



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,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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



Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences  
Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

MAB National Committees  
MAB Focal Points for the World Network  
of Biosphere Reserves

Ref.: CL/MAB/2014/1

- 6 MAR 2014

Subject: **Future Strategy for MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves  
2014-2021**

Dear Colleagues,

At its 25th session in May 2013, the MAB International Coordinating Council discussed the development of a new Strategy for MAB and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) that would build on the experience of implementing follow on the heels of the Madrid Action Plan - MAP (2008-2013). The MAB ICC subsequently decided that it should consider a draft of the new Strategy at its 26th session (Jönköping, Sweden 10 - 13 June 2014) and that the text should be developed in harmony with the UNESCO mid-term strategy (2014-2021) and be supportive of relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) that are to be integrated into the UN's post-2015 Development Agenda. It was also agreed that the MAB Secretariat would support the strategy development processes, which is to be overseen by the Bureau of the MAB ICC and its 'Electronic Reference Group' (formerly referred to as the 'Electronic Working Group', the composition of which is attached) and that the draft should reflect the outcomes of the evaluation of the MAP.

Through this MAB Circular Letter, I am therefore kindly inviting all MAB National Committees and Focal Points to contribute to this important process by providing us with key elements that you believe should feature in the new MAB Strategy building on rather than revising the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Although all comments and inputs in this regard are welcome, it would facilitate the process if you could structure your contributions according to the questions outlined in the Annex, which we have drafted in consultation with the Electronic Reference Group and the MAB Bureau. Inputs sent to [mab@unesco.org](mailto:mab@unesco.org) **before 10 April 2014** would be particularly appreciated.

Your inputs will help us prepare the first draft of the new MAB Strategy on which we will eventually also seek comments from partner organizations and other key stakeholders in an open and transparent manner, including through the MABnet web page. Following the discussions on the draft text at the next MAB ICC, we thereafter foresee a consultation process that would allow us to further refine the new MAB Strategy text that hopefully could be adopted in its final form at the 27<sup>th</sup> MAB ICC in 2015.

For ease of reference, the report of the 25<sup>th</sup> MAB ICC is available here: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/SC-13-CONF-225-11\\_Final\\_Report\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/SC-13-CONF-225-11_Final_Report_en.pdf). Other key documents that could help you in your deliberations, such as the MAP and the Seville Strategy, can all be found online on the MABNet from this page: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/related-info/publications/mab-official-documents/>.

Needless to say, I look forward to any questions you may have in relation to this letter and the development of the new strategy.

Many thanks in advance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Han Qunli' in Chinese characters, written in a cursive style.

HAN Qunli

Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences  
Secretary, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

cc. Permanent Delegations to UNESCO  
UNESCO Field Offices

## ANNEX

### Possible Questions to Address in the Elaboration of the Key Elements of the Draft New Strategy for MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves 2014-2021

#### **1. Vision and Mission Statement for MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)**

In the context of the New MAB Strategy, is there a need to revisit the vision and mission statements for MAB and its WNBR contained in the MAP and if so, what elements should be changed/added?

#### **2. Key Issues, International Processes and Strategic Goals**

What are the key issues, international processes and milestone events that MAB and its WNBR should focus on in the coming years? In relation to these issues, processes and events, what are the most important goals and achievements that MAB should strive towards?

#### **3. MAB Services**

What are the most important services that MAB and its WNBR should deliver to the benefit of UNESCO Member States?

#### **4. Future MAB Research, Policy and Action Agendas**

What key items should be included in MAB's future research, policy and action agendas in order to reach the strategic goals and to ensure the effective development and delivery of the services?

#### **5. MAB Regional and Thematic Networks**

How could the functioning of the regional and thematic MAB networks be further enhanced? Is there a need to streamline the working methods and statutes of existing networks? Should additional networks be established to cover new themes? If so, what themes?

#### **6. MAB Governing Mechanisms**

Is there a need to revisit the governing mechanisms of MAB at the national, regional and international levels? If so, why?

#### **7. Funding Mechanisms and Implementation Partners**

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy at the national, regional and global levels, what could be done to ensure that sufficient funds are mobilized? Is there a need to bring in new implementation partners, such as leading research groups, think tanks, private sector enterprises or groups, and civil society organizations? If so, what should the priorities be in terms of new partners?

#### **8. Communication and Information**

How could MAB and its WNBR take better advantage of contemporary communication and information/data sharing tools and instruments for visibility and benefit to Member States and to society?