

**Main Conclusions and Recommendations of the Twenty-First Session of the
International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme,
Jeju KAL Hotel, Grand Ballroom (Jeju, Republic of Korea)
25 - 29 May 2009**

This document contains a summary list of the main conclusions and recommendations contained in the final report of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC. Kindly note that conclusions and recommendations specific to newly designated biosphere reserves and extensions to existing biosphere reserves have been communicated directly to concerned MAB National Committees.

1. In view of the importance of economic issues of biosphere reserves, it was suggested that the work on quality economies in biosphere reserves be reinforced and the development of statutory frameworks for regional networks of biosphere reserves be given due consideration in efforts to review and update that of the WNBR. The Council called for action from the Secretariat to improve the visibility of MAB and WNBR to levels enjoyed by the World Heritage inscription; while the Council recognized the important role MAB National Committees play, they also called attention to the need for management committees at the individual biosphere reserve level. Furthermore the Council agreed that closer links between the work of WNBR and ESD could help in positioning WNBR as a significant tool to achieve UNESCO targets for the remaining years (2010-2014) of the DESD. (para 12)
2. The Council decided to set a new deadline of 30 September 2009 for receipt of responses on the questionnaire on the assessment of the achievements of the Seville Strategy as required by MAP target 1 and action 1.1, strongly urging all ICC and Observer Member States to facilitate the Secretariat's efforts to improve the response rate. National Commissions for UNESCO and regional/thematic networks should be called upon to support the Secretariat efforts to optimize the response rate to the questionnaire. (para 15)
3. After reviewing document SC-09/CONF.207/6 that outlines the first phase of a study involving a survey sent to all MAB Committees (SC-09/CONF.207/INF.4) to collect information on the extent to which the biosphere reserve concept is included in national legislation frameworks, the Council requested the Secretariat to make information available from different countries that have incorporated the concept of biosphere reserves into the national legislative instruments and processes. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a document for the next session of the ICC, which would group countries that have tried to integrate the biosphere reserve concept into various categories of legislations, for example nature conservation, environmental protection, sustainable development and provide brief descriptions of the outcome and lessons learned through such national efforts. (para 16)
4. The Council welcomed and adopted the integrated strategy for communications and the clearinghouse mechanism described in document SC-09/CONF.207/7 which aims at increasing the visibility of the WNBR, improving the access to information for biosphere reserves and facilitating interaction between biosphere reserves. (para 17)
5. The Council requested the Secretariat to inform Member States of the dates and the documents sufficiently in advance of the dates of the meetings of the International Support Group (ISG) to enable Member States to consult with national experts as appropriate in the preparation for the information exchange sessions effectively. (para 18)
6. The Council called upon the Secretariat to prepare a list of pre-Seville (1995) sites and an assessment of the number of sites in that set which are unlikely to be re-designed to meet the Seville and MAP expectations as defined in MAP target 9 for submission to the consideration of the 22nd session of the Council. (para 62)

7. The Council adopted the recommendation of the Bureau that both the biosphere nomination and the periodic review forms required simplification and revision. The Council suggested that the revisions of both forms be undertaken, with the assistance of an electronic working group. The time interval for periodic review should also be reduced from 10 to every 4-6 years. The Secretariat must explore the feasibility of providing technical support for capacity building in conducting the periodic review process in co-operation with regional networks and other appropriate partners. (para 63)

8. The Council agreed that it accepted the submission of a draft resolution on the promotion of biosphere reserves as learning platforms and places for sustainable development in principle and invited willing ICC Member Permanent Delegations such as Madagascar and Viet Nam to explore with the Secretariat the feasibility of preparing and submitting such a draft resolution to the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference in consultation with all other ICC and interested Observer Member States. (para 66)

9. There was broad consensus on renaming the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme as "MAB Council" removing the word 'Coordinating'. Some ICC Members felt that referring to the Council explicitly as an "Intergovernmental Council" could facilitate the participation of Government Ministries and Departments. (para 69)

10. Council members proposed that a time-limit for periodic reviews – a five-year interval with one year margin must be prescribed in the Statutes. (para 70)

11. The role of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as an "independent" body was strongly supported. There was some discussion on increasing interactions between this body and the Council, perhaps through the representation of the IACBR at the Council sessions. (para 71)

12. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare up-to-date versions of the following three documents to facilitate the implementation of MAP: (i) Statutes of the MAB-ICC; (ii) Rules of Procedures of the MAB-ICC; and (iii) the Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, for discussion and finalization at its 22nd session of the Council. It also asked the Secretariat to prepare for the same session revisions to the Statutory Framework of the WNBR as well as a document on the implementation of MAB and WNBR activities at the national level, including guidelines for establishing MAB National Committees. (para 73)

13. The Council adopted a text on the "MAB Programme for Sustainable Development" that highlights the importance of ecosystem-specific networks on mountains, coastal zones, and small islands, and MAB research, capacity-building and educational projects in marine ecosystems, forests, drylands, urban areas, wetlands, and agro-ecosystems. Networking at ecosystem, regional and sub-regional levels and context specific sustainable development learning in biosphere reserve land/seascapes shall constitute the two principal MAB modalities for supporting sustainable development in Member States. (para 74 and Annex 4)

14. The Council approved the proposed approach and timetable for the first evaluation of MAP in 2010, and requested the Secretariat to submit a progress report to the 22nd session of the Council. (para 76)

15. The Council requested the Secretariat to make a comparison between 2004 and 2009 concerning the evolution in the total number of biosphere reserves, the total areas they cover, as well as the total budgets allocated to MAB under the UNESCO Regular Programme. This

comparative table, to be broken down according to regions, should be sent to all ICC Member States and Observer States attending the 21st session of the Council in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea as well as any other countries that may request it. (para 77)

16. The Council endorsed the Secretariat's initiative to carry out a feasibility study on the future legal status of ERAIFT in order to ensure ERAIFT's autonomy and sustainability. (para 78)

17. The MAB-ICC decided that the age limit of candidates for the MAB Young Scientists Award shall be fixed at 40 years of age for all applicants; to be eligible for the MAB Young Scientists Award, the proposed research projects shall have to be undertaken in a designated biosphere reserve or a potential biosphere reserve; the number of candidates that each MAB National Committee can submit each year to the MAB Secretariat shall be reduced from three to two. (para 82)

18. The Council requested the Secretariat to investigate, in collaboration with selected UNESCO Chairs, appropriate UNESCO Category II Centres and other partner institutions, the feasibility to launch a collaborative programme for capacity building in sustainable development research and development in biosphere reserves that would generate well-designed and content-rich case study materials and other pedagogic resources during the last five years (2005-2014) of the DESD. (para 87)

19. Many ICC Delegates expressed support for the South-South Cooperation Network for the Humid Tropics and expressed the wish that similar networks be considered for other ecosystems of the world. ICC Delegates of countries such as Sri Lanka indicated the wish to be part of the South-South Cooperation Network for the Humid Tropics. (para 89)

20. The Council decided unanimously to create a Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Contributing to Action on Climate Change and Sustainable Development under the auspices of Spain and the Republic of Korea as one of the MAB Programme thematic networks. (para 95)

21. The Council decided that it should meet every year to decide on new entries to the World Network as well as on other important matters such as extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves already included in the World Network, periodic review of biosphere reserves, MAB Young Scientists Awards, Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management, etc. The Council decided that in the future the venue for its annual sessions would alternate between Paris and interested Member States and that its 22nd session would be convened at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) during 2010. The Council requested that the Secretariat in consultation with Members of the Bureau propose dates for the 22nd session of the Council in 2010 to all ICC Members before 1st December 2009. (para 97)

22. Recognizing that the 40th anniversary of the MAB Programme will be commemorated in 2011, the Council recommended that the Secretariat consult with ICC and Observer Member States, including their Delegations at UNESCO Headquarters, to explore interest among Member States to host the 23rd session of the MAB-ICC and associated events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of MAB. (para 98)

23. The Council instructed the Secretariat to co-operate with the Indonesian authorities in organizing a successful first meeting of the important South-South Co-operation initiative in 2010 in connection with the International Year of Biodiversity. (para 99)