic of Korea on a well-prepared nomination including extensive public involvement.

#### **Tuchola Forest, Poland**

80. The Council welcomed this proposal to establish a biosphere reserve composed of the Tuchola Forest, one of the biggest forest complexes in Poland, located in the north-western part of Poland in the Pomerania region, about 50 km from Gdansk on the Baltic coast. The Council commended the Polish authorities for the quality of the process leading to the proposal, the level of details, and the remarkable support from local and national stakeholders and endorsements to the process. The Council noted that the governance structure for the biosphere reserve had already been put in place.

#### **Kozjansko & Obsotelje, Slovenia**

81. The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Slovenian authorities with regards to land ownership, legal texts and the zonation scheme.

82. The Council decided to approve this site as the Slovenian Authorities provided, with the help of a map, confirmation that the core areas consist of only legally-constituted areas devoted to long-term protection in line with the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

#### **Lake Vänern Archipelago, Sweden**

83. The Council commended the Swedish authorities for this very well-prepared nomination. It recognized the importance of the site in terms of its rich biological diversity which is also recognized through other national and regional designations. The Council particularly

commended the relevant authorities for undertaking a long-term consultation process with all the involved stakeholders which has led to the formulation of a clear vision and mission, and a development plan for the site and which recognizes the biosphere reserve as a tool for sustainable development of the entire region.

84. The Council noted with satisfaction the establishment of the funding mechanism for the biosphere reserve, which included support from both local and national authorities.

#### **Nahá-Metzabok, Mexico**

85. The Council welcomed the re-submission of this nomination that includes the Lacandona forest and contributes to preserving the livelihoods and cultures of the indigenous communities living in the area. It noted with satisfaction that the authorities had provided all the information requested by at its twenty-first session in May 2009, confirming the fulfilment of the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

#### **Islas Marías, Mexico**

86. The Council welcomed this proposal which represents a specific case of biosphere reserve. It noted that part of the site is a federal penitentiary surrounded by islands with a high degree of biodiversity. The rehabilitation system for the prisoners is focused on the reforestation and sustainable development process.

87. The Council decided to approve this site as the Mexican Authorities provided:

- a new map with clear delimitation of the transition area;
- additional information on resource uses in the transition area; and
- additional information of the contribution of different actors to biosphere reserve management.

#### **Los Volcanes, Mexico**

88. The Council welcomed the submission of this well-prepared nomination. It noted the importance of this site as a water catchment area, for the presence of volcanoes and its closeness to Mexico City.

89. The Council decided to approve this site as the Mexican Authorities provided satisfactory clarification of the involvement of local communities in the nomination and management processes.

#### **Ometepe Island, Nicaragua**

90. The Council welcomed the good quality of this proposal for a biosphere reserve. In particular, the Council appreciated this site as it is an island biosphere reserve situated in the biggest freshwater reservoir in Central America, the Cocibolca Lake. It has good local participation and a well-functioning tourism management system.

91. The Council suggested consideration of the possibility to include part of the aquatic area in the buffer zone so as to ensure preservation of freshwater values.

#### **Oxapampa-Ashaninka-Yanesha, Peru**

92. The Council congratulated the Peruvian authorities on the high quality of the proposal. It noted that this area is located in the Amazonian tropical forest encompassing high biodiversity and contributing to the conservation of the mountain ecosystems of the area. The Council also commended the participatory process and official support which had led to mutually-agreed delimitation of the three zones of the biosphere reserve.

### **Nominations deferred by the Council**

#### **Tang Sayyad, Iran**

93. The Council noted that the proposed site was located in the Central Zagros Mountains and consisted primarily of rangeland and semi-arid cold environments. Sustainability programmes are planned in the region, including development of renewable energy, recycling, and sustainable agriculture.

94. The Council noted the substantial revisions undertaken since the deferral of this proposal at the 21st session of the MAB-ICC in May 2009.

95. However, the Council decided that this site be deferred and invited the Iranian authorities to resubmit the nomination including additional information on:

- clarifying the significance of the fauna and flora for biological diversity conservation;
- on the proposed management framework and sustainable development policies; and
- clarification of steps to be taken to ensure environmental monitoring and participation of local populations in biosphere reserve management.

#### **Great Nicobar, India**

96. The Council noted that the proposed biosphere reserve included the largest contiguous forest areas in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands outside the North Andamans, as well as a great variety of ecosystems and species. The Council was encouraged by the work done thus far on the nomination and felt that it held great potential for biosphere reserve designation.

97. However, the Council noted that the proposed site did not include the critical coastal and marine areas. Therefore it decided that this nomination be deferred. The Council encouraged the Indian authorities to resubmit the nomination revised to include marine/coastal areas and provide clear information on community involvement in the nomination and management processes.

#### **Khan Khentii, Mongolia**

98. The Council noted that the proposed biosphere reserve had great value for biodiversity, includes a variety of ecosystems, and has strong legal protection. The Council also noted that its status as a strictly protected area is commendable from a conservation standpoint, but the absence of any local population in the proposed biosphere reserve means that the site does not, as proposed, satisfy the requirements contained in the Statutory Framework and the Madrid Action Plan. Expansion of the site to create a transition area including local communities would bring the site much closer to the biosphere reserve model.

99. The Council decided that this nomination be deferred and invited the Mongolian authorities to resubmit the nomination revised to include local communities and demonstrate sustainable development activities in the buffer and transition areas around the strictly protected core.

#### **Mura Drava Danube, Croatia-Hungary**

100. The Council welcomed the idea of a transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) along the border between Hungary and Croatia, and appreciated the joint declaration by the Hungarian and Croatian Ministers on the intent to create this TBR.

101. However, while acknowledging the receipt of the nomination file from the Hungarian side, the Council decided to defer the decision on the proposed transboundary site until the nomination file from the Croatian authorities is submitted to the Secretariat for evaluation by the International Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves.

102. The Council invited both Croatian and Hungarian authorities to include statements on transboundary cooperation and to describe the envisaged mechanisms for coordination of activities between the two countries.

103. The Council took note of the on-going cooperation with the Austrian MAB National Committee which will lead to the possible inclusion of adjacent Austrian sites into the future TBR.

#### **Ramat Menashe, Israel**

104. The Council welcomed this proposal from Israel, located within the boundaries of the Megiddo Regional Council, in the Northern District of the State of Israel and adjacent to the Mount Carmel Biosphere Reserve.

105. The Council noted with appreciation the quality of the consultative process and the inclusion of the thirteen (13) rural communities.

106. However, the Council indicated that the concepts of the human and heritage cores as part of the core area do not fill the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework criteria and, that such areas should be integrated into buffer zones and transition areas. It also noted that the legal status of the core areas was not clearly defined. Furthermore, clearer information on the process for designing an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve given the diversity of plans and initiatives needed to be provided. Finally, the Council also requested information on linkages and cooperation interactions with the contiguous Mount Carmel Biosphere Reserve. The Council therefore decided that the proposal be deferred.

#### **Berlengas Archipelago, Portugal**

107. The Council welcomed this proposal as it included a site with high conservation value for migratory birds. However, the Council regretted that the local population, which is mainly using this area and installing the Berlengas Gate as a point of entry for the biosphere reserve, was not included in the proposal. The same concern was expressed with regard to the possible inclusion of the city of Peniche, as well as for the corridor between the island and coastal line.

108. The Council invited the Portuguese authorities to re-submit the proposal covering a larger area and including the local population that uses the archipelago and lives along the coast lines. The Council decided that this site be deferred.

#### **Otoch Ma'ax Yetel Kooh, Mexico**

109. The Council welcomed the submission of this proposal and noted the importance of the site for biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development in the Yucatan peninsula.

110. However, the Council noted that the proposed nomination did not fully meet the criteria for a biosphere reserve. There are no people living in the buffer zone for demonstrating sustainable resources use and management. Furthermore, there is no transition area surrounding the buffer zone.

111. The Council decided that this proposal be deferred and encouraged the Mexican authorities to re-submit a new proposal in conformity with the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves and following the recommendations of the Madrid Action Plan.

#### **Tehuacán-Cuicatlán, Mexico**

112. The Council welcomed the submission of this proposal and noted the importance of the site for conservation of a variety of ecosystems and a number of endemic and endangered species.



113. However, the Council noted that the zonation system did not meet the Statutory Framework criteria and that the transition area was not clearly defined. The Council also noted lack of information on the involvement of local communities and participatory processes, as well as the number of people living in the three zones.

114. The Council decided that this proposal be deferred and encouraged the Mexican authorities to re-submit a new proposal with a new zonation and a better description of the community participatory processes in conformity with the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves and following the recommendations of the Madrid Action Plan.

#### **Extensions to sites already included in the WNBR approved by the Council**

##### **Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere Reserve, Finland – Extension**

115. The Council commended this very well-prepared, clear and concise proposal for extension of the Archipelago Sea Area, which to date included larger islands in the archipelago and a higher number of inhabitants and was based on great understanding of the opportunities of the biosphere reserve for the sustainable development of the area. The Council particularly appreciated that the extension of the site had been undertaken in line with the recommendations formulated by the MAB Bureau following the periodic review of the site submitted in 2007.

116. The Council was pleased to note that the extension of the site would strengthen the implementation of the objectives and the three main functions of the biosphere reserve.

##### **Luberon Lure Biosphere Reserve, France - Extension and renaming (former Luberon)**

117. The Council welcomed the extensive process and commended the participative consultation process using the ARDI methodology which had led to a proposal for the Luberon Biosphere Reserve to be extended and to become the Luberon Lure Biosphere Reserve. It particularly welcomed the quality of the information and data provided as well as the clear vision for sustainable development of the region. It recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as best practice.

118. The ICC endorsed the new boundaries of the site as recommended by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as well as approved its new name Luberon Lure as proposed by the French authorities.

##### **Pays de Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais Biosphere Reserve, France - Extension and renaming (former Fontainebleau)**

119. The council welcomed the comprehensive report, quality of the data and maps provided, and commended the participative and consultation process using the ARDI methodology which had led to a proposal for the Fontainebleau biosphere reserve to be extended, and renamed as Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais. It welcomed the efforts being made for the coordination and governance of the overall site and recognized the investments made for improving communication on the objectives of the biosphere reserve. It recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as best practice.

120. The ICC endorsed the new boundaries of the site as recommended by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as well as approved its new name Pays de Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais as proposed by the French authorities.

##### **Berchtesgadener Land Biosphere Reserve, Germany – Extension and renaming (former Berchtesgaden Alps Biosphere Reserve)**

121. The Council welcomed this well-prepared proposal for the extension and renaming of the Berchtesgaden Alps Biosphere Reserve which to date included the entire county of

Berchtesgadener Land allowing for better protection of the rich biodiversity and integration of a larger number of inhabitants in the extended transition area.

122. The Council also noted that the extension was made possible through the involvement of a large number of institutions, municipalities and other stakeholders and was based on greater understanding of the opportunities of the biosphere reserve for the sustainable development of the area. This successful extension enables the biosphere reserve to fulfil the three functions of the biosphere reserve more effectively. The Council decided to approve this extension and that the site be renamed as Berchtesgadener Land Biosphere Reserve.

123. The Council invited the German authorities to provide further information of the impacts of tourism and looked forward to receiving the framework concept, as well as information on sustainable tourism management to be developed within the next three years as stated in the nomination file.

#### **Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair-Parc Naziunal, Switzerland – Extension and renaming (former Swiss National Park)**

124. The Council welcomed this proposal for the extension of the Swiss National Park included in the World Network in 1977. It congratulated the Swiss authorities for their efforts to add a buffer zone and a transition area east of the main core area, and for the participatory work that led to the inclusion of local municipalities and villages in the extension proposal, in particular Val Müstair to the south-east of the original Swiss National Park and Biosphere Reserve.

125. However the Council noted that the proposed extension did not complete the full transformation of the pre-Seville (i.e. pre-1995) site of the Swiss National Park into a post-Seville biosphere reserve whose zonation fully meets the Statutory Framework criteria of Biosphere Reserves, which require that buffer zones surround each core area and that the transition area be wider. The Council therefore considered that this extension to the south-east was only a first step in this site's transformation to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR adopted by UNESCO in 1995.

126. As a consequence, the Council while deciding to approve the proposed extension also requested the Swiss authorities to continue efforts to include additional municipalities around the core areas as buffer zones, particularly to the west, north and east. The Council requested that this second step of the extension be completed before end of 2013 and that the Swiss authorities also develop an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve by the same date. It further recommended continuing the extension process by including the local communities of Basse-Engadine in the transition area.

#### **Araucarias Biosphere Reserve, Chile – Extension**

127. The Council congratulated the Chilean authorities on the excellent quality of this proposal which included extension of the biosphere reserve to 12 times its original size. The Council notes that this extension follows the recommendation of the Madrid Action Plan and ensures the conservation of the Araucarias forest and the rich culture associated with this forest. The Council also noted the large number of activities developed in the site.

128. The Council also invited the Chilean authorities to formalize collaboration with Argentina and consider the possibility of the creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve.

#### **Cordillera Volcánica Central Biosphere Reserve, Costa Rica – Extension**

129. The Council welcomed this proposal which included extension of the biosphere reserve to five times its original size. Located on central highlands, the biosphere reserve includes several volcanic cones and is highly rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. This extension ensures a better application of the Madrid Action Plan by the multiple stakeholders of the area.

130. The Council congratulated the Costa Rican authorities for the participatory nature of the process involving local communities and a large number of institutions, municipalities and other stakeholders.

131. The Chair informed the MAB ICC that the United Kingdom and Sweden decided to withdraw the Tainish and Lake Torne Biosphere Reserves, respectively, as these sites were deemed not being able to meet the criteria of the 1995 Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework for biosphere reserves.

132. With 13 new biosphere reserves being added to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) and 2 being withdrawn, the WNBR is now composed of 564 Biosphere reserves in 109 countries, including the first sites in two new countries, namely Zimbabwe and Ethiopia.

#### **E. Periodic review reports of biosphere reserves received since the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the MAB-ICC**

133. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/12 and drew attention of the ICC to the fact that as of March 2010, 229 periodic review reports had been received by the Secretariat. It informed the Council that 65 letters were sent to Member States in March-April 2010 for requesting either the periodic review report (45 biosphere reserves concerned) and/or information on the follow-up of recommendations made by the Council based on the periodic review reports received (123 biosphere reserves concerned). The Secretariat informed the Council that it had received 29 replies from Member States, including two (2) new periodic review reports.

134. The Council then endorsed the periodic review recommendations formulated by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as stated below:

#### **Comoe Biosphere Reserve, Côte d'Ivoire**

135. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire, especially the MAB National Committee for their efforts made in undertaking the Comoe periodic review and also responding to the questionnaire regarding the revision of the periodic review forms, despite the post-conflict situation in the region.

136. The Advisory Committee noted that since the 1980s, Comoe established an ecological research station, now well-known, with strong support from several international partners e.g. the UNESCO-MAB project on the Comoe management plan, the French Development Agency, and the Julius-Maximilian University (Germany).

137. The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to plan the rehabilitation of the "Comoe scientific research station" in their priorities, in order to allow the Comoe Biosphere Reserve to play its full role as one of the BIOTA (BIODiversity monitoring Transect Analysis in Africa), especially during this International Year of Biodiversity.

138. The Advisory Committee noted the importance of the biosphere reserve and of its core area (1,149,150 ha) with several sacred sites and endangered species. However, a map of the zones of the biosphere reserve was not provided in the report. The Committee noted that such maps had been prepared within the framework of a recent UNEP-GEF/UNESCO-MAB regional project. The Committee recommended that the national authorities present a revised periodic review report that incorporates the results of different projects including maps. Also, the zonation should be revised to include a wider transition area.

139. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities should actively involve the local population in the further development and management of the biosphere reserve in accordance with the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

#### **Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa**

140. The Advisory Committee congratulated the South African authorities on this very well-prepared periodic review. The Committee noted that Kogelberg is a good example of biosphere reserve. Indeed, the examination of the report shows that the three functions of the biosphere reserve are fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Committee also highly appreciated the quality of the maps showing zonation, vegetation and tourism distribution.

141. The delimitation of the core areas and buffer zones and the approximate extent of the transition area remain the same as was indicated in the nomination file in 1998. The functions justifying the zonation are well outlined in the document. While the core areas fulfil the conservation function, development is promoted in all three zones, with environmentally-conscious economic development activities being supported specifically within the buffer zone. New developments promoting sustainable living principles within the transition area are encouraged, with emphasis on the scarcity of water and electricity in the country and within the Kogelberg region. Regarding the logistic function, a large diversity of research projects is carried out in the Kogelberg region. The biosphere reserve is regularly used as a study site for universities, namely the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town and the University of Western Cape.

#### **Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve, Morocco**

142. The Advisory Committee commended Morocco on a competent and comprehensive periodic review of the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve. The Committee took note with satisfaction of the development and implementation of the “Plan Cadre RBA” (the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve Framework Plan). In line with the Plan, the biosphere reserve is today an important platform for bringing together a number of actors for promoting biodiversity conservation and development of the Arganeraie and for combating desertification. In this context, the biosphere reserve and the participating management authorities, academia, associations and NGOs, and the private sector are to be commended for bringing sustainable income opportunities to local communities, in particular women, and for their education and public awareness efforts and the good number of scientific studies conducted in the Arganeraie.

#### **Nanji Islands Biosphere Reserve, China**

143. The Advisory Committee thanked the Chinese authorities for submitting this well-prepared report on Nanji Islands Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1998). It noted especially the well-developed research activities and educational and training programmes as particular successes of the site. The Advisory Committee considered that while there are multiple management plans and policies in place, these seem to be functioning well.

144. The Advisory Committee noted that international cooperation with other biosphere reserves in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves is weak, and welcomed the initiative of Nanji Islands to request assistance from the MAB Secretariat to build these relationships. The Committee recommended to the MAB Secretariat to support enhanced international communication and cooperation with the biosphere reserve.

#### **Luberon Lure Biosphere Reserve, France - (former Luberon) and Pays de Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais Biosphere Reserve, France - (former Fontainebleau)**

145. The ICC congratulated the French authorities for the quality of the periodic review process undertaken which resulted in the Council's approval of the two extensions and their proposed name changes (see paragraphs 117 to 120 for details of ICC's decisions and recommendations on the periodic review outcomes related to these two French biosphere reserves).

### **Russian Federation**

146. The Advisory Committee made a general recommendation for the Russian Authorities to explore ways and means to increase the understanding of the concept of biosphere reserve and zonation scheme at the local and national levels, with the support of the UNESCO Office in Moscow and the MAB Secretariat, including the convening of a specific workshop dedicated to designing a zonation scheme. In addition, the following specific comments were made for each site:

#### **Ubsunorskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve**

147. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian Federation as well as the map. However, it noted that the map does not clearly show the different zones of the biosphere reserve and noted that there is no transition area. The Advisory Committee therefore requested that the Russian Federation authorities resubmit a proposal with a transition area in order to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria, with a map and clear legends for the different zones, as well as to provide information on the management plan for the entire area and encouraged the Russian authorities to pursue efforts in cooperating with Mongolia for the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve.

#### **Teberda Biosphere Reserve**

148. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian authorities as well as a map and noted that this site had been involved in the GLOCHAMORE project. However, it noted that the report lacked updated data and information and that the zonation was still not meeting the Statutory Framework with no transition area. It therefore requested to resubmit a proposal, with a transition area to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria, with a clear zonation map and indication of how the updated zonation process will be achieved.

#### **Chernyje Zemli Biosphere Reserve**

149. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information and map that had been received. However, the Committee noted that the site does not fulfil the requirements of the Statutory Framework since the zonation characteristic of a biosphere reserve does not exist. The Advisory Committee reiterated the recommendation made at the last Advisory Committee meeting that the site was important for conservation but involvement of local communities was to be improved and cooperation with the adjacent Rostovsky Biosphere reserve should be strengthened. The Advisory Committee invited the local authorities and the manager of the site in cooperation with the Russian MAB National Committee to work with the UNESCO Office in Moscow on the zoning in order to fulfil the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

#### **Daursky Biosphere Reserve**

150. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received as well as the improvements made since the last report, particularly with regards to educational and scientific activities and the possibility to develop sustainable tourism. However, the Advisory Committee noted that the recommendations formulated at the last meeting were still not addressed and that the site was still not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria, particularly that there was no transition area. Therefore the Advisory Committee requested that the Russian Federation authorities resubmit a proposal with a transition area, in order to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria.

151. Moreover, the Advisory Committee invited the Russian Federation authorities to provide more information on the progress made in cooperation with China and Mongolia on the transboundary aspects of the management of this biosphere reserve.

#### **Taimyrskiy Biosphere Reserve**

152. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian Federation authorities. It however noted that the recommendations made at the last meeting were still not addressed and that the site was not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. It

therefore recommended to the Russian Federation authorities that the site be withdrawn since it seems from the report that the management authorities view this site as a conservation and research area, which the Advisory Committee endorsed, but that there appears to be no evidence that this site could fulfil the criteria of the Statutory Framework for a biosphere reserve, in particular the sustainable development function by including local communities in the buffer zone(s) and transition area(s).

153. The Delegate of the Russian Federation informed the Council that after reception of the letter from the Secretariat to the Russian authorities with the recommendations for the five (5) biosphere reserves reported above, the Ministry of Natural Resources will coordinate major revisions and extensions for the five sites and that comprehensive information including maps will be sent to the Secretariat for examination by the next meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2011. It therefore requested the Council not to withdraw the Taimyrskiy Biosphere reserve as recommended by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves at its last meeting in January 2010. The Council took note of this information and commitment to revise the sites in order for them to meet the Statutory Framework criteria and requested that the Secretariat report to the ICC on progress achieved at a future session.

#### **Dunaisky Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine**

154. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report provided by the Ukrainian authorities. It noted that the document was not reporting on the cooperation with the Romanian side of the transboundary biosphere reserve. It therefore requested that the Ukrainian authorities provide a clear joint zonation map of the transboundary site with the Romanian part. The Advisory Committee requested that a joint periodic review report be prepared and submitted by the Ukrainian and Romanian authorities, with the support of the MAB Secretariat.

155. The Delegate from Ukraine asked further clarification on the periodic review process as regards transboundary sites in addition to national reporting, as well as time for reporting and possible support from the Secretariat in this process. The German Delegate informed about the on-going consultations and work being carried out by France and Germany as regards the periodic review of Vosges du Nord-Pfäzerwald transboundary site. The Secretariat informed the Ukraine Delegation that a letter would be sent to both Romania and Ukraine for undertaking the joint periodic review process. Methodologies and procedures used by France and Germany for their transboundary site will be shared, including reporting on distinctions between national and joint levels, following the recommendations of Pamplona on transboundary biosphere reserves (TBRs). It further informed that the periodic review process and form for transboundary sites will also be examined by the electronic working group set up for the updating of the forms. The Council requested the Secretariat that both the letter to be sent for transboundary review and the work being carried out by France and Germany on transboundary periodic review be made available to all Members of ICC and other Delegates who are interested.

156. Several Delegates mentioned the importance of valorizing the work and efforts made by the countries in the periodic review processes, the importance of the reports for providing quality and scientific information which could be better organized and used for publishing regional and global statistics on the contribution of the biosphere reserves and the WNBR on topics such as conservation of ecosystems, development and thus increase the visibility of the WNBR. Most Delegates were in agreement with the suggestion of the Delegate of Indonesia who stressed the importance of using the periodic review process to highlight good examples and success stories rather than treating it as an exercise in filling up the periodic review form. These issues and contributions will be transmitted to the electronic working group that will work and further report on how to integrate these elements in their investigations of the forms currently used for nominations and periodic review, and on how they could be amended and made more effective in drawing information on successes and good illustrations of biosphere reserves contributions to sustainable development.

157. Several Delegates expressed concerns about the low level of replies, both for the periodic review and for the follow-up of the recommendations. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a survey for its next session for better understanding the causes and obstacles met by some Member States in implementing the periodic review process as well as in implementing the recommendations of the periodic review outcomes.

158. Recalling discussions at the last session of the Council, the Delegate of Germany suggested that the 21<sup>st</sup> session of ICC recommendation for reducing the frequency of periodic review from 10 to 4-6 years be reconsidered. He emphasized that experience of biosphere reserve managers and others who have been part of stakeholder consultations for preparing periodic review reports and implementation of the recommendations indicate a longer time frequency such as the ten-year cycle currently in practice may indeed be justifiable. The ICC requested that the electronic working group consider the question of the frequency of periodic reporting as well.

#### **F. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management**

159. The Secretariat briefly introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/13 and indicated that it had received 21 files from 16 countries but only nine (9) case studies were considered eligible for the award and examined. The Secretariat informed the Council that as a request of the MAB-ICC Bureau, it will make sure that the criteria for applying to the Michel Batisse Award will be made clear in the circular letters sent for new application in order for Member States to ensure that the case studies submitted are concerning biosphere reserves, which are demonstrating results, achievements and integration of the three functions and not proposals for future research studies or integrated conservation and development projects

160. M. Fabio Kalesnik, from Argentina, PhD in biological sciences of the University of Buenos Aires, teacher and researcher at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and permanent member of the management committee of the biosphere reserve since 2000, is the winner of the 2010 Michel Batisse Award and was given the Michel Batisse Award certificate by the MAB-ICC Chair. M. Kalesnik made his presentation on his case study on "Training in environmental education, conservation and sustainable development. Innovative proposals with islanders in the Parana Delta Biosphere Reserve". The presentation will be made available on the MABNet at ([www.unesco.org/mab](http://www.unesco.org/mab))

161. Following the presentation by the 2010 Michel Batisse Award winner, the MAB Secretary invited all Council participants to attend the special "Biosphere Reserve Afternoon" (2 June) that included a Panel discussion on enhancing private-public partnerships and the visibility of biosphere reserves including at the top political levels, as well as presentations of new biosphere reserves and of the biosphere reserve exhibitions outside Room XII, followed by a reception with gastronomic products from biosphere reserves (see Annex III).

#### **XI. Mid-term (2010) evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP): a progress report**

162. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/14 providing a plan for the mid-term evaluation of MAP as approved by the last session of the ICC held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in May 2009. The document included a template for obtaining target specific information on achievements and constraints of MAP which had been considered and recommended by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) that met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in late January 2010.

163. ICC took note of IACBR suggestions, specifically endorsed by ICC Member as well as some Observer Delegations, on making electronic versions of the target specific evaluation sheets available on-line for direct data input by MAB National Committees, National Commissions for UNESCO and/or biosphere reserves. The Secretariat however pointed out

that such a process carried out internationally would result in the Secretariat receiving vast amounts of information from sources that are not validated by the MAB National Committees and/or National Commissions for UNESCO. Hence, the Secretariat recommended that the first step of data and information gathering be at the national level under the authority of the National Commissions for UNESCO and/or the MAB National Committees.

164. ICC acknowledged the concern of many Member Delegations of the increasing reporting load on them for monitoring and evaluating the MAP which may take valuable time away from designing, planning and implementing actions that will promote the MAB Programme and the WNR. Hence the ICC requested that the Secretariat in sending the target specific questionnaire to UNESCO Member States clearly specify that the Member States should report, on a priority basis, only on targets whose deadlines were fixed for 2010 or earlier rather than on all 31 targets and related actions of MAP whose implementation will continue until 2013. Furthermore, the ICC recommended that the Secretariat allow for considerable flexibility for the level of quantitative and qualitative detail the Member States decide to choose to provide information on the implementation of MAP, particularly with regard to the success indicators that have been specified for each of the 31 MAP targets whose attainment was foreseen for 2010. The ICC noted that the mid-term evaluation report with the observations and recommendations of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the ICC may constitute the progress report on the implementation of MAP that could be submitted to the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference in autumn 2011.

## **XII. Capacity Building**

### **A. ERAIFT (Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands)**

165. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/15 on ERAIFT established in the University of Kinshasa (DRC). The Council noted that ERAIFT is a concrete example of a success story in the field of UNESCO's training research and capacity building focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. The Council also noted that since the launch of ERAIFT in April 1999 despite the conflict and post-conflict situation in DRC, considerable progress has been made by ERAIFT (86 Africans specialists, among them 83 Masters II and three (3) Ph.D. from 12 African countries have been trained). ERAIFT received strong support from several donors (UNDP, Belgium, EU). New financing of 4,220,000 million Euros has been mobilized by UNESCO from the EU for a new cycle of four (4) years (2009-2013).

166. During the debate, ERAIFT received strong support from the Council (Zimbabwe, Mali, Egypt, Russia, Benin, Germany, Indonesia and Ethiopia) who welcomed the considerable progress made by this training School for African high level professionals and managers using the MAB ecosystem approach in the field of integrated management of tropical forests for sustainable development. Several delegates acknowledged the importance of ERAIFT including students training courses and research that can be focused on innovative topics such as REDD, REDD+ and Bio-carbon. The delegate of Russia welcomed the results obtained by ERAIFT and requested assistance from the Secretariat to create similar institutes as ERAIFT, to benefit all types of ecosystems, particularly with the mountain zones (e.g. GLOCHAMORE regional project) and that could benefit from the great experience of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Delegate of Benin highlighted several positive aspects of this capacity building regional project for Africa and the importance of such projects for the future of MAB; she recalled the decision of the Executive Board (179 EX/38) to transfer the ERAIFT model to other parts in West Africa (such as Côte d'Ivoire) and elsewhere. In this context, other Delegates representing African Member States, such as Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, welcomed the Secretariat's initiative to encourage the opening of ERAIFT to English-speaking countries. The Delegate of Ethiopia emphasized networking that should link ERAIFT with several forestry schools and research centres in Ethiopia, such as the International Centre of Research (ICR),



to promote exchange of scientific experience. The MAB Secretariat's initiative to introduce long-distance learning (e-learning) within the ERAIFT curricula received overwhelming support from the Council. The German Delegate stressed the fact that successful examples of UNESCO's efforts in Africa such as ERAIFT should receive much greater attention for support from within UNESCO particularly as new extra-budgetary sources become difficult to access within the context of the current financial crisis. She proposed that possible collaboration between ERAIFT and UNESCO Education Sector institutions, such as TVET, a UNESCO Category I Centre which has developed extensive experience in the field of the e-learning system in Latin America and Africa, be explored and also suggested closer collaboration with UNESCO Communication and Information (CI) Sector in this regard. The Delegate of Egypt informed the ICC that Egypt had also supported the implementation of a system of long-distance learning and the transfer of the concept of ERAIFT to the arid, semi-arid and desert zones which should also receive appropriate considerations.

167 The Council encouraged the Secretariat to pursue plans for the future development of ERAIFT as a pioneer capacity-building initiative of UNESCO/MAB in Sub-Saharan Africa and to increase the visibility of this Post-graduate School by stimulating the development of similar institutions in other parts of Africa and through networking across the Amazonian, Congo Basin and Asian tropics with appropriate "South-South Co-operation for Sustainable Development of Lands and Resources in the Humid Tropical regions in the World" launched in Jeju (Republic of Korea, May 2009) in the framework of the 21<sup>st</sup> MAB-ICC. This South-South Network could include other interested Southern and Northern countries and their training institutions or research centres in the future, with the objective to establish a solid Triangular South-North-South Co-operation Network for Sustainable Development. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts aiming to strengthen the future legal status of ERAIFT so that this institution can become an autonomous body with assurances for its sustainability (financial and institutional). In this context, the Council took note of the UNESCO-EC/ERAIFT project initiative to organize within the framework of the "International Year of Forests – 2011", an international conference of Experts including particularly the Rectors of the universities of CEMAC (*Communauté économique et monétaire d'Afrique centrale*) on the reform process to align ERAIFT to the "L-M-D" (Licence- Master-Doctorate.) educational system as recommended by the Bologna process. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to develop new partnerships between ERAIFT, the private sector, the African Development Bank and others.

## **B. South-South Co-operation**

168. The Secretariat presented briefly the document SC-01/CONF.201/16 explaining that the topic of South-South Co-operation had already been introduced to the MAB Programme as early as in 1992 and that a project on South-South Co-operation for the Sustainable Development of Humid Tropics, financed by Germany, had been implemented by the MAB Programme. Furthermore, the Secretariat provided other examples for South-South or South-North-South triangular cooperation, such as the MOU on the Volga Basin in Russia and the Amazon Basin signed between the Universities of Nizhny Novgorod in the Russian Federation and the University of Belem in Brazil. Another example is the dedication of US\$30,000 of the 2009 Sultan Qaboos Prize, received by the Autonomous Organization of National Parks of Spain, to the Eiticoga Biosphere School in Guinea Bissau and other schools in biosphere reserves in other countries such as Mexico, Bolivia, Mali and Viet Nam. The Secretariat also provided more information on a new UNESCO Initiative on Earth Science Education in Africa which was launched during the International Year of Planet Earth in 2008. Since then, five regional scoping workshops have taken place around the African continent (Assiut, Egypt; Dakar, Senegal; Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Luanda, Angola; Cape Town, South Africa). These workshops built a community of earth scientists from academic, industrial and government perspectives who came together to discuss the current status of earth science education regionally, highlight exemplary centres and networks of expertise, and to advise UNESCO as to the concrete activities this Initiative should focus on. A synthesis document of

these workshops has been produced and is available online for public comment at <http://www.earth-science-education-initiative-africa.org>. An October event at UNESCO Headquarters is planned to bring together experts, governments, and funders to launch these specific activities. The responsible members of the Secretariat will continue consulting the Africa Group of UNESCO in the organization of this event. Potential areas for cooperation with ERAIFT and MAC-ICC recommendations were highlighted.

169. South-South Co-operation between ERAIFT, University of Belem, Brazil and MAB-Indonesia was again highlighted as a concrete example for action implemented by UNESCO-MAB. Several countries welcomed these activities and informed about South-South Co-operation activities in their own countries, such as introducing new technologies for empowering of local communities. Indonesia informed about projects implemented in the last fifteen years on small-scale entrepreneurship in local communities. This concerns new technologies and technology transfer thus empowering communities to establish models for sustainable development. Indonesia also informed about North-South-South cooperation, on respective projects benefitting communities for inclusion in South - South cooperation. The Delegate of Egypt expressed the hope that the Secretariat would continue looking for new initiatives benefitting communities in other regions and ecosystems and to explore the launching of additional and new initiatives.

### C. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme

170 The Council endorsed the ten winners for the 2010 MAB Young Scientists Award as selected by the MAB Bureau. The winners and the topics of their research studies are:

Home country (research country)	Winner	Project title
Argentina	Ms Maria Jose LOPEZ	<i>The population environmental attitudes toward the conservation of the Parque Atlantico Mar Chiquito Biosphere Reserve</i>
Benin	Mr G. Fifanou VODOUHE	<i>Relations between touristic activities and biodiversity conservation within protected areas: Case of the Pendjari Biosphere Reserve in Benin</i>
China	Mr HaiQian LI	<i>Sustainable economic development model based on stakeholders collaboration: Comparative study between the Heilongjiang Xingkai Lake Biosphere Reserve and Beijing Miyun water source reserve</i>
Egypt	Ms Fiby ADIB	<i>Comparative economic valuation of the two Ramsar sites in Egypt (wetland) and Omayed Biosphere Reserve</i>
France (Argentina)	Ms Amelie Sarah Caroline LE STER	<i>Intercommunal and bi-provincial participatory management of a biosphere reserve, first experiment in Argentina: Case of Yungas Biosphere Reserve</i>
Ghana	Mr Alex ASASE	<i>Impact of land use change on plant diversity and carbon storage in Bia Biosphere Reserve</i>
Indonesia (Malaysia)	Mr Ari KURNIA	<i>Tasik Chini Biosphere Reserve in regional sustainable development : Contribution of Tasik Chini Biosphere Reserve in developing local community economy</i>

Kenya	Mr Joachim MAKORI	<i>Impacts of climate change on biosphere reserves. A case study of Malindi-Watamu Biosphere Reserve</i>
Morocco	Ms Salama EL FATEHI	<i>Evaluation of genetic resources of an endangered leguminous plant in the transboundary biosphere reserve Morocco-Andalucia: la vesce Vicia ervilia</i>
South Africa	Mr Llewellyn FOXCROFT	<i>Non-native species as a driver of global change : unraveling the dynamics and risks of plant invasions using molecular techniques</i>

171. The Council also endorsed the selection by the MAB Bureau of the two winners for the special MAB Young Scientists Awards supported by the Austrian MAB National Committee offered in 2010 in connection with the International Year of Biodiversity. The two winners are:

- Ms Philista MALAKI from Kenya for the study on “Socio-economic analysis of utilization and conservation trade-offs for mangrove dominated wetlands in Malindi-Watamu Biosphere”
- Ms Sri ASTUTIK from Indonesia for the study on “Carbon stock linkage to plant diversity on Mount Gede Pangrango National Park as the core zone of Cibodas Biosphere Reserve (A case study of ecosystem services)”.

172. The Council expressed its gratitude to the Austrian MAB National Committee for its generous support to the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme and invited other countries to consider following the Austrian example. The Austrian Delegate warmly congratulated the two winners and reiterated the interest of Austria in the promotion of the MAB Young Scientists Scheme as an important tool for capacity building in the context of the MAB Programme.

### **XIII. Report on activities of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010)**

173. The Secretariat briefly introduced the document SC-10/CONF.201/18 reporting on the activities of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). In particular, the UNESCO IYB Strategy approved by the Executive Board of UNESCO was presented, including brief summaries on the implementation status of key UNESCO IYB activities. Furthermore, opportunities for the MAB Programme and its WNBR in the context of IYB were highlighted.

174. In the discussion that followed, many Delegates highlighted the importance of IYB in terms of raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development as well as increasing visibility of the contribution of the MAB Programme and its WNBR to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. While they stressed the values of education and awareness raising activities, the Delegates also highlighted the importance of the current IPBES negotiations and the need for UNESCO and MAB to closely follow and be part of this process.

175. Delegates from Republic of Korea, India, Russian Federation, Bahrain and Indonesia briefly presented key biodiversity-related activities in their countries. The Delegate from Japan informed the MAB-ICC that a side event on the MAB Programme and education on sustainable development would be organized by the Japanese MAB Committee and National Commission for UNESCO at the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD – COP 10) to be held in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.

176. The ICC encouraged:

- Governments participating in the MAB Programme to promote actively the importance of biodiversity for human well-being and development in biosphere reserves, in the light of the spirit of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010).
- National Committees to participate actively in the implementation of IYB; in particular MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO are encouraged to inform themselves of the composition of their country Delegations to the 10th Conference of the Parties of the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, as well as other international, regional and national events organized by UN and other multilateral organizations and inform such country Delegations of all relevant work from the MAB Programme and its WNBR to be used in the dialogue and debates of the COP 10 and other such important events.
- Encouraged other sectors of UNESCO, such as Education and Culture to introduce appropriate elements of biodiversity into their programming and activities

177. It further recognized that the MAB Programme and its WNBR have a role to play in the implementation of relevant outcomes of IYB, in particular the intended joint UNESCO-CBD initiative on biological and cultural diversity, the potential establishment of an IPBES and the implementation of a possible ABS protocol that may be considered for ratification at COP 10.

#### **XIV. UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change and MAB and WNBR Activities**

178. The Secretariat introduced document SC-10/CONF.201/19 outlining the linkages between climate change, MAB and biosphere reserves contained in the UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change and the associated plan of action and the UNESCO Climate Change Initiative, as well as in MAP. Before opening the floor for debate, the Chair invited Mr Adam Fenech, Environment Canada, to make a brief presentation on his work on climate change and biosphere reserves. The Council noted the possibility of using climate change issue for training biosphere reserve communities in understanding past climate and future scenarios for biosphere reserves as well as on the downscaling of IPCC climate models to specific biosphere reserve contexts and locations.

179. After expressing their appreciation of the presentation, the Council examined the document and the recommendations contained therein, emphasizing the role biosphere reserves can play in climate change science, monitoring, mitigation and adaptation. The Council recalled the importance of local and traditional knowledge in this context, and welcomed suggestions for improved information sharing and collaboration among biosphere reserves on climate change and an extended focus for networking to include a broad set of ecosystems, including arid lands. The Council also noted the linkages between climate change mitigation and adaptation and the overall objective of biosphere reserves to contribute to sustainable development, green economies and linked employment opportunities, and assessing vulnerability and futures of development sector activities such as agriculture in buffer and transition zones of biosphere reserves.

180. The Council also recalled that the UNESCO General Conference at its 35<sup>th</sup> session in October 2009 adopted a resolution on UNESCO and global action on climate change that recognized that efforts to address climate change play an important role in achieving sustainable development worldwide.

181. Subsequently, the Council invited the MAB Secretariat to collect and share information with interested Member States on ongoing and planned future MAB and WNBR activities related to climate change and based thereon to explore opportunities for the establishment of a WNBR Climate Change Observatory and enhanced cooperation with relevant international and regional efforts undertaken by other organizations and programmes.

## **XV. Date and venue of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and events linked to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1971-2011) of the MAB Programme**

182. After an introduction of the document SC-01/CONF.201/20 by the Secretariat, the Delegate from Russia informed that the time frame required for taking budgetary decisions concerning his country's possible hosting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and associated events for commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of the MAB Programme in 2011 was inadequate; and hence he informed the ICC that his country would consider hosting a future session, for example the 25<sup>th</sup> session in 2013, in Russia. Subsequently the Delegate from Germany described his country's offer to host the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of MAB-ICC as well as a related commemorative event for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MAB Programme during the second half of May 2011. This German invitation was unanimously accepted by ICC and the Chair of the ICC thanked Germany on behalf of all ICC Members. Germany informed that it would provide the exact date and venue before the end of August 2010 and the Secretariat announced that, based on written proposals to be received from Member States, it will prepare a concept paper on the organization of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and related MAB 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative event before end of August 2010.

183. Several Members made a range of proposals for activities during the year 2011, e.g. preparing exhibitions/ expositions on MAB Present and Future and to link this with other anniversaries (Argentina), creating a set of posters and CDs, such as the exhibit 'Ecology in Action' on the last 40 years of MAB (Russian Federation), having many countries implementing commemorative activities during the same day (India) and selecting and recognizing 40 biosphere reserves for excellence (Bahrain). The Secretariat stated that the slogan of 40 years/40 biosphere reserves may be very well accepted by Member States and that one could envisage an International Biosphere Reserve Day. The ICC invited all Member and Observer Delegates to send to the Secretariat other suggestions and ideas, before end of August 2010, so that the Secretariat may integrate all such proposals in the preparation of the concept paper on the organization of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and associated activities to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MAB Programme by the end of September 2010.

184. Austria offered to host an event in Vienna in order to discuss and elaborate a strategy for creating a set of "MAB research sites" including those pre-Seville biosphere reserves which are important for research but cannot be transformed into post-Seville sites as well as perhaps other new sites which are dedicated to research addressing global environmental issues.

## **XVI. Other matters**

185. The Russian Federation informed about transboundary biosphere reserve projects between itself, Ukraine and Belarus focusing on peats, bogs, marshes and other wetlands in an area along a 1,600 km border. In this context, Russia informed Delegates of the establishment of a centre for training on wetlands involving UNESCO-MAB and IHP Programmes as well as the Ramsar Convention.

## **XVII. Adoption of the report**

186. Mr Chung-II Choi presented the draft report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC to the Member and Observer Delegates section by section. Modifications, additions and deletions introduced by the Delegations were noted, and in a few cases Member States submitted written texts to replace the wording in the draft report. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed by ICC Member and Observer Delegations during the review of the report on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the last day of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC held in UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 31 May to 4 June 2010.

### **XVIII. Closure of the meeting**

187. The Chair thanked the organizers and the ICC and Observer Delegations, the interpreters and congratulated the Secretariat for the efficient management of the meeting and the timely delivery of the report. The Secretary of the MAB Programme thanked the Chair for his excellent leadership in the conduct of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC, as well as the staff of the MAB Secretariat and the interpreters for the high quality of services rendered as well as all those working behind the scenes such as translators, technicians... He also thanked the ICC Member States and Observer Delegations for attending the 22<sup>nd</sup> session and contributing towards discussions of the various issues. Subsequently, the Chair declared the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC closed.

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION /  
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE  
ET LA CULTURE**

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

Twenty-second session / Vingt-deuxième session

UNESCO Headquarters (Paris), Room XII (Fontenoy Building), 31 May – 4 June 2010  
Siège de l'UNESCO (Paris), Salle XII (Bâtiment Fontenoy), 31 mai – 4 juin 2010

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## Annex 2

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**  
**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**  
Twenty-second session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)  
31 May – 4 June 2010

[http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=6793&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

### **PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Opening by the Chair of the ICC
2. Opening remarks by the Director-General of UNESCO
3. Report of the Chair of the ICC
4. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur
5. Adoption of the agenda and timetable
6. Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), decisions and recommendations of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and other related matters
7. Reports on activities since the 21<sup>st</sup> MAB-ICC with special references to the Madrid Action Plan
  - 7.1 Member States of UNESCO
  - 7.2 Regional, sub-regional, MAB/biosphere reserve, ecosystem and other thematic networks
8. Review and updating of statutory documents of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)
9. Communication strategy and clearing-house mechanism
10. World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)
  - 10.1 Implementing the Madrid Action Plan Target 9: All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations
  - 10.2 Biosphere reserves and relevant legislative frameworks at the national level
  - 10.3 Biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development including the future work of the task force on quality economies
  - 10.4 Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to designated biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR

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- 10.5 Periodic review reports of biosphere reserves received since the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the MAB-ICC
- 10.6 Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management
- 11. Mid-term (2010) evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP): a progress report
- 12. Capacity Building
  - 12.1 ERAIFT (Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands)
  - 12.2 South-South Co-operation
  - 12.3 MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme
- 13. Report on activities of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010)
- 14. UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change and MAB and WNBR activities
- 15. Date and venue of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB-ICC and events linked to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1971-2011) of the MAB Programme
- 16. Other matters
- 17. Adoption of the report
- 18. Closure of the meeting

**PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE FOR THE 22th SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL (ICC)  
OF THE MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME, 31 May - 4 June 2010, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)**

	Monday, 31 May	Tuesday, 1 June	Wednesday, 2 June	Thursday, 3 June	Friday, 4 June
09:00-10:00	Registration	Bureau meeting	Bureau meeting	Bureau meeting	
10:00-11:15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening by the Chair of the ICC.</li> <li>Opening remarks by the Director-General of UNESCO.</li> <li>Report of the Chair of the ICC</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and updating of statutory documents of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions / modifications to designated biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development including the future work of the task force on quality economies</li> <li>UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change and MAB and WNBR activities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date and venue of the 23rd session of the MAB-ICC and events linked to the 40th anniversary (1971-2011) of the MAB Programme</li> <li>Other matters</li> </ol>
11:15-11:30	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break
11:30-13:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur</li> <li>Adoption of the agenda and timetable</li> <li>Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), decisions and recommendations of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC and other related matters</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-term (2010) evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP): a progress report</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic review reports of biosphere reserves received since the 21st session of the MAB-ICC</li> <li>Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management (Followed by a presentation by the winner of the 2009 Michel Batisse Award)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity Building:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ERAIFT (Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of the report</li> </ol>
13:00-14:30	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break
14:30-15:45	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports on activities since the 21st MAB-ICC with special references to the MAP:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member States of UNESCO</li> <li>Regional, sub-regional MAB/biosphere reserve, ecosystem and other thematic networks</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR):               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing the MAP Target 9: All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Biosphere Reserve Afternoon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel discussion on enhancing private-public partnerships and the visibility of biosphere reserves including at the top political levels</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South-South Co-operation</li> <li>MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closure of the meeting</li> </ol>
15:45-16:00	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	
16:00-17:30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on activities of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biosphere reserves and relevant legislative frameworks at the national level</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of new biosphere reserves</li> <li>Presentations of biosphere reserve exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication strategy and clearing-house mechanism</li> </ol>	
17:30-18:30	Bureau meeting	Bureau meeting	Reception	Bureau meeting	



## Annex 3

### Biosphere Reserve afternoon

During the time allotted for a panel discussion during the "Biosphere Reserve Afternoon" a number of ICC Member and Observer Delegations provided valuable inputs particularly with regard to enhancing private-public partnerships and the political visibility of biosphere reserves. A representative of the German Delegation outlined the various measures and initiatives undertaken in recent years by the German MAB National Committee in order to enhance the awareness and visibility of biosphere reserves in the country. This included the establishment of a dedicated working group, the production of educational materials distributed to some 12,000 schools, establishment of partnerships with the private sector companies like Honda and Danone. Among the more high-visibility initiatives was the declaration of 2009 as the National Year of Biosphere Reserves in Germany during which events were organized under the auspices of the President, Chancellor and the Minister of Environment of Germany. A biosphere reserve pavilion was included at the Federal Garden Exhibition, in Schwerin which attracted well over a million visitors. These initiatives have significantly improved awareness and public as well as political support for biosphere reserves in Germany.

A private sector representative of the Indonesian Delegation explained the commitment of his company, Sinar Mass, to the new Indonesian Biosphere Reserve in the Riau Province of Sumatra approved by the ICC in May 2009 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. Benin highlighted the role of co-operation with Canada and the benefits of the UNEP/UNESCO/GEF Project for improving visibility and benefits of the biosphere reserves to local communities. A representative of Ethiopia outlined processes adopted in mobilizing high-level political support and private-public partnerships for the preparation of his country's first two biosphere reserves which were adopted by the current session of the Council. Many other ICC Member Delegations including Egypt and Russia as well as observer Delegations from Canada and UK shared their experiences and thoughts as well as constraints and difficulties in attracting high-level political support and building private-public partnership for MAB and WNBR.

Many Delegations, particularly Bahrain and Indonesia, stressed the need to use the periodic review process to bring out the good examples and practices in biosphere reserves and share them with decision makers and the public. In this regard the Delegate from Bahrain stressed the need to seriously address problems linked to countries taking the periodic review process seriously and implementing the results of the review in a timely manner; he also alerted the Secretariat to the need to stimulate those countries that do not have biosphere reserves and to start actions for establishing new biosphere reserves with a view to improving interest and visibility of MAB and WNBR among all UNESCO Member States.

The Secretariat thanked all Delegations for the rich and diverse range of ideas and suggestions made and emphasized that in all countries, and particularly in large countries with several biosphere reserves high-level political and budget support to the work of MAB National Committees and biosphere reserves is a necessary condition for success. The Secretary of the MAB Programme drew attention of the Delegates that MAB is an intergovernmental programme and without direct Government support neither the MAB National Committees nor individual biosphere reserves are likely to function effectively. Such Government support needs to be sought both at the national level as well as at sub-national levels (provincial, state, local, etc.). Education and awareness raising, telling "biosphere reserve and MAB success stories" to decision makers are equally important to have public as well as local community buy-in for biosphere reserves and the MAB Programme.

The specific strength of biosphere reserves and MAB are their contributions at the interface between biodiversity conservation, generation of socio-economic opportunities for people's benefits and using research and training for building knowledge on sustainable development. Communication and information dissemination efforts must specify and build on this specific message without overemphasizing only the protection or conservation function of biosphere

reserves. The Secretariat expressed their agreement with the view of the Delegates of Turkey and India that exploring green and sustainable development options in buffer zones and transition areas need greater attention as part of efforts to implement the Madrid Action Plan during the remaining years leading up to 2013.

The opportunities for building private sector partnerships for MAB and biosphere reserves are significant but will be best exploited if initiatives begin at the national and/or local and regional levels within the country. The Secretary of the MAB programme referred to the example of the partnership with Danone-Germany which was initiated by the German National Commission for UNESCO and appealed to all Delegates to urge their own respective National Commissions and National Committees to assume leadership in exploring and developing similar partnerships.

This lively debate and exchange of ideas was followed by a film clip showing series of images from a selected number of new biosphere reserves approved by the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICC. A representative from Ethiopia and Poland, respectively, made brief presentations on the new biosphere reserves approved in their own countries. A film on the new biosphere reserve of Slovenia was shown. This was followed by brief presentations from the Camargue (France) and Urdaibai (Spain) biosphere reserves that had organized exhibitions outside the meeting room about the content and ideas used in the design and display of exhibits. The Secretariat informed that in the exhibition space a reception with local products from the French biosphere reserves of Luberon-Lure, Mont Ventoux, Cevennes, Camargue, Fango, Fontainebleau-Gâtinay and Vosges du Nord and from the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve of Spain as well as the newly extended and renamed Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair-Park Naziunal (formerly Swiss National Park) and coffee from the two new Ethiopian Biosphere Reserves of Kaffa and Yayu had been organized. The Chair concluded the proceedings for the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 and invited all Delegates and Observers to enjoy the reception with a taste of biosphere reserve products.

#### Annex 4

**Address by Mr Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO  
on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Co-ordinating Council  
of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB)  
UNESCO Headquarters, 31 May 2010**

Mr Chairman of the MAB Council,  
Distinguished members of the International Coordinating Council of MAB,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you today to UNESCO Headquarters for the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme.

In 1971, Mr René Maheu, Director-General of UNESCO, informed the First International Coordinating Council (ICC) session that the General Conference had decided that the MAB Programme should focus “on the general study of the structure and functioning of the biosphere and its ecological regions, on the systematic observation of the changes brought about by man in the biosphere and its resources, on the study of the overall effects of these changes upon the human species itself and on the education and information to be provided on these subjects”. This MAB vision is as valid today as it was back in the early seventies.

Our understanding of the “changes brought about by man in the biosphere and its resources” and the “overall effects of these changes upon the human species itself” are perhaps broader and deeper today than in 1971. For example, climate change and global warming consequences are understood, and their implications for the future of human-environment relations better appreciated today than in the late 1960s when MAB was conceived. Sustainable development has attained consensus as a global priority for international co-operation. MAB which emphasized an integrated approach to natural resource use and conservation can be counted among those UN initiatives that provided conceptual antecedents to the currently accepted concept of sustainable development.

However, the architecture of international environmental relations have considerably changed since the early 1970s: the number of UN and UNESCO Member States have nearly tripled; the role of civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and place-specific stakeholder participation in addressing issues and problems of environment and development have been encouraged and promoted.

The MAB Programme itself, as it prepares to commemorate its 40th anniversary at the time of the 23rd session of the ICC in 2011, has undergone changes. The original 14 projects that covered ecosystem ecology, conservation of natural areas and impacts of large infrastructure, pollution and other human interventions on the environment have coalesced around two principal operational pillars as established by the 21st session of the ICC in May 2009: networks promoting interdisciplinary scientific co-operation in drylands, mountains, urban areas, coastal zones and small islands, forests and other natural and human-modified ecosystems; and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) currently comprising 553 sites in 107 countries.

The concept of biosphere reserve, originally applied to promoting community involvement in the management of conservation areas has evolved into covering land/seascapes that contribute to addressing regional sustainability issues, as outlined in the Madrid Action Plan. Sustainable development is foreseen as a relationship between the three functions of a biosphere reserve: namely biodiversity conservation on the one hand and socio-economic well being of human communities on the other and research and monitoring dedicated to learning and knowledge building for promoting sustainable and mutually beneficial interactions between the two.

The Madrid Action Plan adopted under the leadership of the MAB-ICC Chair, HE Mr. Henri Djombo, has laid out a “road map” for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for 2008-2013 that fully takes into account the changes that I have outlined above and recognizing biosphere reserve’s potential to contribute to sustainable development.

In reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan, this MAB Council will give significant attention to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the progress made in the implementation of the associated Madrid Action Plan. Not only will you study the pleasant task of including new sites to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but also explore more difficult questions concerning the transformation of pre-Seville, i.e. pre-1995 biosphere reserves to modern ones that are dedicated to illustrating sustainable development principles and practices. It is therefore a most timely ICC session because biosphere reserves around the world are being called upon to address an increasing range of issues, concerns and opportunities, such as in the areas of climate change and building green economies.

On behalf of the Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, who is a consistent advocate of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, let me assure you that UNESCO will do its utmost to assist its Member States to address these challenges through a strong MAB Programme and to seize the opportunities provided by the WNBR for promoting sustainability and international cooperation, and

that we are looking forward to the results of your deliberations during the 22nd MAB-ICC, which we trust will be very successful.

Thank you.