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Fourth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves

Lima, Peru

14–17 March 2016

Lima Declaration on the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

1. We, the representatives of UNESCO Member States, biosphere reserves, and co-operating public and private sector institutions and civil society organizations gathered at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (4WCBR) of UNESCO during 14-17 March 2016 in Lima, Peru;
2. *Expressing* our sincere gratitude first of all to the Government of Peru and its Ministry of Environment, with the National Service for Protected Areas (SERNANP), the Municipality of Lima and through them to Peruvian people, for their extraordinary support to UNESCO and its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme by hosting the 4WCBR in Lima, Peru, to endorse the new Lima Action Plan for MAB and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves 2016-2025. We are very grateful for the hospitality our hosts have extended to all the Congress participants;
3. *Expressing further* our satisfaction that this is the first time in the history of the MAB Programme that the World Congress for Biosphere Reserves has been hosted in the Latin American region: a strong indication of the universality of the MAB and its WNBR and the new dynamics in pursuing the *vision and mission of the MAB Programme*. In this regard, Peru should be praised in particular, for its extraordinary efforts in promoting international cooperation and consensus in multilateral agreements for sustainable development, demonstrated not only by this Congress, but also through the successful organization of the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lima in 2014.
4. *Emphasizing* that the 4WCBR has been held at an important and optimal time, after the successful organization of the 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lima in 2014, which paved the way to the Paris Agreement on climate change that was successfully concluded at the 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris, in December 2015, shortly after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 and, within UNESCO, the endorsement of the MAB Strategy 2015-2025, as adopted by the MAB ICC at its 27th session in June 2015, by the 38th session of UNESCO General Conference in November 2015. Together, these new global agreements provide a comprehensive and updated framework for promoting international cooperation for sustainable development, cooperation with targets for MAB and WNBR actions in the next 10 years;
5. *Expressing* satisfaction with the organization of the 4WCBR that enabled the smooth finalization of the Lima Action Plan and facilitated exchange through more than twenty regional, thematic and cross-cutting workshops and thirteen side events, that contributed an

enormous resource of new thoughts, experiences, initiatives, best practices and the identification of needs and opportunities for future cooperation, formulated in clear recommendations to the wider constituency of the MAB Programme and its WNBR;

6. Recalling the core mission of the MAB Programme - to balance human responsibility to maintain nature and conserve biodiversity with the human need to use natural resources for enhancing social and economic well-being of peoples - established at the 16th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1970 which launched MAB as a long-term intergovernmental and interdisciplinary programme of research, training, monitoring, education and pilot projects.

7. Recalling further that the development of biosphere reserves in MAB, started in 1976, has gone through four decades of evolution, empowered by the Member States of UNESCO through the implementation of the Action Plan of Minsk Conference (1983), the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (1995), the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013), the international MAB Conference "For life, for the future: Biosphere reserves and climate change", with the Dresden Declaration (2011), and national, local and regional cooperation projects in the majority of UNESCO's Member States, thus gaining a significant momentum for sustainable development at all levels and contributing to global agenda, especially the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as well as the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; and will now be further strengthened by the MAB Strategy 2015-2025, and the Lima Action Plan;

8. Recalling the Resolution "MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2015-2025" (Ref. 38 C/Resolution 15, No. 19 under Programme and Budget) adopted by the 38th UNESCO General Conference guiding the programme and biosphere reserve development for the coming decade;

9. Noting the efforts of the MAB Community to ensure the quality and functionality of its WNBR by the implementation of its Exit Strategy since 2013, seeking for a significant quality improvement of the WNBR and renewed commitment from Member States of UNESCO towards the MAB Programme and its WNBR;

10. Convinced of the need to further strengthen support for contributions of MAB and its WNBR, following the MAB Strategy 2015-2025, to support sustainable development in the context of the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) as defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by means of mobilizing the potential of biosphere reserves to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs including the SDG 13 to 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact' and the SDG 15 to 'Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss', and recognizing the interlinkages of the Strategy and the Lima Action Plan with the targets of other goals;

11. Noting with pride the fact that the WNBR today includes more than 600 sites of global importance for biological diversity and cultural diversity, representing almost all major ecosystem types of our planet;

12. Recalling that MAB's *vision* is a world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere;

13. Recalling further that MAB's mission for the period 2015-2025 is to: develop and strengthen models of sustainable development in the WNBR; to communicate the experiences and lessons learned, facilitating the global diffusion and application of these models; to support evaluation and high-quality management, strategies and

policies for sustainable development and planning, as well as account able and resilient institutions; and to help Member States and stakeholders to urgently meet the SDGs through experiences from the WNBR, particularly through exploring, advocating and testing policies, technologies, education and new lifestyles and innovations for the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources and mitigation and adaptation to climate change;

14. Emphasizing that the overall spirit of the Congress is its call for all to take action, in accordance with the Lima Action Plan, to explore vigorously innovative solutions to the persisting problems and new challenges encountered on all fronts, and to capitalize the achievements and lessons learnt and to develop new practices by means of new ideas, concepts, innovation its, instruments, methodologies, tools, indicators, best practice models in MAB and its WNBR, and by enabling a UNESCO-MAB led global sustainability movement;

15. Underscoring in this context that MAB and its WNBR must continue to constitute a leading global resource base for sustainable development solutions, including measures to protect and promote indigenous and local knowledge systems;

16. Underlining that such a global movement will be characterized by a wider and more active role of local communities in developing and deciding actions on the ground in biosphere reserves, and also by new partnerships between science and policy, between scientists and decision makers, between national and local governance, between public and private sector actors, and among decision-making bodies, citizen groups and organizations, and in particular indigenous, as well as youth communities;

17. Take note of the Declaration arising from the Inter-Ministerial Conference on “Biosphere Reserves in the Caribbean Small Island States – Tools for sustainable development and growth”, in St. Kitts & Nevis, 27 March 2013, and reiterate the desire, inter alia, to identify and designate one biosphere reserve in each state that had not established one yet, on the basis of a consensus-driven agreement between all parties: local communities, government, industry, NGOs, nature preservation societies, heritage conservation groups, etc. and to explore all possible partnerships towards the establishment of the Caribbean Small Island Developing States MAB network and the integration with other thematic and regional Biosphere networks, such as the IberoMAB and the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves;

Therefore join efforts to

18. Encourage UNESCO Member States to establish and to ensure functional MAB National Committees or MAB Focal Points in countries where they do not yet exist, and to establish biosphere reserves in countries that have not established them yet, including transboundary biosphere reserves, and particularly in Small Island Developing States;

19. Encourage UNESCO Member States to use biosphere reserves as models for national /regional demonstration of sustainable development within national Agenda 21 programmes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

20. Invite UNESCO Member States to use biosphere reserves (respecting each member national sustainable development policy) as priority sites or observatories for biodiversity conservation as well as ecosystems and climate change research, monitoring, education, mitigation and adaptation;

21. Encourage the UNESCO MAB Secretariat to review the implementation of the MAB Strategy 2015-2025 by fully applying the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025) in line with the biosphere reserves for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in support of the UNFCCC COP21 Paris Agreement;

22. Encourage cooperation between the MAB Programme and the other Intergovernmental/International Scientific Programmes of UNESCO, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), and the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) as well the World Heritage Convention and the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD);

23. Call upon UNESCO to continue to improve the effectiveness of collaboration with relevant specialized agencies and programmes of the UN system, in particular UNDP, FAO, UNU and UNEP, and with active NGOs, with the aim of enabling Member States to use biosphere reserves as priority places to demonstrate and promote the achievement of the SDGs and related targets, as well as relevant goals, targets and objectives specified under the CBD, the UNFCCC and the UNCCD;

24. Build new partnerships between the MAB programme and scientific institutions, such as universities, research centers and UNESCO Category 2 Centers, and UNESCO Chairs to launch capacity building and training activities aimed at all biosphere reserve stakeholders, including managers, taking into account the SDGs;

25. Recognizing the increasing importance of involving the private sector in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services, further encourage UNESCO to cooperate with a wide variety of Private Sector partners such as business enterprises, including small and medium-size firms, national, international and multinational corporations, philanthropic and corporate foundations, financial institutions and private individuals;

26. Call upon stakeholders in biosphere reserves to communicate their experience, thus contributing to economic and political decision processes and to assist in implementing the innovations and lessons learnt to national decision makers.

27. Call upon UNESCO, all international and national partnerships and the coordinators/managers of biosphere reserves themselves to establish new mechanisms for sustainable, robust and sufficient funding of biosphere reserves, for the Secretariat of the MAB Programme, as well as for all the regional and thematic networks in order to ensure the implementation of the MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan in order to identify and secure extra-budgetary funds to facilitate and enable the countries that have not yet established biosphere reserves, notably the SIDS, to prepare, initiate and develop a local Biosphere site;

28. Urge UNESCO and its Member States, through its National Commissions, to strengthen the WNBR for the implementation of the SDGs and to promote in particular regional, sub-regional, national and thematic networks as fora for exchange of experience and good practices and to promote the global diffusion and implementation of such practices within and outside biosphere reserves;

29. Call upon all UNESCO Member States to strongly support the MAB Programme and its WNBR and to implement the Lima Action Plan for the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves 2016-2025.