

**Zimbabwe's intervention on the occasion of the approval of the Middle Zambezi Valley to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).**

Mr Chairman,

I have requested for the floor in order to express to you and to all the Council members my country's appreciation for the decision you have just adopted to enlist the Middle Zambezi Valley as Zimbabwe's first Biosphere Reserve, thus joining a growing and vibrant worldwide network of biosphere reserves.

On behalf of the Zimbabwe National Committee for MAB, I would like to thank the Advisory Committee, the Bureau and the International Coordinating Council of MAB for this great honour. In so doing I would like to recall the commendable work done by the Zimbabwe National Committee under the able guidance of Professor Christopher Magadza who has dedicated his professional knowledge and skills, over many years, towards the realisation of today's decision by this Council. It is indeed regrettable that he is unable to personally witness the fruits of his labours on this occasion.

We appreciate the guidance provided by the Advisory Committee of MAB which was instrumental in enabling us to improve on our initial submission and encouraged us to make a re-submission. We of course equally appreciate the invaluable support of the Secretariat of MAB under the leadership of Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran who was available to assist us in the nomination process. The process was very demanding but the Secretariat was forebearing and patient.

Let me assure you that, as the only Biosphere Reserve we have for the time being, we intend, guided by the principles of the Madrid Action Plan, to dedicate all our energies and capacities to ensure that it delivers on the promises and commitments we have made.

I thank you.