



General Conference

38th Session, Paris, 2015

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Item 4.19 of the provisional agenda

38 C/66

6 November 2015

Original: English

PROCLAMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE MANGROVE ECOSYSTEM

OUTLINE

Source: 197 EX/Dec.41.

Background: At the request of Ecuador and with the support of GRULAC item 41 the proclamation of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem was included in the agenda of the 197th session of the Executive Board. Decision 41 adopted by the Executive Board at its 197th session (197 EX/Decision 41) invites the Director-General to support all efforts leading to the proclamation of the "International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem", to include this item into the agenda of the 38th session of the General Conference and recommended that the General Conference adopt, at its 38th session, a resolution concerning this subject.

Purpose: This document provides information on the rationale, objectives and other important information regarding the proposal to proclaim the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.

Decision required: paragraph 2.

Proclamation of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

1. After having examined this item, the Executive Board recommended that the General Conference, at its 38th session, adopt a resolution for the Proclamation of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.

2. In light of the above, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following draft resolution:

The General Conference,

Having examined document 38 C/66,

Considering that mangroves are a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem, providing by virtue of their existence, biomass and productivity substantial benefits to human beings, providing forestry, fishery goods and services as well as contributing to the protection of the coastline and being particularly relevant in terms of mitigation of the effects of climate change and food security for local communities;

Recalling that promotion of a harmonious relationship between human beings and their natural environment, privileging ecosystems of singular importance and vulnerability, is part of the essence of UNESCO and its international science programmes;

Recognizing that 26 July each year is celebrated worldwide as the International Day for the Defense of the Mangrove Ecosystem without being as yet an international day as declared by the United Nations or any of its agencies;

Recalling that within the framework of its Man and the Biosphere Programme, International Hydrological Programme and Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Programme, UNESCO has developed with partners an open initiative on mangroves and sustainable development;

1. *Requests* the Director-General to take the appropriate measures, and to set up mechanisms, to proclaim 26 July as International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem”;

2. *Further requests* the Director-General to:

- (i) promote the celebration of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem;
- (ii) grant support to the officially recognized local, national, regional and international activities carried out as part of this annual celebration;
- (iii) encourage Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, universities, research centres, civil society associations, schools and other local stakeholders to actively participate in the event.

ANNEX

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Ecuador, with the support of GRULAC, proposed that the UNESCO Executive Board include an agenda item at its 197th session on the proclamation of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.
2. The proposal underlined the importance of mangrove ecosystems to coastline protection, climate change mitigation and food security for local communities. It highlighted several links with UNESCO, including through the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Programme, the International Hydrological (IHP) Programme, the World Heritage Convention and the Global Geoparks Network.
3. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves of MAB already includes some 84 sites that have mangrove components. Many of these biosphere reserves are in developing countries and in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Examples are La Selle Biosphere Reserve in Haiti and the island of Principe in Sao Tome and Principe, as well as other biosphere reserves such as Shankou Mangrove in China and Can Gio Mangrove in Viet Nam. World Heritage sites with mangrove ecosystems include the Phoenix Islands Protected Areas in Kiribati. The Global Geopark Network also has mangrove sites such as the Langkawi Global Geopark of Malaysia.
4. Since 2013 in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNESCO has supported an open initiative on mangroves and sustainable development in cooperation with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, Conservation International, Ecuador and the Hivos Foundation, through the work of MAB, specifically the IberoMAB Network, IHP and LINKS.
5. During the preparation of the Regional Plan for the Conservation of Mangroves in the Southeast Pacific, representatives from the Governments of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru have recommended that the International Day in the Defense of the Mangrove Ecosystem, already celebrated on 26 July each year by many countries without being recognized by the United Nations or any of its agencies, be recognized by UNESCO. It is noted that in Ecuador this date has been celebrated by mangrove users for the past 17 years.
6. The activities in relation to this International Day will be carried out by the Member States and the interested institutions. There will be no direct financial implications to the Regular Budget of UNESCO.