

# Environment Experts and Biosphere managers consultation Meeting on challenges of Biosphere Reserves in the Arab Region April 25-27, 2015 Agadir (?)Morocco

## I. Background:

The Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) is based on the concept that it is possible to achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation of biological diversity, economic development, and maintenance of associated cultural values. The validity of this concept is tested, refined, demonstrated, and implemented in the Biosphere Reserves. A biosphere reserve is an area proposed by its residents, ratified by a national committee, and designated by UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) program.

The Arab Region Biosphere Reserves are part of an international network (WNBR) and include many important conservation areas, ecological research sites, and environmental education areas in the region. The areas are important for developing the data, technology, and experience needed to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that relate to global issues, such as biodiversity, climate change, desertification, and sustainable development. Locally, an individual BR provides means for integrating conservation, research and monitoring, education and training, and involving local populations in conservation and development issues, in an area of outstanding ecological, scientific, and educational importance.

The WNBR offers an important connection between the global sustainable development agenda and specific and dynamic national and local contexts. With 2015 approaching, extensive discussions take place about a new agenda for cooperation based on the post 2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

## II. Objectives of the workshop

The workshop aims to bring together expert in Environmental issues and Biosphere Reserves Managers to discuss and identify environmental challenges of BRs in the Arab Region. The experts will assist BR managers in developing best practices and identify solutions for managing Biosphere Reserves. This will include enhancing capacities of the Managers to test, monitor and assess the impacts of climate change on the existing ecosystems, and the livelihoods of the local communities as well as a possible ways to increase the number of reserves in the Arab Region. Participants will also: assess the role of biosphere reserves in contributing to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); discuss actions for the post-2015 development agenda and how BRs in the region could contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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The themes to be highlighted include: **biodiversity; water systems, land use, Green Economy, Ecotourism, and Ecosystem Services.**

### III. Structure and theme of the workshop

This meeting is planned to be as interactive as possible: participants are strongly encouraged to exchange views, identifying lessons learnt, case studies and developing best practices pertaining to the following themes:

- Utilization of BR as model of approaches to support activities that combine climate change adaptation, with maintenance of the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity as well as social development.
- Strengthen the contribution which biosphere reserves make to the implementation of international agreements promoting conservation and sustainable development, especially to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other agreements, such as those on climate change, desertification and forests.

### IV. Profile of the Participants

It is expected that environment specialists (biodiversity, climate change, Remote sensing, water resources, ecotourism, ecosystem services, and Green Economy) and BR managers and from the following countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen) will participate in this meeting.

### V. Expected Results

- Assessed the current situation of the BR's of participating countries.
- Reached a consensus on approaches and principles in implementing BR activities within the framework of sustainable development
- Discussed actions for the post-2015 development agenda, such as a roadmap for contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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