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**National Report of Japan**

There are seven Biosphere Reserves (BR) in Japan; Mount Hakusan BR (1980), Shiga Highland BR (1980), Mount Odaigahara & Mount Omine BR (1980), Yakushima Island BR (1980), Aya BR (2012), Tadami BR (2014) and Minami Alps BR (2014). Active efforts have been made by these BRs to contribute to the promotion of sustainable development based on local community efforts and science.

**14th East Asia Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN) Meeting**

From 6th to 9th October 2015, Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (the National Commission hereafter), together with UNESCO Beijing office and Shiga Highland BR, co-organized "14th East Asia BR Network Meeting" in Yamanouchi town, Nagano prefecture, one of the local area of the Shiga Highland BR. 40 members from Japan, China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, gathered under the theme "Activities in transition area and the role of local communities in managing BRs". During the meeting, representatives of Member States presented their activities related to the themes in various sessions. Furthermore, participants conducted one-day field research on the core and transition areas of Shiga Highland BR which was followed by the discussion 3 on the BR. As it can be seen from this case, EABRN is functioning as a communication platform among Member States in East Asia. In addition to periodic meetings of EABRN, more exchanges and cooperation among BRs are to be expected under the framework of EABRN.

### The third Japanese Biosphere Reserves Network (JBRN) Congress

Jointly organized by EABRN Meeting mentioned above, "The third JBRN" was held with the support of the National Commission through the scheme of "Japan UNESCO Partnership Programme" which is subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT).

With the presence of mayors of all seven BRs in Japan, new network participated by seven local authorities was launched. The network discussed various issues such as the branding of UNESCO BRs, involvement of the local residents. Under the new framework, each local area is encouraged to seek their way of establishing sustainable society. The network is expected to enhance the activity to revitalize local area through sharing research results, project strategy and know-hows. In addition, through the cooperation with BRs around the world, the network is contributing to the establishment of sustainable society in a global scale.

### Sites in planning stage for new BR

Recently in Japan, BR has been gradually focused on as one of means for local development, as well as a system to conserving a nature and research. The Japanese National Committee for MAB, the National Commission, MEXT and other concerned ministries such as Ministry of the Environment, Forestry Agency, as well as Japanese Coordinating Committee of MAB give necessary supports and information, including procedure of new nomination, to some local authorities.

In August 2015, the National Commission received three new applications for BRs which is now under consideration.

### Collaboration with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Sustainability Science

MEXT and the National Commission are promoting ESD in light of the view that ESD is nurturing people who will promote a sustainable society with sufficient global perspective. Following the UN Decade of ESD which ended in 2014, in Japan, the National Commission published a report in August 2015 on the further promotion of ESD. The report contains proposals on disseminating and deepening ESD, such as developing a guideline for

schools and supporting UNESCO Associated Schools which conduct good practices. In the international area, UNESCO is promoting ESD under the framework of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD. MAB is one of the members of the GAP partner network, the network consists of around 70 leading global ESD stakeholders. ESD and MAB is closely related and MAB is expected to play an important role in scaling up ESD around the world. Since BRs are expected to play an important role as learning sites of sustainable development, the National Commission is encouraging local authorities in BR sites to liaise BR activities with ESD and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). These days, an increasing number of elementary and junior high schools in BR sites are applying for UNESCO Associated Schools, and it would become the model case activities which show the collaboration between ESD and ASPnet utilizing the framework of BRs.

In order to solve the global problems, we urge that UNESCO take the initiative in promoting scientific efforts through a comprehensive approach to build a sustainable society. Accordingly, the National Commission made a proposal on “Sustainability Science” to UNESCO at the 129th Japanese National Commission General Assembly held on 3 August 2011. Several practical case studies for Sustainability Science using the BR activity could further strengthen the activity of BR and MAB. New findings in natural science are necessary to identify several global challenges, which is not sufficiently tackled. It is essential to solve complex challenges genuinely with a cross-cutting approach among all the studies including social and human sciences, in addition to changing values. “Sustainability Science” is an integrated approach to build a truly sustainable society, bringing together the contributions of the natural, social and human sciences. Since UNESCO is a forward looking organization and could play an important role to build a sustainable society, the National Commission requested that the concept of “Sustainability Science” should be reflected to UNESCO’s upcoming Medium Term Strategy (2014-2021) (37C/4) and Programme and Budget (37C/5) to strengthen UNESCO’s work. Since then, National Commission has been discussing with UNESCO. In April 2013, the Sustainability Science Workshop was held in Kuala Lumpur focusing on the concept of Sustainability Science.