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Programme

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**International Co-ordinating Council
of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**
Twenty-fifth session

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FINAL REPORT

I. Opening by the Chair of the ICC

1. The twenty-fifth session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held at UNESCO, Headquarters, from 27 to 30 May 2013.
2. 113 participants included representatives of the following Members of the ICC as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th session: Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, and Viet Nam.
3. In addition, observers from the following Member States were present: Albania, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Namibia, Niger, Poland, Saint-Kitts and Nevis, Slovakia, Spain, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, The Netherlands, Tunisia, Uganda, and Vanuatu.
4. The following international/multilateral organizations and institutes were present: IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences), SCOPE (Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment), RAMSAR Convention.
5. The full list of participants is presented as Annex 1 to this report.
6. Ms Boshra Salem officially opened the meeting as Chair of the MAB Council. She welcomed all members of the MAB Council and observer delegations from UNESCO's Member States as well as representatives of international organizations.

Welcoming words from the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences

Ms Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences Sector, warmly welcomed the delegates to the twenty-fifth session of the MAB International Coordinating Council.

Ms Kalonji informed the Council that UNESCO's Executive Board, at its 191st session in April last month, has decided that the MAB Programme in the UNESCO 37 C/5 document (2014-2017) should have its own Main Line of Action which reads "*Strengthening the role of ecological sciences and biosphere reserves*". The related Expected Result has been worded as "*Use of biosphere reserves as learning places for equitable and sustainable development and for climate change mitigation and adaptation strengthened*". The corresponding Performance Indicator for this Expected Result has been proposed as "Approved new strategy for MAB and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2014-2021)".

Ms Kalonji informed the MAB-ICC on the latest results of the prioritization exercise of expected results within UNESCO for the 37 C/5 which was carried out the previous week by the Working Group of the Executive Board. The MAB Programme, together with the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), have been ranked very high for the Natural Sciences Sector.

ADG/SC announced that Mr Thomas Schaaf, who has been designated Director ad interim of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences since August last year is leaving UNESCO at the end of this week for early retirement at age 55. She paid tribute to Dr Schaaf's commitment to the MAB Programme and underlined his contribution for over 25 years within the MAB Programme. She expressed her satisfaction for the manner that Dr Schaaf managed to serve the Division of Ecological and Earth Science and the MAB Programme during a period which has been marked by severe financial constraints.

In consultation with the Director-General, she announced that she had decided to designate Mr Han Qunli as the new Director of the Division and Secretary of the MAB Programme. Mr Han Qunli is very well known by the MAB community as he has also worked with and for the MAB Programme for over 20 years. Mr Han who is currently the Director of the Natural Science Executive Office had been successively the Director of the UNESCO-Jakarta Office serving the science programmes in the Asia-Pacific region and the Director of the UNESCO-Tehran cluster office. Ms Kalonji underlined that the delegates will have to discuss very important items for the future, including the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan, the new strategy for MAB for the period 2014-2021 and the future of MAB in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. She concluded by wishing the delegates fruitful debates and thanking them for their continuous support to the MAB Programme.

II. Opening remarks by the UNESCO Director-General

7. The Director-General warmly welcomed the MAB-ICC delegates. She started her remarks with highlighting that the *raison d'être* of UNESCO was networking and sharing and thus acknowledged the importance and contribution of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) in this regard.

8. The Director-General compared the WNBR to a map of global scientific cooperation for protection of biodiversity. She specifically mentioned the importance of networking and cooperation within transboundary biosphere reserves, and referred to it as hyper cooperation between countries and as sources of inspiration for them. In this context, she mentioned her participation to the inauguration of the West Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Belarus, Poland and Ukraine) as well as her flying over the Trifino Transboundary Biosphere Reserve shared by Guatemala, Honduras and Salvador.

9. She recalled that for 40 years the MAB Programme has been very concretely putting science at the service of peace and sustainable development and demonstrating the connections between human development and ecosystems, and between biological and cultural diversity.

10. She highlighted the innovative aspect of the MAB Programme and the importance of this MAB-ICC session for reinforcing the MAB Programme. She called for biosphere reserves to

continue to inspire beyond their boundaries. She also pledged for the more active participation of the MAB Programme to the Future Earth Initiative as well as to the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

11. She finally emphasized the needed role of the MAB Programme for reinforcing the link between knowledge and policy, and between science and policy, to craft solutions for sustainability. In this respect, the Director-General made reference to the Scientific Advisory Board created by UNESCO at the request of the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. She ended her opening remark by wishing the participants very productive discussions.

III. Report by the Chair of the ICC

12. Ms Boshra Salem provided her report as Chair of the MAB-ICC on important events and developments following the twenty-fourth MAB-ICC with a focus on activities in which she personally had participated. Firstly, she reported on the UNESCO-MAB Project “Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD)” which involves dryland experts and managers of biosphere reserves from Belgium, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia. She mentioned the 10th International SUMAMAD Project Workshop in Bolivia in November 2012 and that preparations are under way for the 11th International SUMAMAD Project workshop in June 2013 in Ghent (Belgium) which will also mark the closing session of this highly successful UNESCO-MAB Project. She expressed her warm gratitude to the Flemish Government of Belgium which has provided over US \$2.3 million to UNESCO for the operations of the SUMAMAD Project during its two phases of existence, as well as to the United Nations University as a co-partner of the project, and to the UNESCO-MAB Secretary, Dr Thomas Schaaf, for having implemented the project so diligently.

13. The Chair then synthesized the most salient points and recommendations produced at the 8th ArabMAB meeting together with a technical workshop on “Green Economy and Biosphere Reserves” held in the Dana Biosphere Reserve (Jordan) on 12-13 April 2013.

14. She stressed that the biosphere reserve model is receiving more and more attention at the global level notably in regard to its relevance for promoting sustainable development, such as in connection with climate change mitigation and adaptation, urbanization, promotion of green economy, eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, demonstrating the importance of ecosystem services and education for sustainable development. She also mentioned that biosphere reserves are increasingly also seen as relevant places for promoting peace and non-violence. She mentioned in this context the Pan African Forum on “Africa: sources and resources for a Culture of Peace”, held in Luanda, Angola, from 26-28 March 2013, organized by UNESCO and the Republic of Angola.

15. In concluding, the Chair referred to the new MAB and WNBR Strategy for 2014-2021 that is expected to guide the Programme on many of these critical issues following the completion of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) in 2013 and suggested to update the Statutory Framework in line with this strategy. She noted that good preparatory work had started already on the evaluation of the MAP and she expressed her hope that the MAB-ICC would have a substantive discussion at its twenty-fifth session both on the evaluation of the MAP and on ideas for the new Strategy. The Chair encouraged Member States to participate actively in the evaluation of the MAP and in the development of the new Strategy.

IV. Adoption of the agenda and timetable

16. After a delegate requested that more time should be allocated to item 8 on the post Rio+20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021, the Council adopted its agenda and timetable as proposed by the Secretariat (see agenda appended as Annex 2 to this report).

V. Report by the Secretary of the MAB Programme

17. The Secretary of the MAB Programme introduced document SC-13/CONF.225/4 (see Annex 3 of this report) on activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the conclusion of the twenty-fourth session of the MAB-ICC on 13 July 2012.

18. The Secretary focused on the growth in the number of biosphere reserves; the finalization of the updating of the biosphere reserve nomination and periodic review forms; the establishment of a working group on the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves; the post Rio+20 opportunities and preliminary ideas towards a MAB strategy for 2014-2021; the deliberations of the International Support Group (ISG) for the Implementation of the Madrid Action Plan; ecosystem related activities including on mountains, coastal areas and islands and urban areas; cooperation with the Stockholm Resilience Centre on biosphere reserves, ecosystem services and governance as well as the institutional affiliation with the Elinor Ostrom Award; research on resilience and climate change; regional network activities linked to the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), South and Central Asian MAB Network (SACAM), AfriMAB, ArabMAB, IberoMAB, REDBIOs and EuroMAB.

19. The Secretary stressed that the Organization's present financial difficulties had resulted in the suspension or postponement of several planned MAB activities and initiatives. However, he was pleased to highlight a good number of initiatives spearheaded by the MAB Secretariat funded through multilateral and private sector partners, as well as projects funded by individual Member States and through North-South cooperation. He thanked all Member States for their initiatives and their support.

20. After the presentation, eleven delegates and four observers took the floor. All delegates warmly welcomed the report of the Secretary on the work of the MAB Secretariat and Member States since the last MAB-ICC session and congratulated the Secretariat for implementing numerous activities in spite of the difficult financial situation. Delegates also welcomed the fact that, particularly thanks to the support of GRULAC, the UNESCO Executive Board recently had supported the inclusion of a specific Main Line of Action for the MAB Programme and that its working group on the 37 C/5 had ranked MAB as a high priority programme among UNESCO's various programmes and activities. Delegates requested support from other Member States to ensure that the budget of the MAB Programme is secured within the next General Conference and to make the MAB Programme more visible and known.

21. In their questions and comments, delegates stressed the importance of biosphere reserves for promoting the overarching objective of sustainable development and related issues, notably education for sustainable development with reference to the venue of an international conference in Japan in November 2014, green economies, ecosystem services, sustainability science and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The delegate of Egypt offered to translate into Arabic some key documents such as the nomination and periodic review forms. Several delegates also referred to the value of transboundary biosphere reserves for international cooperation, peace and reconciliation. Several delegates welcomed the project Green Economies in Biosphere Reserves in Ghana, Nigeria and the Republic of Tanzania funded by the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) as well as support provided by Germany for AfriMAB and Spain for biosphere reserves in different areas of the world. Some delegates welcomed the partnership with the Stockholm Resilience Centre and also encouraged increased cooperation with the conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity. Some delegates requested more information on activities and cooperation of the MAB Programme with the IPBES platform. Some delegates also sought additional information on the financial situation of the MAB Programme and how the lack of resources had impacted programme implementation and requested that this information be shared in order to ensure that adequate support and budget is provided to the MAB Programme, during the forthcoming General Conference.

22. The Secretary welcomed the questions and comments, thanking delegates who supported the creation of a separate Main Line of Action for MAB in UNESCO's 37 C/5 document as well as the implementation of MAB nationally and internationally. He mentioned that he would revert back to the Council later with more detailed budgetary figures while emphasizing that as concerns the future budget that it was the prerogative of the Executive Board and ultimately the UNESCO General Conference to decide on the overall programme and budget.

VI. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States/regional and thematic MAB networks in the context of MAB

A. National reports

23. Prior to the session, the MAB Secretariat had received a good number of national reports that it had posted online on the MABNet. At the session, delegates were also invited to make short statements on their activities. Several delegates therefore reported orally on their various projects and initiatives to implement the MAB Programme and associated challenges, benefits and partnerships.

24. Notably, most delegates referred to their work related to existing biosphere reserves and their management with the objective of promoting sustainable development and welfare and income opportunities among local communities with a focus on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, interdisciplinary research and monitoring, climate change mitigation and adaptation and networking. Several delegates also referred to efforts and processes aiming at developing new biosphere reserve proposals.

25. Actions mentioned included conferences, field projects, publications, institutional, legislative and policy reforms, awards to young researchers, establishment of UNESCO Chairs, academic courses, training initiatives, public awareness campaigns, as well as bilateral, twinning and other networking arrangements.

26. In order to enhance the quality and credibility of its national biosphere reserve network, and ultimately the WNBR, the delegate of the United Kingdom referred to the decision taken by its national authorities to withdraw one of its biosphere reserves from the WNBR, since it did not fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria and given that there is no local interest in taking further action in this regards. The delegate of the United Kingdom invited other delegates to consider, as appropriate, this option as well in their future deliberations.

27. Several delegates noted with appreciation the support they had received from other Member States, as well as from the MAB Secretariat.

B. Networks

28. Succinct reports were provided on the activities of IberoMAB, EABRN, EuroMAB, AfriMAB, ArabMAB, SeaBRNet and the World Network of Island and Coastal Areas. The information provided highlighted the rich contributions of the regional and thematic networks for the implementation of the MAB Programme and the Madrid Action Plan, including exchange of good biosphere reserve management practices and case studies, joint projects, fundraising, and collaborative research on a wide range of critical sustainability issues, such as green economies, ecosystem services, climate change mitigation and adaption, and interdisciplinary biodiversity research.

VII. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP)

29. The MAB Secretary introduced document SC-13/CONF.225/5 that recalls that at its twenty-fourth session, the ICC underlined that the evaluation of the MAP should be a process to take stock of MAP implementation as well as to help shape a future strategy for the future of the MAB Programme and the WNBR for 2014-2021, follow up to Rio+20 Conference, green economy,

biodiversity conservation, combating desertification and the challenges imposed by climate change. In particular, the document provides primarily information on actions taken with regard to technically handling the evaluation of the MAP by the MAB Secretariat in close cooperation with UNESCO's Internal Oversight Office (IOS) and the small electronic working group established for this purpose consisting of the MAB Bureau and four biosphere reserve focal points/managers. The electronic working group had undertaken a ranking of the different MAP actions.

30. Two representatives of IOS then outlined the underlying approach and methodology proposed for the evaluation process that, as recommended by the twenty-fourth MAB-ICC, would mainly be based on "internal" elements, rather than be a fully-fledged "external evaluation" in order to keep costs to a minimum. In short, the evaluation was proposed to be a hybrid model, based on desk study and document review, an internally developed online questionnaire for different stakeholder groups, self-assessment, semi-structured interviews and, if possible, a limited number of site visits. The process will benefit from the advice of a newly established "reference group" consisting of representatives of the MAB secretariat, IOS, and upon approval of the ICC, the recently established electronic working group. This approach will ensure a participatory process and provide adequate quality assurance. Furthermore an external team of consultants is proposed to be involved for data analysis and validation of results.

31. In the discussion that followed, delegates referred to the importance of involving local authorities in the evaluation as key stakeholders. The Council also emphasized the benefits of presenting the questionnaires into as many languages as feasible and some delegates recalled that some stakeholders might have difficulties to access online questionnaires. Some delegates stressed that it would be important to distinguish responses to the questionnaires from those respondents that had a long MAB experience from those who were provided by respondents who were new to the programme. Some delegates were not in favour of site visits as they would not necessarily be representative and a larger number of visits would be too costly. Several delegates also inquired about the exact role of the external team of consultants, the coverage of trans-boundary BRs and the relationship and coordinated timing between the MAP evaluation and the process to develop a new Strategy for MAB and the WNBR for 2014-2021 recommending that they should be undertaken in parallel.

32. The MAB Secretary agreed to the importance of using the different working languages and invited delegates to consider providing support for translating the questionnaires and the replies into national languages, as appropriate, and to indicate stakeholder groups that might require having access to hard copies of the questionnaires. He also acknowledged that site visits indeed could be costly. He responded that it certainly would be possible to develop the new MAB Strategy simultaneously with the MAP evaluation but that the Secretariat initially had thought it would be beneficial to have the conclusions of the MAP evaluation prior to the development of the Strategy.

33. IOS appreciated this initial feedback that reflected important issues to be considered and assured that the draft questionnaire would be thoroughly tested before it would be put online and that at a minimum, it should be made available in the two working languages of UNESCO, (English and French). The IOS representatives also confirmed that respondents will be invited to indicate their level of experiences with MAB and biosphere reserves when completing the questionnaire, the focus of which will be on the actions ranked as priority by the electronic working group. Furthermore IOS agreed that given the complexity of the MAB network, the high number and diversity of biosphere reserves, and the budgetary restrictions for the evaluation, site visits cannot be representative but could still be considered to a few locations as examples of best practice. In terms of time-line, it was proposed that the questionnaire will be ready by the end of October 2013, followed by a two-month period (November-December 2013) during which interested stakeholders will be invited to complete the questionnaires, the results of which will be assessed in early 2014 and submitted to the MAB Council at its next session (tentatively mid-2014).

34. In conclusion, the Council decided that the MAP evaluation should be undertaken as outlined but that the work on the development of the Strategy should start prior to the finalization of the

evaluation so that a draft Strategy for MAB and WNBR could be presented at the twenty-sixth session of the MAB-ICC. The Council also decided to endorse the rankings made by the electronic working group (with the amendment that action 6.2 is given medium priority) and to extend the mandate and to convert the current electronic working group into a new “MAP evaluation reference group”.

VIII. MAB and World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) – post Rio+ 20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021

35. The MAB Secretary introduced document SC-13/CONF.225/6, which refers to preliminary ideas regarding a future strategy for MAB and WNBR in the context of Rio+20 opportunities and based on the result of the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP). The Secretary felt that biosphere reserves are well positioned to play key roles at the interface of environmental conservation, research on human-environment interactions, sustainable development, cultural identity, and learning for a sustainable future in emerging international forums.

36. Moreover, he mentioned that at the international level, biosphere reserves should be firmly embedded in the science/development arena linking science, society and policy. Specifically he referred to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which was established in April 2012 as an independent intergovernmental body open to all United Nations member countries, and to the Future Earth Initiative which is a new 10-year international research initiative that will develop the knowledge for responding effectively to the risks and opportunities of global environmental change and for supporting transformation towards global sustainability in the coming decades.

37. The Secretary further mentioned that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil, June 2012) agreed to establish an intergovernmental working group to design “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) as successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s). These future goals are meant to shape a Post-2015 Development Agenda including the notion of “green economy” (i.e. how economies can achieve “green growth”) and poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development. MAB and its WNBR should be strategically positioned to assume their roles in the international development arenas such as regarding environmental sustainability and green economy.

38. He also indicated that MAB and its WNBR should continue, as in the past, to be closely involved with the work of the three *Rio Conventions* (Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). He also felt that biosphere reserve could be showcased at the closing conference of the United Nations Decade on Education and Sustainable Development (2005-2014), which will be held in Japan in late 2014.

39. Finally, the Secretary concluded by indicating that many biosphere reserves already respond to the concerns of international agreements on the environment and sustainable development. Moreover, biosphere reserves embody the multifaceted mandate of UNESCO. Examples were given from Ethiopia, Japan, France, Germany, Jordan and Burkina Faso. In this context, the Secretary considered biosphere reserves as “mini UNESCOs” on the ground encapsulating the goals of UNESCO regarding education, the natural and social sciences, as well as culture.

40. Ten delegates and five observer countries and international organizations took the floor after the presentation. Many delegates congratulated the Secretary of the MAB Programme for his excellent presentation, which gave very detailed ideas about the future perspectives of the MAB Programme. One delegate suggested the creation of a working group that should work on several issues related to the targets identified by the Rio+20 Conference, which include topics such as combating poverty, biodiversity conservation, improving public health, urban environment, energy, water availability, and social safety nets. The delegate of Egypt requested an overhaul of the Seville Strategy to take into account the Rio+20 Conference and the forthcoming Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Madrid Action Plan and which must contain a vision, a mission and emphasize training.

41. Many countries welcomed very much the idea of referring to biosphere reserves as “mini UNESCOs” as they include all aspects of UNESCO mandates such as education, natural and social sciences, social inclusion, cultural identity, communication and sustainable development at large.

42. Very strong support was expressed for the work achieved by the MAB Programme in the different networks such as REDBIO, and the use of biosphere reserve within the Associated Schools Project Network (ASpnet).

43. Some delegates were glad to emphasize the recent decision of the Working Group of the Executive Board that gave high priority to the MAB Programme within UNESCO’s programmes. They also welcomed the fact that the MAB Programme has its own Main Line of Action in UNESCO’s 37 C/5 document.

44. Delegates recommended that MAB and WNBR should be well linked to all intergovernmental and international endeavours, such as IPBES and the Future Earth Initiative. Moreover, it was noted that biosphere reserves should play an active role in the upcoming World Parks Congress to be held in Sydney (Australia) in late 2014 as well as in the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 2014 to be held in Japan. A member of the United Kingdom delegation presented an initiative called “Assist Social Capital”, which aims to make biosphere reserves work on the ground by combining good business practices with community benefits.

45. Some delegates expressed their gratitude for the support provided by some Member States to the MAB Programme through extrabudgetary funding. This support has helped to improve the functioning of existing biosphere reserves in developing countries.

46. One delegate placed strong emphasis on the cultural aspects in biosphere reserves. The observer from IUCN expressed the importance of the interaction of biosphere reserves with sites listed on the World Heritage Convention. In this context, mention was made on promoting public/private partnerships and one observer delegate invited the MAB Programme to engage in topics of sustainable consumption, sustainable lifestyles and education as agreed upon at the Rio+20 conference.

47. In his reply, the Secretary of the MAB Programme thanked all delegates for their views and ideas expressed. He suggested that the MAB Bureau, which is in charge of the evaluation of the MAP through the electronic working group, should also be in charge of preparing a draft future strategy on MAB and its WNBR in collaboration with the MAB Secretariat. One of the first tasks of this group would be to prioritize the ideas received from the MAB Council and to present a draft future strategy for the MAB Programme at the next session of the MAB-ICC in 2014, taking also into consideration the outcome of the evaluation of the MAP. This suggestion was approved by the MAB Council.

IX. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR

48. Taking into account the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (11-13 March 2013) and the Bureau’s further deliberations thereon on 27 to 28 May 2013, the Council took the following decisions concerning approval and deferral of new proposals as well as approval of a selected number of extensions and name changes to biosphere reserves that are already part of the WNBR:

New nominations approved by the Council

Snake Island-Laotie Mountain (China)

The Council welcomed this proposal which is located in the west of the Dalian Lushunkou District. With a total area of 9,808 hectares this site is unique for its high density of single species of *Gloydius shedaoensis*. This species was listed on the China List of Endangered Animals in 2004. There are 307 bird species belonging to 19 orders and 53 families. This is an important area for migrating birds and serves as a migratory route for over 10 million birds.

The Council commended the authorities for the extensive consultative process with respect to nominating this site.

The Council noted with satisfaction that after the Advisory Committee meeting, the Secretariat received a clear zonation delineating transition zones for the Laotiesham Mountain and the Laohuwie Mountain components of the site after approbation by the related villages to be included in the biosphere reserve area. Considering that this updated zonation is totally compliant with the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves, the Council decided this site to be **approved**.

Macizo del Cajas (Ecuador)

The Council welcomed the proposal of Macizo del Cajas located in the Southwest part of Ecuador from the Ecuadorian Authorities. The Council recognized that the proposed biosphere reserve covers a large number of ecosystems ranging from high mountains (4,380 metres in altitude) down to coastal and marine areas along the Pacific and that it features two important biodiversity hotspots. The proposed site includes the Las Cajas National Park, which is recognized as a Ramsar site, and the World Heritage listed City of Cuenca.

The Council also recognized the fact that the proposed biosphere reserve had a very well established zonation system and that the nomination preparation process had involved a large number of governmental institutions and several multi-level stakeholder meetings that favoured an interdisciplinary and participatory approach that would help guarantee that the proposed site would contribute effectively to sustainable development. The Council decided that this site be **approved**.

Marais Audomarois (France)

The Council welcomed the proposal by France. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in northern France and comprises the city of art and history of Saint Omer and its wetland designated as a Ramsar site. The total surface is 22,300 hectares including 23 municipalities in two departments, with 150 permanent residents on the islands. More than 1,700 species of flora, birds and fungi were identified comprising more than 1/3 of the aquatic diversity of France. There are more than 10 local varieties of vegetables, including cauliflower and chicories. The site is one of the two last wetland floating gardens in France, with specific system of wateringues (water management units) and is crucial in the prevention and management of floods. It is also a high valued place for leisure and tourism with a permanent population of 69,000 inhabitants. The core area includes two forest Natura 2000 sites. The Council commended the authorities for the quality information as well as for the participatory process with the local inhabitants.

The Council decided that the site be **approved** and further encouraged the extension of the buffer zones in order to ensure continuity in landscape and zonation as well as continued development of partnership between the stakeholders of the different zones and areas.

Mont-Viso (France)

The Council welcomed this proposal of a future transboundary biosphere reserve by France and Italy which encompasses the French national part named Mont-Viso Biosphere Reserve and Italian national part name Area della Biosfera del Monviso.

The French part of the Mont-Viso Biosphere Reserve is a glacial cirque surrounded by valley floors, with a sunny dry climate. The region therefore has an insular character marked, even today, by the presence of many endemic species. Owing to its high-altitude lakes, remarkable landscapes forged by pastoralism and rich biological and ecological diversity, it is one of the French Alps' jewels of nature. There are a dozen critical habitats in the area, particularly pine and larch forests, open and semi-open environments (such as steppe formations), rock formations and aquatic environments (including marshes, wetlands, torrents and mountain lakes). The Mont-Viso Biosphere Reserve holds rare and distinctive heritage and natural resources that are maintained and preserved by people whose livelihoods have depended on them for thousands of years and who set great store by them. The various forms of human activity, such as agriculture, forestry and handicrafts, have naturally been adapted to the characteristics of the high mountain terrain. There are 25,895 inhabitants distributed among the 21 municipalities in the area, which covers some 133,464 hectares.

The Council strongly welcomed the process which will lead to the creation of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve and commended both countries for the activities and the cooperation already in place. As a first step to the establishment of the transboundary biosphere reserve, the Council recommended the national site to be **approved**.

The Council requested that the signed political agreement between the two countries be finalized and sent to the Secretariat as soon as possible, possibly by the 37th session of UNESCO's General Conference for the designation of the transboundary biosphere reserve between the two countries.

Great Nicobar (India)

The Council welcomed the proposal of Great Nicobar from the Indian authorities. The Committee noted the high level of pristine diversity in this area and the existence of indigenous communities in this area. The area represents the tropical wet evergreen forest type. The fauna consist of 1,800 species. It was also reported in the nomination document that 200 species of meiofauna have been recorded from the coastal habitat. The inhabitants of this proposed area derive a wide variety of biological resources from their environment such as medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products.

The Council recommended that the Indian authorities develop a management plan which ensures active local community participation. They are further encouraged to submit to the MAB Secretariat a flora distribution map.

The Council decided that this site be **approved**.

Area della Biosfera del Monviso (Italy)

The Council welcomed this proposal of a future transboundary biosphere reserve by France and Italy which encompasses the Italian national part named Area della Biosfera del Monviso and the Mont-Viso Biosphere Reserve for the French national part.

The Italian part of Area della Biosfera del Monviso biosphere reserve is located in the Northern Alpine region of Italy, at the border with France. It encompasses a variety of ecosystems along a an altitude gradient (450 – 3,841 metres above sea level) including the important Monviso massive, the Alevè Forest mainly containing *Pinus cembra* and the Po river basin with the spring being located at the Pain del Re (2020 metres), flowing through the entire core area of the biosphere reserve. It comprises a total area of 293,916 hectares and includes areas that are already part of the Nature 2000 network and Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

There are 266,474 permanent residents living in the biosphere reserve with a concentrating around the lower altitudes and a fast decrease of population in the mountain areas. The area already hosts

traditional activities for centuries like agriculture and producing traditional products like wood carvings for games, furniture and harps. Especially human activities like high altitude mowing are seen as an important cultural component that needs protection as it contributing to high plant diversity in Alpine valleys. The site also contains two World Heritage sites.

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Alakol (Kazakhstan)

The Council welcomed the nomination of this site which is located in the Central Asian–Indian bird migration route and is a wetland of world significance and serves as water-birds' habitat and aggregation site. The Council noted that the site is reported as containing 678 species of higher plants from 293 genera, 85 families and includes 6 endemic species and 10 sub-endemic species.

The regional economy is based mainly on agriculture which is composed of plant growing and cattle rearing. The Council commended the authorities for having diverse research and educational programmes ongoing in the site. The Council noted that the site has a management plan which does not cover the transition area. The Kazakhstan authorities are therefore encouraged to develop a management plan which includes the transition area and captures the views and inputs of communities in that area. The Council requested that the authorities provide a zonation map with more detailed legend to confirm whether the blue areas on the original map provided is part of the transition zone.

The Council recommended that this site be **approved**.

Ziarat Juniper Forest (Pakistan)

The Council welcomed this proposal. The Juniper Forest of Ziarat in Balochistan, Pakistan, is one of the largest juniper forests of its kind in the world. The Council noted with great interest the fact that the juniper forest ecosystem exhibits great biodiversity conservation values and that it is of high ecological significance which accrues local, regional and global benefits.

The Council acknowledged that the site, which covers some 110,000 hectares, provides habitat for endangered wildlife species and rich plant diversity, including many plants of high ethno-botanic and medicinal importance that are used by the local communities. Furthermore, the Council noted that the juniper forest ecosystem provides many other valuable ecosystem services by protecting the watersheds in the catchment areas that conserve and sustain provision of water resources for various production functions that support livelihoods of the local communities.

The Council took note with satisfaction that shortly following the meeting of the Advisory Committee, the MAB Secretariat received a comprehensive management plan, including improved maps for the proposed site which were missing at the time of the submission, and pending for approval. The Council considered that the management plan received was taking into account various management challenges and opportunities and that the maps were satisfactory. The Council considered that the site was meeting the Statutory Framework criteria. The Council therefore decided that the site be **approved**.

Gochang (Republic of Korea)

The proposed Gochang biosphere reserve is located in the south-west region of the Republic of Korea . With a total surface area of approximately 671,52 km² this site (which is also a Ramsar designated site) is composed of forest, coastal and freshwater ecosystems. There is great biodiversity in particular as the tidal flats are major stopover sites for migratory birds, especially longbill and plover.

The Council welcomed this proposal and noted with great interest the diverse development/economic activities which are linked to this site. These range from eco-tourism, organic farming, and salt production.

The Council encouraged the authorities to develop a management plan for this site and to send a copy of this plan to the MAB Secretariat as soon as it is completed. In addition information should be provided on why the northern side of the Ramsar site is not included in the zonation.

The Council decided that this nomination be **approved**.

Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo (Spain)

The Council welcomed this submission. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the littoral Cantabric-Atlantic region, covering an area of 116,724.3 hectares (6,508.5 core, 22,118.6 buffer zone, 88,097.2 transition area) and has about 190,000 inhabitants. It encompasses two main river watersheds, Mero and Mandeo, and contains ecosystems from coastal zones to mountain ranges with altitudes of 800m (while most of the area does not exceed 300m), with pristine forests and high biodiversity. The proposal involves 18 municipalities from the Galician region which played a very active role in the proposal process.

The proposal includes a detailed Action Plan based on the Madrid Action Plan, covering the three functions, a structured management committee, and a general budget for the period 2013-2022. Since the proposal fulfills all requirements of a biosphere reserve, the Council decided that this site be **approved**.

Terres de l'Ebre (Spain)

The Council thanked the local authorities for the resubmission of this proposal and noted that limitations identified in the previous proposal had been overcome by redefining the limits of the biosphere reserve leaving outside of the proposed site the nuclear power plants.

This new proposal covers an area of 367,729.6 hectares (71,697.6 core area, 87,637.4 buffer zone, 221,251.1 transition zone), and has a total population of about 190,000 people. The proposed site is located in the Catalunya region and includes the delta and the watershed of the Ebro River, which is the largest river in Spain in terms of volume. It has a large number of different ecosystems ranging from inland to coastal areas. The main part of the land is used for producing cattle. This site also has strong support from the local authorities who have already implemented a pilot waste management system in the area that could also inspire other sites from the WNBR.

The proposal also indicates the use of energy based on alternative sources including hydrological, solar and wind power energy, respecting biological conservation and landscape values. The proposal includes an Action Plan following the MAP, and a preliminary management committee.

Since this proposal overcame the limitations identified by the Committee in the previous meeting, the Council decided that this site be **approved** and encouraged the authorities to pay attention to the conservation function, biodiversity and landscape values in view of renewable energy development.

Real Sitio de San Ildefonso (Spain)

The Council welcomed the resubmission of this proposed biosphere reserve and congratulated the national authorities for increasing by 2.4 times the size of the proposed site since the previous nomination proposal. The area of the proposed site covers 35,414.50 hectares (5,296.75 core area, 13,559.86 buffer zone, 16,557.91 transition zone), and has a population of about 14,000 people. The increase of the area resulted from the addition of the municipality of El Espinar. The biosphere reserve is located in the province of Segovia, 50 km from Madrid and 11 km from the city of Segovia. The zonation system is now in line with the Statutory Framework criteria, taking into account the comments made by the Council in the previous meeting. The mountain of Valsain constitutes an important woodland area in the country, and is of important ecological, economic, aesthetic and social value. Other economic activities developed in the biosphere reserve are glass industry, tourism and some small-scale agriculture. This site has several research centres focusing on forest research and monitoring activities that will be an important value for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The proposal includes a detailed Action Plan according to the Madrid Action Plan and the constitution of a management committee. Considering that this new proposal responds totally to the recommendation of the Council in the previous submission, the Council decided that this site be **approved**.

Nominations recommended for deferral

Sila (Italy)

The Council welcomed this proposal by Italy, situated in the Calabria region. The proposed site covers an area of approximately 77,173.80 hectares which fully falls within Sila National Park. It is located within the only hotspot area of southern Europe with genetic diversity being higher than European average and is also part of the Natura 2000 network. The proposed site is part of the Mediterranean eco-region and spreads along a gradient of altitudes (1200-1700 metres above sea level), which includes five different types of forest ecosystems but also other habitats of interest such as grassy areas, moors and peat beds.

There are around 6,500 residents living within the area of the proposed biosphere reserve spread over several municipalities. The population is characterized by elderly inhabitants. Agriculture is a historical and long-term activity in the region with nature tourism acquiring a growing importance. Tourist facilities also include many environmental education elements. The Council acknowledged the quality of this new proposal and recognized the efforts of the Sila National Park to fulfill the Statutory Framework criteria. However, the Council noted the lack of clarity on the zoning rationale and status. The Council noted the confusion of the status of core areas and buffer zones as regards the inclusion of Natura 2000 sites, and regretted that the transition area was not extended to the Sila area (zone z outside the National Park). It also noted the lack of information on how to ensure the involvement of local communities in the zoning process and in the management of the proposed biosphere reserve. The Council decided that this proposal **be deferred**.

It recommended to the authorities to submit a new nomination that will integrate the following elements:

- Information on the involvement of local people in the zoning process and their participation in the management of the proposed biosphere reserve;
- Maps showing clearly the different zones and limits of the national park and the limits of the biosphere reserve;
- Clearly outlined functions of the biosphere reserve within the multi-annual economic social development plan in progress;

- Clearly outlined life and social sciences functions of the biosphere reserve;
- A clarification on how the development of photovoltaic farms fits with biodiversity conservation within the perimeter of the National Park;
- Clarification on the involvement of local communities of Sila area and how the National Park authority will reflect their involvement in the coordination structure clearly explaining the position of each entity in this coordination structure.

Portland Bight (Jamaica)

The Council warmly welcomed the first biosphere reserve proposal from the authorities of Jamaica as an important step for the protection system of their natural capital. The Portland Bight lies in the centre of Jamaica's south coast, west of the capital, Kingston. It covers different island ecosystems, including three ranges of coastal hills, coastal plains and the coastal shelf extending to the drop-off. The marine area contains mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds and wetland areas. The mangrove systems of West Harbour are particularly well preserved and extensive. There is also a freshwater marsh, one of Jamaica's rarest and most threatened types of ecosystems. This area also includes the Ramsar site of Portland Bight. The site also includes a high fishery production site for local fishermen in an area marked by poverty. However, following the advice of the Advisory Committee, the Council noted that the proposed site has only a marine core area and is not surrounded by a buffer or transition area. The Council encouraged the government to submit a new zonation system, including terrestrial core area(s) which need(s) to be surrounded by buffer and transition areas.

The Council decided that this site be **deferred** and that a new zonation system with the appropriate figures should be submitted. The Council again recommended the national authorities to seek advice from a member of the Advisory Committee.

Bioma Pampa-Quebradas del Norte (Uruguay)

The Council thanked the Uruguayan authorities for this submission. This site is located in the Haedo Range connecting valleys. This area includes the southern part of Mata Atlantica and the Pampa biomes. This mountain area has a high biodiversity and preserves the Guaranee's watershed. It is the habitat of rare amphibious species like the Urugayana frog (*Hyla uruguayana*), toad of Devincenzi (*Melanophryniscus devincenzii*) and rattlesnakes (*Crotalus durissus terrificus*). A small number of inhabitants in the site live in rural communities with close ties to the land. However, the Council noted that the core area is not surrounded by buffer or transition areas as required to protect the core area. The Council requested that the core areas be surrounded by buffer and transition areas and the proposal be resubmitted.

The Council, therefore, decided that this site be **deferred** and be resubmitted with a respective zonation system designed. The authorities are also encouraged to seek advice from a member of the Advisory Committee.

Magaliesberg (South Africa)

The Council welcomed this very well prepared and documented proposal which lies between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg in the east and Rustenburg in the west. It covers an area rich in biodiversity with a wide variety of topography, landscapes and geology. Endemism of plant and animals is high, with a world class for butterflies but also with some ecosystems or species that are either endangered or vulnerable, rendering their conservation a key issue. With its four million years of history, the proposed biosphere reserve includes the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site which is an important cultural heritage not only for South Africa but for humanity.

The proposed site lies adjacent to the major Platinum Highway development corridor linking Pretoria to Lobatse, where primary activities/land uses are agriculture, mining, urban development,

agriculture, and tourism. The Council noted with appreciation that the biosphere management plan will reduce the development and impact of the industrial and agricultural activities of the corridor and that training activities will benefit youth and strengthen cooperation with the private sector.

The Council acknowledged that the current proposal does not reflect the planned biosphere reserve because the negotiation process to delimit the entire biosphere reserve is still ongoing. Therefore, the zonation is not yet complete and a large piece of buffer and transition zones is lacking in south and southeast, especially around the related core area.

The current biosphere reserve proposal includes, in its transition zone, South Africa's main Nuclear Research Centre – Pelindaba, which uses an atomic reactor and a particle accelerator for different purposes in nuclear sciences. The Council noted that after the Advisory Committee meeting, the Member State sent to the MAB Secretariat additional information on Pelidaba confirming its civil research function. However, the Council would like to recall the deliberations of the twenty-fourth session of the MAB-ICC where the nomination of the proposed Terres de l'Ebre (Spain) biosphere reserve was deferred due to a similar case. The Council reconsidered the proposal in light of additional information provided by the authorities about the Nuclear Research Centre and decided to **defer** this proposal. The Council invited the Member State to revise the nomination to present a complete biosphere reserve zonation in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR based on consultation with local communities and to exclude the nuclear reactor from the proposed area.

Extension and/or changes in the zonation of Biosphere Reserves

Ordesa Viñamala (Spain) – extension

The Council congratulated the Spanish authorities for transforming this biosphere reserve nominated in 1977, notable as one of the first Spanish biosphere reserves, considered then just as a protected area. In 2000, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Periodic Review noted that this site did not fulfill the Seville Strategy, and recommended an extension of the area to include the three zones and the local participation in the process of nomination. The present proposal satisfies the requirements of the Seville Strategy and can be considered as a post Seville Biosphere Reserve. This biosphere reserve is located in the central Pyrenees (Aragón, Spain) and contains in the core area the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, the natural monument of Pyrenees glaciers and the World Heritage site of Pirineos-Monte Perdido, Circos y Cañones. The extension also includes the valley and urban areas that surround the core zone protected areas. The biosphere reserve covers a total area of 117,364.03 hectares (16,091.9 core area, 43,759.7 hectares buffer zone, 57,512.5 hectares transition area) and has about 6,000 people. The proposal also includes a detailed Action Plan following the Madrid Action Plan, and a structured Management Committee.

The Council encouraged the implementation of the "Advisory Committee" involving the different actors of the biosphere reserve. Since the proposal fulfills all requirements of a biosphere reserve, the Council decided that the extension be **approved**.

Fitzgerald River (Australia) – extension

The Council acknowledged the proposal for the extension of the Fitzgerald River Biosphere Reserve in Western Australia. This site is a first generation biosphere reserve which was nominated in 1978. The site is characterized by a very diverse ecosystem and supports various species of plant and animal life.

The Council welcomed the development strategy which supports the human development of the local indigenous people. This proposal is a good example of the conversion of a pre-Seville biosphere reserve into a fully functional post-Seville biosphere reserve.

The Council, however, decided that this extension be **deferred** and encouraged the authorities to resubmit the proposed extension next year with the following documents/information:

- Zonation map clearly showing the core, buffer and transition zones;
- Hard copies of the nomination documents with endorsements of the relevant authorities; and
- Information on the number of people living permanently/temporary in the three different zones.

Withdrawal of sites

49. The MAB Secretary informed the MAB-ICC that following two periodic reviews and consultations with stakeholders, the United Kingdom has decided to withdraw Loch Druidibeg (approved in 1976) from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as this site no longer meets the criteria set up by the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

50. As decided by the Council, with the addition of 12 new biosphere reserves and one being withdrawn, the WNBR is now composed of 621 biosphere reserves in 117 countries including 12 transboundary biosphere reserves.

51. Many delegates expressed their satisfaction for the work done with regards to the assessment of the nomination of biosphere reserves to be included in the WNBR so far. One delegate suggested that the MAB Council should develop guidelines with regards to the use of different energy sources and nuclear waste in biosphere reserves. The delegate of Haiti welcomed the new sites and he expressed his hope that Jamaica will also have established one new biosphere reserve next year. He also expressed his support for the creation of a sub-regional biosphere reserves network in the Caribbean with Cuba, Dominican Republic, St Kitts & Nevis and other countries. He also informed the Council that in the next months, Haiti will launch a joint project with the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve in the Dominican Republic to establish a transboundary site. He especially thanked Spain for the support to projects for the creation of the La Selle Biosphere Reserve and to a possible future transboundary biosphere reserve with the Dominican Republic.

X. Periodic review of biosphere reserves and follow-up of recommendations

A. Periodic review reports received since the 24th session of International Coordination Council

52. The representative of the Secretariat introduced document SC-13/CONF.225/8 Rev and first gave some indications on the 55 periodic review reports received and examined by the Advisory Committee. She indicated that 15 periodic review reports were done for the second time and one was done for the third time. She also mentioned that the recommendations concerned national parts of three transboundary biosphere reserves and that out of the 55 recommendations, 17 concluded that the specific site was fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria, 34 were fulfilling only partly and four were not fulfilling the criteria and three sites were recommended for withdrawal.

53. Several delegates took the floor after the introduction. Some delegates highlighted the importance of the periodic review process for assessing how biosphere reserves are effectively functioning and how they meet the criteria. One delegate highlighted the increased consistency as regards the recommendations while noting that more than 30 sites were not fully meeting the criteria. Some delegates mentioned the need for increased transparency of the periodic review

reports, including clear categories for the recommendations, using “traffic light” system, with red light for sites that are not meeting the criteria, green light for sites fully meeting the criteria and orange light for sites partially meeting the criteria. It was suggested that such a list should be made available on internet. One delegate raised concerns about the possibility that some sites are not taking the periodic review process seriously and therefore suggested that the ADG/SC sends the letter to request the periodic review report to the concerned Ministry, so it will instruct directly the sites in its country.

54. Another delegate mentioned the importance of the periodic review process as well as to maintain a flexible approach in the requests to be made by the Secretariat. One delegate raised concern about a recommendation for one of the site to be withdrawn and indicated that additional information had been provided to the Secretariat and therefore requested that more time would be given for the site to send a report by the end of the year. Another delegate raised the issue of receiving guidelines from the MAB-ICC as regards changes occurring in a biosphere reserve between periodic reviews and new developments such as the creation of hydropower stations. The IUCN observer mentioned the willingness to cooperate in this process for exchange of data, information checking and communication, using online data and information such as the state of conservation at the World Heritage Centre. During the adoption of the recommendations, several delegates made comments and provided additional background information and informed that actions were being taken to address the recommendations. One delegate enquired about the extension process. The Secretariat replied that if extensions changes were important, the nomination form was usually used. She indicated that the periodic review process could also lead to significant changes since it was a time for reconsidering the objectives of the site and that boundaries could be expanded with the adhesion of new municipalities and for taking into account the need to ensure the dynamic interaction between the three functions.

55. The Council then endorsed the periodic review recommendations formulated by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as stated below with a slight change for the recommendation of Slovensky Kras Biosphere Reserve.

Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review of the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, established in 1986. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the review process was undertaken by reviewers selected by the Canadian MAB National Committee and local biosphere reserve practitioners. It noted with satisfaction the cooperation with local communities, and that this site started as a community project. It also noted with satisfaction the quality of the numerous follow-up activities including in the areas of education and communication. However, the Advisory Committee noted that the site is still not meeting the zonation requirement as there are only two zones with the core area being the national park and noted that there are issues as regards the creation of a buffer zone as it seems to be perceived as an extension of the park by some stakeholders. The Advisory Committee noted the efforts made to address the recommendation made by the MAB-ICC in 2001, but considered that the report is not addressing satisfactorily the recommendations. The Advisory Committee therefore considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria and thus recommended that the 2001 recommendations be fully implemented:

- reinforce the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve Management Committee by extending its membership to include in particular provincial government agencies and First Nations;
- elaborate guidelines to help this management committee to progress towards making a coordination plan for the biosphere reserve;
- provide a clear zonation map.

The Advisory Committee further requested that the authorities design a comprehensive management/work plan for the Executive Director as well as for the management board and to submit these at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. It further strongly encouraged the biosphere reserve authority to invite and exchange experience and practices with other functional biosphere reserves in Canada to work on completing the zonation and to improve communication of scientific research to local people and involve them in the research activities. It finally recommended that the management authorities address these issues by using the new periodic review form.

Berchtesgadener Land Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report from this site established in 1990. It noted the considerable progress made in the functioning of the biosphere reserve with the extension of the site to cover the entire district of Berchtesgadener Land in 2010, a move initiated by the municipalities, and welcomed the involvement of new municipalities. It noted that the site had been extended from 46,744 hectares to 83,894 hectares. While considering that the site fully meets the Statutory Framework criteria, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to consider enhancing cooperation with adjacent areas in Austria in view of the possible establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve. It requested the authorities to provide detailed information on the sustainable development of maize plantations for biofuel and combined heat and power plant establishment. It finally recommended that the biosphere reserve share its work in the field of biodiversity conservation, organic farming labeling and education and climate change studies with the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, including during the regional meetings such as EuroMAB.

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second report from the biosphere reserve, established in 1990. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the promotion of sustainable and organic farming, the establishment of a register of renaturalization sites and projects that promote sustainable development, labeling and scientific research studies. It noted that the primeval beech forest of the Carpathians and the ancient beech forest of Germany were established as a World Heritage Site in 2011. The Advisory Committee considered that the site satisfactorily fulfills the criteria of the Statutory Framework. With regard to the lack of funding, the Committee recommended that the authorities may consider participatory monitoring. It encouraged the authorities to continue the cooperation with the World Heritage Site and that the biosphere reserve be used as an example of management of joint designation and invited them to share their practice within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Spreewald Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve designated in 1991. It noted with high satisfaction the implementation of the recommendations issued in 2003, including the establishment of a joint management strategy for the authorities and companies as regards water management in areas where lignite mining and mining rehabilitation activities are taking place. The Advisory Committee commended the German authorities for the high quality of the periodic review report and considered that the biosphere reserve is fully fulfilling the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It finally recommended using the Spreewald Biosphere Reserve as a model for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala)

The Advisory Committee noted the high quality of the first periodic review report of the site and welcomed the Guatemalan authorities' effort for this work. The Advisory Committee noted the important activities on conservation and research. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria. The Committee recommended

that the sustainable development function be further strengthened and invited the authorities to submit to the MAB Secretariat information thereon by the end of December 2013 together with more information about the “recovered zone” and its location within the overall zonation scheme of the biosphere reserve.

Sunderban Biosphere Reserve (India)

Nominated in 2001, this site of almost 4,262 square kilometers is the largest mangrove forest in India and it forms a major portion of the world's largest delta boasting a rich fauna and flora. Notably, the site is the home for the royal Bengal Tiger. The Government is undertaking a tiger preservation project as there are concerns about the rapid decrease in tiger count due to poaching and other reasons. The Committee noted the administrative and management structure which has been outlined in consultation with the local communities. The Advisory Committee welcomed and accepted the report and concluded that the site satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria.

Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (India)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report of site, designated in 2001 and located in the southeastern part of India close to Sri Lanka. The core area and buffer zone are also a marine national park; 21 Islands within the national park constitute the core area and the surrounding marine areas are buffer zones. These Islands are inhabited and strictly protected. About 200,000 people live in and around the biosphere reserve permanently. Almost 1.4 million people visit the biosphere reserve each year for tourism purposes. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves and recommended that the Indian authorities seek to improve upon the zonation by increasing the sizes of the core area and the buffer zone and that they inform the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 thereon.

Komodo Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site established in 1977. The Komodo Biosphere Reserve is found between Flores and Sumbawa and is famous for its population of about 5,000 giant lizards, also called “Komodo dragons” (and the reason why the site is also designated as a World Heritage site). The vegetation type is open grass-woodland savannah, mainly of anthropogenic origin, with patches of tropical rain forests, monsoon forests and mangroves. Apart from Komodo Island, the biosphere reserve also covers Rinca and Padar Island as well as numerous islets. It includes one of the world's richest marine environments with coral reefs. The population living in the area has increased rapidly due to migration and illegal logging, poaching and unsustainable fishing practices are threats to the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted that there is a management plan in place for the core area (a national park) but not for the entire biosphere reserve and that different institutions are responsible for different zones of the biosphere reserve with no apparent strong coordination mechanism among them. While the Committee commended Indonesia for the report and the conservation work in the biosphere reserve, it concluded that the biosphere reserve is only partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and to provide information thereon to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 together with a clarification of the rationale for the rectangular zonation patterns of the buffer and transition zones of the biosphere reserve.

Tanjung Puting Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site established in 1977. The Tanjung Puting Biosphere Reserve and national park is situated on the Tanjung Peninsula in the south of Borneo and covers swampy areas between Kumai Bay and Seruyan River and large diversity of forest

ecosystems, including lowland forest, freshwater swamp forest, tropical heath forest, peat swamp forest, mangrove forest, and coastal forest. The core area is constituted of the national park. It is also host to very rich species biodiversity including primates, dugongs and dolphins. Illegal logging, encroachment and forest fires are some conservation threats. The Advisory Committee noted that there is a management plan in place for the core area (the national park) but not for the entire biosphere reserve and that different institutions are responsible for the different zones of the biosphere reserve with no apparent or strong coordination mechanism among them. While the Committee commended Indonesia for the conservation work in the biosphere reserve, it concluded that the site only partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

Lore Lindu Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site designated in 1977. The Lore Lindu Biosphere Reserve and National Park comprises one of the largest remaining mountainous rain forests of Sulawesi. It is of high importance from a biodiversity, cultural as well as an archaeological point of view. Approximately 90% of the area is mountain forest above 1,000 metres altitude, representing most of Sulawesi's unique mountain flora and fauna. Management challenges include migration to the area and increased conversion of forest to rice fields. The core area is managed as a national park under the park authority and the buffer and transition zones by a multitude of public and private bodies. Challenges facing this biosphere reserve include logging and poaching. While the Committee commended Indonesia for the conservation work, it concluded that the biosphere reserve is only partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and the development of an integrated management plan in order to seek to reduce illegal logging and poaching in the reserve, such as through public awareness, education and the generation of alternative income and job opportunities, which would seem particularly important in view of the strong migration into the area, and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

Siberut Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site designated in 1981. Siberut is the largest in the chain of four Mentawai Islands situated off the west coast of Sumatra and host to an exceptionally high degree of endemism. 65 per cent of the animals are thought to be endemic. Lowland dipterocarp rain forest is the principal ecosystem. The area is subject to serious human impacts. Actually, the island was once logged-over. The core area is made up of a national park and the biosphere reserve in its entirety has a somewhat simple zonation system. While the Advisory Committee commended Indonesia for the report and the conservation work in the biosphere reserve, it concluded that this site only partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and the development of an integrated management plan in order to seek to reduce human pressures and to promote additional sustainable development initiatives in the reserve and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site designated in 1981. The Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve and national park covers a vast area of tropical rain forest in northern Sumatra with a range of ecosystems: lowland evergreen dipterocarp forest, lower and upper montane rain forest, peat swamp forest, forest over limestone, sub-alpine meadows and heathlands, freshwater lakes and rivers, and sulphur mineral pools with very high conservation values. The Aceh region has been impacted by civil conflicts and the 2004 tsunami. When the area was declared a World

Heritage Site, it was immediately put on the list of World Heritage Sites in danger. The biosphere reserve faces many problems, such as ecosystem fragmentation and conversion of natural areas, and illegal poaching is common and presents many complex management challenges. While the Advisory Committee commended Indonesia for the report that transparently covers several critical issues and the conservation work in the biosphere reserve, it concluded that the biosphere reserve is only partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee invited the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of establishing an overarching biosphere reserve coordination mechanism and the development of an integrated management plan in order to seek to reduce human pressures and to promote additional sustainable development initiatives in the reserve and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Designated in 1976, the Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve is situated in the north of Iran at the border to Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus Iranian Highlands. The biosphere reserve includes mountains high alpine meadows, semi-arid steppes, rangelands and forests, rivers and springs. Economic activities in the biosphere reserve are mainly agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, apiculture, handicrafts and tourism. While welcoming the report, the Advisory Committee regretted the poor quality of the maps, including the fact that core and transition areas were not clearly delineated on them. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve is partially meeting the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and consultations with local people. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Arjan Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Designated in 1976, the Arjan Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Zagros Mountains in the Caucasus-Iranian Highlands and includes terrestrial as well as water habitats. Due to important elevation differences, the biosphere reserve hosts rich plant diversity. People living in the area derive their livelihood from agriculture, animal husbandry, carpet sewing and in the transition area also in industry. Management challenges include land use changes for agricultural use, groundwater depletion, overgrazing and illegal hunting and fishing. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be a lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve is partially meeting the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seeks to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee noted that this biosphere reserve is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Geno Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Dating back to 1976, the Geno Biosphere Reserve is situated in the south of the Zagros Mountains. It covers warm and humid region along the coast and arid deserts of central Iran. Local communities in the biosphere reserve are mainly engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and small industries and tourism. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Golestan Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Designated in 1976, Golestan Biosphere Reserve is located in the northern part of Iran as part of the Caucaso-Iranian highlands situated in between the sub-humid and semi-arid Caspian regions including temperate rain forest, cold winter and semi-deserts and mixed mountain and highland systems. A vast variety of habitats and rich biodiversity can be found in the biosphere reserve. Golestan offers a great ethnic diversity that gain a living from agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, industry, silk production and tourism. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Hara Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Established in 1976, the Hara Biosphere Reserve is located in the Mehran River delta, it hosts important mangrove ecosystems and provides habitat to two globally threatened species: a wintering habitat for the pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, and a regular feeding place for the green turtle *Chelonia mydas*. People in the area are mainly engaged in trading. Additionally, there are some palm plantations, animal husbandry, fishing activities and ship construction industries. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are done on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve

and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Kavir Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Designated in 1976, the Kavir Biosphere Reserve is located in the Anatolian Iranian Desert. People in the area earn a living from livestock rearing, agriculture, horticulture and sales of handicrafts. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee noted that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Established in 1976, the Miankaleh Biosphere Reserve is located at the southeastern part of the Caspian Sea. Major habitats include wetlands, inter-tidal mud with sandy shore, shallow marine waters, forests, peat lands and agricultural areas. Miankaleh was designated a Ramsar site in 1975. Local people earn their income from agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, carpet weaving, traditional poultry farming and tourism. Management challenges include overgrazing, illegal hunting, fishing, deforestation, and the spread of villages without management plans. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran seek to establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Touran Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Established in 1976, the Touran Biosphere Reserve is located in the Anatolian Iran deserts comprising salt, gypsum, stone and sandy habitats and covers both clay lowlands and mountains. Communities in the area depend mostly on agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and carpet sewing. Major human impacts on the ecosystem arise from overgrazing especially by camels, illegal hunting and fuel wood harvesting. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations

with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Lake Oromeeh Biosphere Reserve (Iran)

Established in 1976, the Lake Oromeeh Biosphere Reserve is situated in the north of Iran and belongs to the Caucasus-Iranian Highlands and contains salt flats around the lakeshore, Pistachio forests and Artemisia steppe communities on its islands. Other habitats are wetlands, river estuaries and sandy soils and coasts. The lake has been designated as a National Park and as a Ramsar Site. People in the area engage in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, apiculture, mining, business and industry, tourism, Artemisia harvesting, salt extraction and hunting. While contributing positively to the conservation objectives of the area, the Committee noted that there seemed to be lack of efforts related to the education, research and public awareness activities linked to the biosphere reserve. In addition, the Committee also regretted that there was no management plan established for the reserve and no designated biosphere reserve management authority for the biosphere reserve in its entirety. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the relevant authorities in Iran establish a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve and that more efforts are made on research, education, public awareness and that consultations with local people are enhanced. The Committee also asked for better and more detailed maps of the biosphere reserve and its zones. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

General recommendation for Italy

The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review reports from Italy and encouraged the Italian authorities to pursue the upgrading of the existing biosphere reserves to meet the Statutory Framework criteria, notably by clearly distinguishing between national park and biosphere reserves and engaging local communities and stakeholders in a shared vision for sustainable development by using biosphere reserve as platform for dialogue and engagement.

Cilento and Vallo di Diano Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The Advisory committee welcomed this first periodic review report of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1997. It considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. It noted the extension of the transition area and the change in zonation while further encouraging the Italian authorities to better define the three zones of the biosphere reserve, especially as regards the proposed expansion of the reserve referred as AMP and the contiguous areas of the National Park of Cilento.

The Advisory Committee requested the Italian authorities to implement the following recommendations to:

- clearly emphasize the education and sustainable development functions of the biosphere reserve;
- develop the management plan for the biosphere reserve with integration of tourism;
- clarify the coordination between the National Park and the transition area regarding implementation of activities and involvement of stakeholders;
- reinforce the participation of local communities in the management and governance of the biosphere reserve;
- improve the monitoring of the impacts of economic activities on the biosphere reserve;

- clarify how the various projects and research activities contribute to the functioning of the biosphere reserve;
- share experiences and practices among the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, for example during regional meetings such as EuroMAB.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Circeo Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report of Circeo Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. It acknowledged with satisfaction the efforts made since the last periodic review report in 2012, in particular the change of the zonation and the increase of the area of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria by including the three zones in the biosphere reserve that were not included during the nomination. The Advisory Committee requested the Italian authorities to:

- enlarge the buffer zone to farmlands;
- enlarge transition areas to the rest of the plain where the National Park authorities have developed monitoring with others organizations;
- secure the participation of local stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve and in the decision-making process of the governance structure;
- develop a co-management and socio-economic action plans for the biosphere reserve and integrate them into the regional master plans;
- provide explicit and detailed information on how they address the issues of tourism and farming;
- improve the monitoring of the impacts of economic activities and awareness-raising of inhabitants including the different social and ethnic groups.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Miramare Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this third periodic review report of Miramare Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1979. It acknowledged with satisfaction the efforts made since the last periodic review in 2011, in particular by the change of the zonation of the biosphere reserve and the implementation of sustainable development practices. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee requested the Italian authorities to:

- develop a co-management plan for the biosphere reserve and support its integration into the regional master plans;
- clarify and reinforce the participation of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve and its governance bodies;
- clarify how the various scientific research outcomes are contributing to the functioning of the biosphere reserve;

- improve the social science-based studies integration within the research-monitoring functions of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Somma-Vesuvio and Miglio D'Oro Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report of the Somma-Vesuvio and Miglio D'Oro Biosphere Reserve, established in 1997. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the important effort to integrate tourism. The Advisory Committee considered that the site was partially meeting the criteria of the Statutory Framework and that in order to better fulfill the criteria, it requested the authorities to:

- clarify the action plan to resolve the problem of the unauthorized dumping of waste and illegal construction;
- clarify coordination between the authorities in charge of the different zones;
- educate and build the capacity of local community to better manage the resources of the buffer zone and transition area of the biosphere reserve;
- reinforce the integration of biodiversity conservation within the economic activities and practices of the buffer zone and transition areas;
- reinforce the communication concerning the biosphere reserve and its functions;
- support the integration of the management plan of the biosphere reserve into the regional master plan and parks master plan;
- clarify and reinforce the participation of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve;
- improve the monitoring of the both ecological and social impacts of economic activities especially tourism and urbanization;
- improve the monitoring of the implementation of the various memorandums of understanding;
- clarify how the various projects and research outcomes are integrated within the functioning of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Ticino Valley Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report of the Ticino Valley Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002. The Advisory committee acknowledged with satisfaction the efforts made with regard to the zonation, which protect the core area and the use of the buffer and transition areas to promote sustainable development activities. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to:

- better explain the choice to delineate and extend the biosphere reserve with a satellite of the transition area in the north-west part of lake major;
- clarify the coordination between the authorities in charge of the different areas especially between Lombardy and Piedmont regions;
- clarify how the different master plans are implemented and are integrating in the biosphere reserve, especially as regards to the diversity of Regional Territorial Plans, Provincial Territorial Plans, Regional Landscape Plans and Parks' Territorial Management Plans;
- clarify and reinforce the participation of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve;
- improve the monitoring of the impacts of economic activities such as farming;
- share experiences and practices among the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, especially with regard to transboundary biosphere reserves.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the requested information to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve (Kyrgyzstan)

The Committee welcomed the periodic review report for the sites which is located in north-east Kyrgyzstan and designated in 2001. The total surface area of the site is 4,311,588 hectares. The core area remains strictly protected and is devoid of any activities except for scientific research. The local communities derive their livelihood from selling items to tourists, notably handicrafts. Tourism has been described as an important source of income for the local people. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Committee recommended to the authorities to develop and submit to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, a management structure and plan which includes local communities in decision making and resource management as part and parcel of the management system of the biosphere reserve.

Sary-Chelek Biosphere Reserve (Kyrgyzstan)

The Advisory welcomed this report which is the first periodic review submitted for this site since its designation in 1978. Located in north-western Kyrgyzstan, the habitat in this site is characterized by juniper stands and dark coniferous forest. Local people derive their income from tourism and visitor services, such as horse renting, selling honey and dairy products. While the Committee commends the authorities for having delineated a buffer zone for this biosphere reserve, it concluded that this site only partially fulfils the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 with a map clearly showing the three zones (core area, buffer zone and transition zone) of the biosphere reserve in line with the Statutory Framework.

North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve (Latvia)

The Advisory committee welcomed this first periodic review report of North Vidzeme designated in 1997. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the cooperative consultative process for conducting the periodic review, with the involvement of the consultative Board of the biosphere reserve, and the engagement of experts as well as the organization of a workshop for the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the biosphere reserve with the periodic review process being one key item of the agenda of the workshop. It congratulated the authorities for the dynamism of the site, including the mobilization of foreign investment for several large international cooperation projects, and for the mobilization of NGO's and stakeholders in the projects and

activities of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee considered that the site was fully fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria until 2009, when a change in the governance structure drastically reduced the staff and thus compromised the activities and positive dynamics of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee expressed its concern about this reduction of staff and requested information about the present governance of the biosphere reserve including staffing and budget resources. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide sufficient staff to implement the biosphere reserve functions and to ensure appropriate management and that the requested information be sent to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013.

Boucle du Baoulé Biosphere Reserve (Mali)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report and noted the improvement in communication resources, research, training and educational activities. However, it noted that the link between conservation and development is not well demonstrated. It also noted that the site does not fulfill the development function. It recommended that the management of the biosphere reserve should involve other stakeholders and especially local communities for whom specific programmes should be designed in order to foster sustainable development and to contribute to poverty alleviation.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site was partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to:

- provide information about the status of the declassified and multiple usage zones;
- comply with the terminology used for biosphere reserves in naming their zones;
- include local communities in governance structures of the biosphere reserve;
- develop a new management plan and to send a copy to the MAB Secretariat upon completion.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this report for this site which was created in 2001 covering an area of 383,567 hectares in the State of Queretaro (24,803 hectares in 11 core areas, and 358,764 in the buffer zone). There is no estimation or delimitation of the transition zone. Main economic activities in the site are tourism, subsistence farming, mining and oil extraction. There are no residents in the core areas and about 86,300 inhabitants in the buffer zone (there is no estimation of population living in the area of transition zone). Some 15,000 people visit the biosphere reserve every year. An Action Plan for the biosphere reserve was approved in 2000 and a new plan was elaborated in 2012 and is presently being revised. The biosphere reserve has an advisory committee constituted made up of representatives of the government, environmental institutions, NGOs, the academic sector, and local organizations. The Advisory Committee observed that this site satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. However, as the transition zone is not delineated, the Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities indicate and clearly map the delineation of the area of the transition zone and implement sustainable development projects in this area.

Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report for this site, the second periodic review following its designation in 1979. The biosphere reserve covers an area of 331,200 hectares in the Lacandona

forest, State of Chiapas. The transition zone is estimated at 113,719 hectares. The buffer zone has a population of 29,700 people and the transition 35,000. The biosphere reserve has an Action Plan approved in 2000, which is currently under revision. The biosphere reserve has an advisory committee composed of representatives of academia, NGOs, the government and local communities. Main economic activities are tourism, subsistence farming and fishing. While the Advisory Committee concluded that the site satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves, it noted that the recommendations following the first periodic review report to define more clearly the zonation of the reserve and to explore the possibility of an extension of the reserve by including the Lakanatua and Cojuluta protected areas, have not been pursued as no submission for an extension had been made. The Advisory Committee therefore, recommends that the authorities submit to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, an updated map of the biosphere reserve that clearly indicates the zonation of the transition area, and that sustainable development projects be implemented in this area.

Mapimí Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report on the Mapimi Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977 and extended in 2000 from initially comprising only a protected area of 20,000 hectares to a much larger area of 342,387 hectares through the inclusion of municipalities of the states of Durango, Coahuila, and Chihuahua. The biosphere reserve is situated in a dry area in north-eastern Mexico with an estimated population of 407 people living in the buffer zone and 45,000 people in the transition zone. Main economic activities include cattle rearing, subsistence farming, tourism, and salt exploitation. The biosphere reserve had an Action Plan approved in 2006, for the period 2007-2011 including programs for biodiversity conservation, management, restoration, knowledge, and culture. The biosphere reserve has an advisory committee consisting of 27 members from local communities, the government, civil society, the private sector and academia. While the Advisory Committee concluded that this site satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves, it noted that the recommendations following the first periodic review to clarify the zonation and the status of an agreement with the private sector had not been fully pursued. In this report it is clarified that the biosphere reserve follows the legislation established in Mexico for biosphere reserves but it lacks details about the delineation of the transition area. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended to the authorities to submit to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, an updated map of the biosphere reserve that clearly indicates the delimitation of the transition area, and that sustainable development projects be implemented in this area.

El Cielo Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review for this biosphere reserve established in 1986 in the State of Tamaulipas, north-east Mexico, with a total area of 232,715 hectares. Principal economic activities in the site are tourism and subsistence agriculture. This biosphere reserve has an Action Plan that currently is being revised for approval in 2013, which includes programmes on biodiversity protection, management, restoration, knowledge, and culture. The biosphere reserve has an administrative council composed by government officials and representatives of local communities. During the review of the first report, the Advisory Committee recommended to the authorities to clearly identify the three zones of the reserve, including the transition zone, and to ensure legal protection of the core zones, as well as to improve the participation of local communities in the activities carried out in the biosphere reserve. The second report clearly mentions a management committee, with representation of government, NGOs, academia and community representatives. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves and its Action Plan responds to the three functions of biosphere reserves.

Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report which it viewed as being of high quality notably in terms of follow-up actions taken on the recommendations made following the examination of the first periodic review report from this site which was designated in 1988, in particular the improved mapping of the transition zone. Located in the states of Jalisco and Colima, with a core and buffer zone of 139,570 hectares and a transition area of 557,143 hectares. In 1999, the buffer zone had 30,700 people which was reduced to only 8,860 in 2010. The transition area had 353,413 people in 1999 and 691,901 in 2010. The most important economic activities are subsistence agriculture and tourism. The biosphere reserve had a five-year Action Plan approved in 2000 and a new plan is currently under review. Like other biosphere reserve in Mexico, Sierra de Manantlán is receiving support from the government and other sources. The biosphere reserve has an advisory committee made up of representatives of two universities, NGOs, government officials, and of 32 communities. While concluding that the biosphere reserve satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves, the Advisory Committee recommended to the authorities to seek to encourage the implementation of sustainable development projects in the transition area of the site and to inform the MAB Secretariat thereon by the end of December 2013.

“W” Region Biosphere Reserve (Benin/Burkina Faso/Niger)

The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the periodic review of the Niger part of the W transboundary Biosphere Reserve. This is the first periodic review since “W” was designated in 1996, before being extended to a transboundary biosphere reserve with Benin and Burkina Faso in 2002. Due to the lack of information and documentation, the Advisory Committee was not able to assess if the Niger part of the “W” Region Biosphere Reserve fulfilled the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee particularly noted the lack of relevant information in the maps provided which do not give a proper biosphere reserve zonation. The Committee recommended that the authorities undertake the periodic review of the transboundary biosphere reserve which was due in 2012 in close collaboration with the authorities in Benin and Burkina Faso. This periodic review should use the periodic review form for transboundary biosphere reserves and be very well documented in order to allow the Advisory Committee to evaluate the fulfillment of the Statutory Framework. It recommended that the periodic review should address transboundary issues and especially the coordination mechanisms between national and transboundary levels. The Advisory Committee recommended that the joint periodic review for the transboundary biosphere reserve be sent to the MAB Secretariat by end of December 2013 to be examined at its next meeting

Bosque Mbaracayú Biosphere Reserve (Paraguay)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report from the Paraguayan authorities. The Advisory Committee appreciated the quality of the report on the activities implemented since the nomination of the site in year 2000. The Committee noted the new areas of the buffer and transition zones and the establishment of the Management Committee of the biosphere reserve in 2006 and the conservation function of the site. While concluding that the biosphere reserve satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserve, the Committee recommended that the sustainable development function be further strengthened.

Poland: General recommendation

The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review reports from Poland and encouraged the Polish authorities to pursue the upgrading of the existing biosphere reserves to meet the Statutory Framework criteria, notably by clearly distinguishing between national parks and biosphere reserves, and by increasing the involvement and engagement of local communities and stakeholders in a shared vision for sustainable development by using biosphere reserves as platforms for dialogue and concertation and by reinforcing cooperation, joint work and planning with the neighboring countries within its numerous transboundary biosphere reserves.

Babia Gora Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report of the site, designated in 1976 and extended in 1997 and 2001. The first periodic review took place in 2000. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for the implementation of the recommendation on the extension of the biosphere reserve and the inclusion of a transition zone to improve the development function. The Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. It requested clarification on the zonation regarding the satellite core areas and how these areas can be connected to the rest of the biosphere reserve. It requested the authorities to clarify the forestry activities in the buffer and transition areas and to define sustainable forestry. It also requested to receive further explanation on how private landowners are participating in the management of the biosphere reserve. It requested the Polish authorities to:

- prepare and implement a management plan for the whole area, involving local stakeholders;
- encourage the Polish authorities to pursue their efforts towards an agreement with the Slovak authorities in view of the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve;
- increase interaction and exchanges with the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the above mentioned information to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory committee at its next meeting.

Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review of Bialowiesza Biosphere Reserve, established in 1976 and extended in 2005. The first periodic review was done in 1998. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria, through a strong conservation function but considerable weak logistics and development functions and that the biosphere reserve is therefore not yet fully operational. The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to:

- establish an institution with a coordinating function for the entire biosphere reserve that will involve participation of stakeholders and inhabitants;
- provide a copy of the biosphere reserve management plan or a detailed outline thereof;
- describe activities related to the biosphere reserve and how the recommendation on the management plan of the previous periodic review have been taken into account;
- clarify how they try to cooperate with the Belovezhskaya Pushcha Biosphere Reserve in Belarus;
- clarify how the development and logistic functions of the biosphere reserve will be strengthened.

The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the biosphere reserve to use the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for sharing experience and practices and requested to receive all information related to the above mentioned clarifications by the end of December 2013.

East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Poland/Slovakia/Ukraine)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review report from the Polish part of the transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) with Slovakia and Ukraine, established in 1998. The Advisory Committee considered that the national site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework

criteria. It noted the lack of a management plan as well as a coordinator for the site, both at national level and for the TBR parts, and that there is no office or coordination in place for the biosphere reserve. The Committee also noted that there is no indication on a plan to address these issues. It considered that the logistics and development functions are weak but with a good potential for their improvement in the short term. It further noted that the scientific research activities are very weak and that they need considerable improvement including information dissemination and sharing internationally. The Advisory Committee recommended that the periodic review should be done in cooperation with Slovakia and Ukraine, using the updated transboundary periodic review form. It further requested the strengthening of the development and logistics functions of the reserve, as well as of local involvement and participation and encouraged a more active participation of the reserve in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the requested information, including the joint transboundary biosphere reserve report to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Puszcza Kampinowska Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review report for the biosphere reserve, designated in 2000. The Advisory Committee noted however that while the conservation function was fully implemented, the development and logistics functions are weak. It also noted that the activities described are mainly focusing on the core area and in relation to the Kampinos Park. The Committee further noted that there is no integrated management plan of the biosphere reserve, neither coordination nor involvement of local communities and no vision for the biosphere reserve. It also noted that there is no indication that measures are being taken to address these weaknesses and issues. The Advisory Committee therefore considered that the site is not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria and requested that the authorities may wish to consider withdrawing the Puszcza Kampinowska Biosphere Reserve from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Slowinski Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report provided by the biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The Committee noted that the conservation function is well addressed but also noted that threats may be arising from the establishment of hydroelectric power stations and wind power installations. The logistics and development functions are weak and no involvement of local communities is described. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommended that the authorities undertake to:

- provide a thorough study on the possibilities to sustainably combine hydroelectric power station and wind power with the conservation function of the reserve;
- develop international partnerships and scientific exchange to enhance diffusion and dissemination of scientific results;
- provide a copy of the management plan or a detailed outline thereof;
- improve the involvement of local communities in the management and overall functioning of the biosphere reserve;
- participate in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, including through twinning with other biosphere reserves.

The Advisory Committee requested that the additional information and clarifications be sent to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013.

Tatra Biosphere Reserve (Poland/Slovakia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review of Poland for this biosphere reserve designated in 1992, which is part of the transboundary biosphere reserve with Slovakia. The Advisory Committee noted that the zonation is in place, as well as the existence of a management plan which was mainly targeted towards conservation and forest management. It noted that the development and logistics functions are weak and that there is no staff for the biosphere reserve. It also noted that the site is a high tourist destination. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Committee requested that information be provided on the governance and coordination of the biosphere reserve including involvement of local communities and mechanism for consultation. The Advisory Committee recommended that the periodic review should be done in cooperation with Slovakia, using the updated transboundary periodic review form. It further encouraged a more active participation of the site in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the requested information, including the joint transboundary biosphere reserve report to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 for it to be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the periodic review report for the Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve which was designated in 2002. Four special habitats and several economic important plant species are described in the report. The island attracts about 3.5 million visitors per year. Beside tourism, agriculture is also an important economic activity. The Committee encouraged the authorities to continue recognizing the values of the biosphere reserve for sustainable development and ecosystem conservation. The administrative authority in Jeju needs to focus on describing the trends of species, habitats, research and developments to show the difference between the past and the present. The authorities are also encouraged to support the economic activities of the women divers in the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee concluded that this site satisfactorily fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria.

Mount Sorak Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this second periodic review report for the Mount Sorak Biosphere Reserve designated in 1982. The zonation of this biosphere reserve remains the same as when it was first nominated. The Committee noted the increase in the number of visitors that are received annually to the biosphere reserve. A management plan was developed for the area in 2006. The Committee concluded that this site partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee accepted this periodic report and recommends that the size of the transition zone should be increased to surround the buffer zone.

Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review from the biosphere reserve designated in 2002. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities on the efforts made for making the biosphere reserve functional and for work with local communities. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to promote participatory approach in decision making processes, to conduct socio-economic studies and to share their work in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide by the end of December 2013 the following information:

- description of activities in each biosphere reserve zone and areas;
- description of the radiation monitoring and data linked to the possible establishment of nuclear plant facility in the vicinity of the biosphere reserve;

- description of modern principles for sustainable farming and its implementation in the reserve.

Ugra Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review from the biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It noted that the conservation function is being realized. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to promote participatory approaches in decision-making processes, as well as exchange practices within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the authorities foster the sustainable development objectives in the field of agriculture, tourism and education and to conduct socio-economic studies. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide by the end of 2013 the following information to the MAB Secretariat:

- description of the current status and monitoring of the indicators of the state of the environment, specifically with regard to the electromagnetic field levels and their possible health hazards to people and impacts on nature.

Darvinskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review from the biosphere reserve designated in 2002. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is not fulfilling the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the high degree of biodiversity in this site and the importance of the conservation function. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide by the end of December 2013 the following information to the MAB Secretariat:

- all documents of the report in one the working languages of UNESCO (English or French);
- clear zonation for the three zones including zonation map, rationale, description of activities in each zone, exact number of people living in each zone, maps with locations of towns and settlements and clear delineation of transition zone;
- description of industrial activities in Cherepovets and monitoring of their impacts;
- presentation of the management plan for the biosphere reserve with description of its governance;
- strategies for sustainable development, communication and public awareness, and participatory process of local population;
- identification of key stakeholders and process for cooperation with managers of Rybinski reservoir – hydropower station;
- Increased participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and in international cooperation in climatic change research, environmental impact assessment of water accumulation.

The Advisory Committee recommended that in the case that all the above-mentioned information cannot be provided by the end of December 2013 that the authorities may then wish to consider withdrawing the Darvinskiy Biosphere Reserve from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Polana Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report from the biosphere reserve, established in 1990. The Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function is strong and that all staff are dedicated to the conservation function of the site. It also noted that local communities are not part of the governance structure and decision-making of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted that no socio-economic research is planned, and that the management plan needs to be updated. The development function is weak and the tourism revenues do not seem to be benefiting the biosphere reserve. It further noted the poor communication between the different institutions and lack of coordination within the site. The Advisory Committee considered that the site is partially fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee recommended to the authorities to:

- increase cooperation with the tourism sector to better capture/benefit from this activity;
- improve the capacity to plan and coordinate research with a participatory approach particularly socio-economic;
- improve the management towards a more integrative approach;
- enhance support for the biosphere reserve to enable better participation in the Network at the national and international levels;
- improve local participation and economic development within and around the biosphere reserve, supported by socio-economic research.

It finally noted with concern that the biosphere reserve seems to have decreased in size since the last recommendation issued in 2001.

Slovensky Kras Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review of this biosphere reserve established in 1977. It noted the high degree of biodiversity and its excellent status. It noted that the management is only in the hands of state nature conservancy and that main activities are concentrated in the forest sector in the core area. It noted that there is no participation of local communities, and no community involvement. It observed that tourism is important and managed by different sectors but that there seems to be no tourism benefits directed to the biosphere reserve management. It also noted the lack of financial resources. It further noted that the issues raised during the last periodic review report have not been addressed and that recommendations made in 1998, such as on the need for an administration office, the increase of staff resources and cooperation with Hungary were not fulfilled. In view of the many obstacles described and lack of perspectives to improve the situation, the Advisory Committee recommended to the authorities to consider the withdrawing of the Slovensky Kras Biosphere Reserve from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (South Africa)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report submitted by the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve authorities and acknowledged the efforts made in particular in rezoning and enlarging the site. The Advisory Committee noted that it fulfills the criteria in line with the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of biosphere reserves. The new proposed zonation system protects the core area very well. The core, buffer and transition areas are mainly used to promote sustainable development activities mostly based on tourism. The Advisory Committee recognized the quality of the management coordination process and the design of the management body. The Committee recognized the value of research done in this area and the involvement of the local communities in the governance of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee requested the

authorities to provide updated information related to the newly extended biosphere reserve perimeter and to clarify the zonation of the transition area that is split into two categories and it recommended the use of one category for the transition zone. With regard to the new zonation proposal, the Committee noted that 70% of the core area is under land claims. Therefore, the Committee requested the authorities to explain how they will deal with the expected changes in the composition and functioning of the zones and recommended that the rezoning process take the land claims process into account. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities clarify how tourism activities impact on sustainable development issues related to water consumption, electricity, and waste management. In this regard, the Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the authorities to explore the possibility of establishing a mechanism for the financial support of the tourism industry to the management of the biosphere reserve. The Committee requested the authorities to provide information on how the biosphere reserve management plan is integrated in various projects and conservation plans and to send a copy of the management plan of the biosphere reserve to the MAB Secretariat by December 2013. The Advisory Committee encouraged the management authorities of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve to contact the South African MAB national committee in order to organize a meeting, in close collaboration with the MAB Secretariat, to raise the profile of Biosphere Reserves within the South African Government, as well as within the provincial and local governments.

Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (South Africa)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report submitted by the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve authorities. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the authorities recognized that public participation needs to be improved and related funds be secured. The Committee noticed that the core area was very well protected by the zonation system but stressed that mining and farming uses of the buffer and transition areas do not promote sustainable development activities and participatory based conservation. The Committee recognized the support from the scientific research done in this area and the willingness to involve the local communities within the management and governance process of the biosphere reserve. While acknowledging the efforts made so far, the Advisory Committee noted that the biosphere reserve partially met the criteria in line with the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities pursue their effort to improve public participation through a membership drive, projects and elected representatives from the communities onto the Board and to improve involvement of local communities in education programs to increase social capital and local capacity through ICDP approach. The Committee requested the authorities to clarify how the management body deals with both the ecological and social changes linked to land claims on several parts of the biosphere reserve; this situation may lead to the possibility of rezoning. The Committee invited the authorities to consider their progressive integration in the development of Mega parks approach and trans-boundaries initiatives in this area. The Committee requested the authorities to send a copy of the action plan of the biosphere reserve to the MAB Secretariat. The Committee invited the South African MAB national committee and the MAB Secretariat to help the K2CBR to secure funding to implement its action plans. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013.

Redes Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report from this biosphere reserve which was created in 2001 and located in the municipalities of Caso and Sobrescobio in the “principado” of Asturias and part of the Cantabric region. It covers a total area of 37,736 hectares and has about 2,700 people. The main economic activities in the reserve are tourism, agriculture, cattle rearing and regulated hunting. The zonation of the reserve follows the Seville recommendations and the three functions of the biosphere reserve are well identified. There is intense participation of local communities. The biosphere reserve coincides with the Natural Park of Redes. The Action Plan of the Reserve covers the three functions of the biosphere reserve. A

management committee exists which is made up of authorities, the scientific community and local actors. It is important to note however, that because the biosphere reserve coincides with the Natural Park, the site is more known as a Natural Park than as a biosphere reserve. While the Advisory Committee concluded that this site satisfactorily meets the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves, it recommended that the authorities should submit to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013 a map showing all biosphere reserves located in the Great Cantabric region in order to get an overview of how they relate to the zonation of this biosphere reserve. It also recommended that increased actions should be undertaken to enhance the visibility of the biosphere reserve through communication, education and public awareness activities, using media, special events and advertising.

Isla de El Hierro Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report and noted its high quality. The Committee highlighted the successful project described in the report named *El Hierro 100% sustainable* focusing on sustainable energy, fishery management, ecological agriculture, sustainable transport and species conservation. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site fully fulfills the biosphere reserve criteria and suggested that several of the achievement made by the Isla de El Hierro Biosphere Reserve could be very good examples to inspire other sites within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve (Uruguay)

The Advisory Committee welcomed this report, the second for the site, submitted by the Uruguayan authorities. The Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function is well developed and that valuable research is undertaken in the site. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee concluded that this site only partially fulfills the Statutory Framework criteria for biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that a management structure to coordinate the activities of the biosphere reserve be designated and that information thereon should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, together with a map with a clear zonation system for the biosphere reserve, as well as information on how the sustainable development function of the biosphere reserve could be strengthened.

B. Exit strategy

56. The representative of the Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/7. She indicated that 287 biosphere reserves had submitted a periodic review report so far. Out of these 287 biosphere reserves, 78 biosphere reserves are due to undertake a second or third periodic review. There are 112 biosphere reserves that have never done a periodic review. She further specified that nine countries have never done any periodic review for any of their biosphere reserves (concerning 60 biosphere reserves).

57. She informed the Council that to date, 357 periodic review reports had been submitted within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. 219 biosphere reserves had submitted one report, 65 biosphere reserves submitted two reports and three biosphere reserves submitted three reports. She explained that out of 287 biosphere reserves that have done a periodic review, 6 biosphere reserves are fully meeting the criteria and are considered as model to be shared within the WNB. 80 biosphere reserves are meeting the criteria, 138 are partly meeting the criteria, 55 biosphere reserves are not meeting the criteria and for six biosphere reserves withdrawal was recommended.

58. She informed the Council that 102 letters were sent out in October 2012 to request the periodic review reports as well as follow-up information to the recommendations issued by the MAB Council.

59. These 102 letters requested 256 biosphere reserves in 73 countries to submit a periodic review report. Following the letters, 34 biosphere reserves submitted a periodic review report. She also indicated that 21 additional reports were received. In total, 55 periodic review reports were received by the Secretariat and were examined by the Advisory Committee in 2013.

60. 119 biosphere reserves provided answers and information on when they plan to deliver a periodic review report. 99 biosphere reserves did not answer to the letters sent out in October 2012. In addition she stated that four biosphere reserves sent a periodic review after the deadline and these will be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting in 2014.

61. The letters for the follow-up of the recommendation concerned 60 biosphere reserves in 28 countries. 26 biosphere reserves provided information on the implementation of the recommendations. Five spontaneous follow-up responses were received in addition. 32 biosphere reserves did not answer to the letters sent out in October 2012. She also informed delegates that some follow-up information were received after the deadline for one site and that one biosphere reserve sent a full periodic review report as a follow-up. She indicated that a total of 31 follow-up responses had been received before the deadline so that they could be examined by the Advisory Committee in 2013.

62. After this presentation, she introduced the exit strategy proposed by the Advisory Committee.

63. After the introduction by the Secretariat, numerous delegates commended the Advisory Committee for the proposed exit strategy and the Secretariat for its comprehensive and detailed presentation. Delegates underlined that the WNBR should remain a network of excellence. Several delegates expressed disappointment about the lack of response from countries and sites. While the majority of delegates supported the exit strategy, discussion focused on (a) recipients of letters so as to ensure an improved response rate including by writing directly to Permanent Delegations and concerned ministries; (b) the number of years to be allocated to sites which do not meet the criteria; (c) the need for sites to receive adequate support from the Secretariat as well as from UNESCO field offices and MAB regional networks; (d) the need to remain flexible as regards the capacity of sites to upgrade so as to meet the criteria; (e) the need to ensure a good cultural and ecosystem representativity of the WNBR; (f) to need to have sufficient time to reach out to local communities including into languages that are not working languages of UNESCO. In addition two Observers referred to training support available for countries for conducting the periodic review process (i.e. manual guide for managers of biosphere reserves supported by Germany and a training course for practitioners at the University of Goteborg, Sweden).

64. In her response the representative of the Secretariat confirmed that the models of good periodic review reports from all regions would be made available on the Internet after agreement by concerned countries. She also confirmed that a site that has withdrawn from the WNBR could resubmit a proposal in the future. She warmly thanked the French and Spanish MAB national Committees for their support in translating the new nomination and periodic review forms and indicated that the transboundary forms for nomination and periodic review should be online very shortly.

65. In the light of the above discussion, the Council decided to adopt an “exit strategy” as indicated below:

- (a) A biosphere reserve of the MAB Programme is an attractive designation that not only serves to enhance conservation but also sustainable development and research throughout the world. As a consequence, the number of biosphere reserves has increased considerably from 391 sites in 94 countries in the year 2000 to 621 biosphere reserves in 117 countries (including 12 transboundary sites) in 2013. The MAB Programme as a scientific programme has also evolved since its inception in 1971, and so have methods, competencies, experience, and knowledge developed on how to apply the biosphere reserve concept in practice. In this context the MAB

Programme has started a process to ensure the continued adherence of the sites established as biosphere reserves to the objectives of their establishment and to ensure the credibility and coherence of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and to meet Targets 9 and 10 of the Madrid Action Plan.

- (b) Therefore, the Council decided on a *three step process* to manage the periodic review process as a tool to assess, monitor and improve the quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves:

1st step: The MAB Secretariat sends a letter to the relevant MAB National Committees with a copy to the individual biosphere reserve concerned, the UNESCO National Commission and the Permanent Delegation requesting submission of periodic review reports for those sites that have not yet submitted a periodic review report. In a similar manner, the MAB Secretariat sends a letter with regard to those sites which have not yet submitted information on the actions taken as recommended by the MAB-ICC on periodic review reports submitted earlier;

2nd step: If no periodic review reports nor comprehensive reports on the implementation of the recommendations are received after three months, the MAB Secretariat sends a reminder letter to the relevant MAB National Committees with a copy to individual biosphere reserves, the UNESCO National Commission and the Permanent Delegation of the country concerned stating the consequences of non-action. If appropriate, the MAB Secretariat sends the reminder letter directly to the Permanent Delegation and Ministry concerned;

3rd step: If a reply has still not been received after an additional period of three months by the MAB Secretariat, the Secretariat will recommend to the MAB-ICC Bureau that its Chair should issue a last “warning” to the MAB National Committee and the biosphere reserve concerned with copies to the UNESCO National Commission, concerned ministries and the Permanent Delegation of the country concerned consisting of a request for an official statement whether the biosphere reserve wishes to remain in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and if so, accompanied with a clear statement which actions, including timeframe, will be taken.

- (c) In case a reply is still not received from the MAB National Committee or the UNESCO National Commission concerned within a further period of three months, the MAB-ICC Bureau shall recommend to the MAB ICC that the biosphere reserve in question be withdrawn from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The MAB-ICC may then decide to remove the site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- (d) In case a reply is received from the MAB National Committee or the UNESCO National Commission, the MAB Secretariat puts the biosphere reserve concerned on an internal pending list of “Biosphere Reserves which do not fulfill the criteria” and provides a new deadline of one year for the submission of a periodic review report, and/or additional information.
- (e) If the respective national authorities wish to retain the site as a member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but if the site is not fulfilling the criteria of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and its Statutory Framework, or if the site only partially fulfils the criteria, the MAB Secretariat, UNESCO field offices and MAB regional networks should offer guidance and help (e.g. by providing examples of “model periodic review reports” on the MAB website).
- (f) One year after a site has been put on the list mentioned in paragraph (d) above and then every year, the MAB Secretariat should identify and reward the willingness of

biosphere reserves to comply with the criteria of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework so that the biosphere reserves concerned will be removed from this list.

- (g) In case a biosphere reserve is not able to fully comply with the criteria within a period of thirty months since the periodic review process was started (i.e. first step – first demand of periodic review report), the MAB-ICC should consider that the area will then no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network (as per Article 9, para 6 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves).
- (h) For the sites that have provided periodic review reports and/or follow up information on the recommendation on the report by the MAB-ICC prior to this exit strategy and that are not meeting the criteria, the Secretariat sends a letter to the relevant MAB National Committees with a copy to the individual biosphere reserve concerned, the UNESCO National Commission and the Permanent Delegation, indicating that a report must be submitted by the end of 2015 clearly indicating how the site is fulfilling the criteria. In case, the site is still not meeting the criteria after examination of the report by the Advisory Committee, the Bureau shall recommend to the MAB-ICC that the biosphere reserve in question be withdrawn from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The MAB-ICC may then decide that the area will then no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network (as per Article 9, para 6 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves).
- (i) The Council also recommends that the MAB Secretariat, UNESCO field offices and MAB regional networks provide guidance such as additional information on training for biosphere reserve managers, and functioning biosphere reserves that may help other biosphere reserves to comply with biosphere reserve criteria.

XI. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management

66. The Secretariat informed the Council that the Members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves recommended Dr Marisa Coetzee, Project Manager at the Association for Water and Rural Development, and Dr Harry Biggs, Program Integrator at South African National Parks (South Africa), for the 2013 Michel Batisse Award for their case study on the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve. This recommendation was endorsed by the Bureau.

67. Dr Marisa Coetzee made a presentation on her case study on “*Synthesis of stakeholder activities and alignment of Stakeholders in the in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere for a set of programmes related to improved biodiversity and ecosystem services, improved livelihoods and resilient economic development*” to the Council.

XII. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme

68. The Secretariat informed the Council that for the first time this year, due to financial constraint, the Secretariat could not award ten winners as usual, but only four. For the third consecutive year, the Austrian MAB national committee granted two special awards. The total of six awards has been decided on the basis of one potential winner by region.

69. The Council endorsed the six winners of the 2013 MAB Young Scientist Awards, including the two awards of the Special MAB Young Scientists’ Awards supported by the Austrian MAB National Committee as selected by the MAB Bureau. The winners and the topics of their research studies are:

Country	Name of applicant	Title of study
Nicaragua	Ms Claudia Munera	“Biocultural design” as a framework to identify sustainability issues in Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve and Fortress of the Immaculate Conception, Nicaragua
Iran	Ms Atieh Kazemi Mojarad	Sustainable Development of Biosphere Reserves through promoting key ecosystem services (Case study: small scale products in one BR)
Mexico	Ms Angela Camargo	An assessment of the effectiveness of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve to preserve populations and functionality of large bodied herbivorous mammals.
Spain	Mr Julio Blas Garcia	Praying for the “white dove”: How do wildlife populations perceive massive human pilgrimages
India	Mr Bilal Habib	Design and Development of Ecological Monitoring Programme in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Uttarakhand, India, Involving Local Communities”
Côte d’Ivoire	Mr Kouakou Hilaire	Action pour la Sauvegarde de la Biodiversité de la Reserve Naturelle Intégrale du Mont Nimba, Côte d’Ivoire.

70. In 2013, the gender balance is ideal with 50% of the winners being female. All the regions which have sent applications have been awarded.

XIII. Date and venue of the 26th session of the MAB-ICC

71. Sweden offered to host the next MAB Council meeting session in 2014 in the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve. The proposed dates are 9-12 or 16-19 June 2014. This proposal was unanimously endorsed and delegates warmly thanked Sweden for its kind offer. The final dates will be communicated by the MAB Secretariat after verifying that there will be no other major meeting at the same dates (i.e World Heritage Committee meeting).

XIV. Other matters

72. Mr Martin Price (United Kingdom) drew with great satisfaction the Council’s attention to the fact that MAB-ICC Chair, Ms Boshra Salem, had been inducted to the United States of America, State Department’s “Women in Science Hall of Fame”. In her response, Ms Salem stressed how very pleased and honoured she was to have been included in the State Department’s 2013 Women in Science Hall of Fame for the Middle East and North Africa region and that this prestigious recognition to a large extent was a function of her role as MAB-ICC Chair. She therefore thanked the MAB-ICC for having entrusted her with this responsibility.

73. Mr Martin Price (United Kingdom) expressed his sadness over the fact that the MAB Secretary, Mr Thomas Schaaf, would not sit on the podium in the future following the closure of the 25th MAB-ICC as he had decided to leave the organization on early retirement. Mr Price noted that he had known Mr Schaaf from his early days at UNESCO and recognized his strong commitment to MAB and his good sense of humour. He wished him all success in his future endeavours. Mr Samir I. Ghabbour (Egypt) stressed how disheartening it was to see Mr Schaaf leave UNESCO. He referred to Mr Schaaf as a “son of MAB, he was born into MAB and grew up with MAB” and that he hoped that the programme would thrive as vividly as it did under the responsibilities of Dr Ishwaran and Dr Schaaf.

74. Following a standing ovation in his honour, Mr Schaaf thanked Mr Price and Mr Ghabbour and the entire Council for their heart-warming support saying he would like to add a few more words of gratitude at the occasion of the closure of the session.

75. The MAB-ICC Chair concluded the item on other matters by stressing how much she had appreciated working with Mr Schaaf over the years and that she too would like to revert to their collaboration at the closing session.

XV Adoption of the report

76. Mr Sergio Guevara Sada, Rapporteur of the MAB-ICC, presented the draft report of the 25th session of the Council to the Members and Observer Delegates section by section, and paragraph per paragraph when appropriate. Modifications, additions and deletions introduced by the delegations were noted.

77. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed by the ICC Members during the review of the report on 30 May 2013, the last day of the 25th session of the MAB-ICC held at UNESCO Headquarters from 27 to 30 May 2013.

XVI Closure of the meeting

78. The Chair paid tribute to Thomas Schaaf and his work in UNESCO-MAB. She highlighted his commitment and his achievements over his entire career. She indicated that they were friends, working closely together on MAB activities as well as other successful projects. She offered him a gift for him to remember his Egyptian friends which was very much appreciated by Thomas Schaaf. She wished him well for his next commitment.

79. Thomas Schaaf then took the floor to address the Council. He informed the Council about the start of his career in UNESCO during a sabbatical leave as Assistant Professor from the University of Freiburg. He spoke of how his experience working in UNESCO has enriched him by affording the opportunity of travelling to all continents and meeting with a diversity of cultures. He noted how the sharing of different world views had enriched his own perspective and talked about his passion for the environment and caring for people. In this perspective, working for the MAB Programme had been a dream come true. He shared his spiritual vision about an interconnected world, where people are part of the environment and related to other living beings. He also referred to the choice that we have as human beings to either destroy or conserve the environment. He gave some indications about his possible future activities, including teaching and taking care of disabled or elderly people. Dr Schaaf added that that he was also open to new opportunities, such as supporting countries that wished to designate biosphere reserves or prepare periodic reviews. He thanked everyone for their support and friendship over the last 25 years.

80. After his intervention, delegates paid tribute and gave a standing ovation to Thomas Schaaf.

81. The Chair stressed the importance of the decisions taken at this session. She thanked the Director-General, the Assistant Director-General, the MAB Secretariat, the Council delegates and observers, the team of translators, the technicians and the catering team. She thanked everyone for supporting her work as the Chair and indicated that she looked forward seeing everyone in Sweden next year.

82. Subsequently, the Chair declared the 25th session of the MAB-ICC closed

ANNEX 1

ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE / UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Conseil international de coordination du Programme sur l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB) / International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Vingt-cinquième session/Twenty-fifth session

Siège de l'UNESCO, Paris, salle XII (Bâtiment Fontenoy) /
UNESCO, Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)

27-30 mai 2013
27-30 May 2013

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ANNEX 2

AGENDA

1. Opening by the Chair of the ICC
2. Opening remarks by the UNESCO Director-General
3. Report by the Chair of the ICC
4. Adoption of the agenda and timetable
5. Report by the Secretary of the MAB Programme
6. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States / regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB
7. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP)
8. MAB and World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) – post Rio+20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021
9. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR
10. Periodic review of biosphere reserves and follow-up of recommendations
11. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management
12. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme
13. Date and venue of the 26th session of the MAB-ICC
14. Other matters
15. Adoption of the report
16. Closure of the session

ANNEX 3

International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme Twenty-fifth session

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)
27-30 May 2013**

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/about-mab/icc/icc/25th-session/>

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE MAB PROGRAMME

1. This report summarizes main activities undertaken by the MAB Secretariat since the 24th session of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) held at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris, 9-13 July 2012). At the time when the Secretary a.i. of the MAB Programme will introduce the report to the MAB Council on 27 May 2013 he may add new information that became available during the intervening period. This report will only refer to issues which are not covered by the proposed individual agenda items for the 25th session of the Council as the latter will be introduced by the MAB Secretariat at the time of each agenda item. Some of the agenda items (e.g. proposals for new biosphere reserve nominations, periodic review reports on existing biosphere reserves, or MAB Young Scientists Research Grant Awards) will be studied by the Bureau of the ICC and its recommendations will be brought to the consideration of the Council at the time of the discussion of the particular agenda item by the ICC.
2. The 24th session of the MAB ICC has been attended by all 34 members of the Council as well as by 34 observer delegations and four intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. At its 24th session, the Council approved 20 new biosphere reserves, including in three new countries (Kazakhstan, Haiti, Sao Tome and Principe), and including two new transboundary biosphere reserves. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts 610 biosphere reserves (including 12 transboundary sites) in 117 countries. Many MAB National Committees and UNESCO National Commissions have organized official inauguration ceremonies for the new biosphere reserves which have been well covered by the local and national media thus contributing greatly to the visibility of the individual site and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves at large.
3. Following the decision by the ICC at its 24th session, a small working group has been established with regard to reflecting on the key issues that the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves should focus on. Progress achieved on this issue will be reported under item 7 of the provisional agenda.
4. At its July 2012 session, the MAB ICC had decided that the MAB Secretariat send a letter to all MAB National Committees requesting them to provide information by the end of 2013 on the process of upgrading existing biosphere reserves into sites which meet the criteria of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves. The MAB Secretariat has complied with this request and detailed information on the outcome of this endeavour will be provided to the Council under item 10 of the provisional agenda.
5. Following the decision of the MAB Council at its 24th session, and after endorsement by the MAB Bureau at the end of December 2012, both the biosphere reserve nomination and periodic review forms have been finalized and translated into French and Spanish, thanks to the support of the French and the Spanish MAB National Committees. The new forms are available in English, French and Spanish on the MAB website at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/related-info/publications/mab-official-documents/>.

6. On 25 January 2013, the 9th Consultation Meeting between the International Support Group (ISG) for the Implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme took place at UNESCO Headquarters with a large number of representatives of Permanent Delegations to UNESCO attending. In essence, they agreed to the views of the MAB Secretariat pertaining to the final evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan and post Rio+20 opportunities and preliminary ideas towards a strategy for 2014-2021. These matters will be presented to the MAB ICC under the respective items 7 and 8 of the preliminary agenda.

Ecosystems and global programme matters:

7. The period since the 24th session of the MAB ICC was marked by the severe financial situation which is currently affecting all of UNESCO, both in terms of human resources and funding for programme activities. For example, the successful world-wide study on global and climate change affecting mountain biosphere reserves (GLOCHAMOST) could not be implemented as originally foreseen in this biennium due to lack of funding under UNESCO's Regular Programme. However, several biosphere reserves (e.g. Changbaishan BR, China; Berchtesgaden BR, Germany; Nanda Devi BR, India; Huascarán BR, Peru; Sierra Nevada BR, Spain) have continued GLOCHAMOST work on their own.

8. Fortunately, some ecosystem related MAB activities, such as on drylands, were partly compensated through on-going extra-budgetary funded projects, in particular through the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands Project (SUMAMAD, sponsored by the Flemish Government of Belgium) involving dryland biosphere reserves in Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia as well as dryland researchers in Belgium, Bolivia and India. Unfortunately, however, no funding from UNESCO's Regular Programme budget could be allocated to dryland studies and dryland biosphere reserves in other countries.

9. The 3rd Meeting of the Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves will take place on the islands of Hiiumaa and Saaremaa of the West-Estonian Archipelago BR (Estonia, 3-7 June 2013). This meeting is jointly organized by the MAB Secretariat, the West-Estonian Archipelago BR, Jeju Island BR (Republic of Korea), and Menorca BR (Spain). Established in 2012, the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves aims to study, implement and disseminate island and coastal strategies to preserve biodiversity and heritage, promote sustainable development, and adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. Its two technical headquarters coordinate the network and work together at the global level: the office on the island of Jeju focuses on climate change issues while the other office in Menorca specializes on sustainable development. The First Meeting of this new network had been held in Menorca (13-15 February 2012), and the second on Jeju Island (12-13 September 2012). The purpose of the 3rd Meeting is to bring together representatives of island and coastal biosphere reserves to discuss the main challenges and threats facing these areas - climate change; water, energy and food self-sufficiency; and waste management - and to share experiences and potential solutions.

10. The MAB Secretariat is pursuing its cooperation with the Stockholm Resilience Center (SRC), notably through the Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society Programme (PECS) sponsored by UNESCO and ICSU and hosted by the SRC. Biosphere reserves are used as research sites in several projects and working groups, including on landscape conservation and biodiversity. The MAB Secretariat is cooperating with other research programmes from the SRC using biosphere reserves as demonstration sites, such as the GLEAN project (Global Survey on Learning and Participation in Ecosystem Management of Biosphere Reserves). In addition, the cooperation with the University of Michigan (USA) on governance of biosphere reserves has progressed and more than 200 sites are now sampled in the governance data base, inspired from the socio-ecological framework of Prof. Elinor Ostrom. UNESCO-MAB is an institutional partner of the Elinor Ostrom Award for Collective Governance of the Commons. Created to honour the legacy of Elinor Ostrom, the Award aims to promote the work of practitioners and scholars involved in the

field of the commons. According with Elinor Ostrom's large legacy the Award will go to academic and applied works on our commons. The first call for nominations was opened until mid-April 2013, *inter alia* on the MAB homepage.

11. In November 2012, UNESCO-MAB and UNEP organized the 2nd Council meeting for the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) at UNESCO Headquarters which had not meet since 2005. This event, sponsored by DFID, revitalized collaboration with UNEP and raised the visibility of UNESCO as GRASP's co-lead UN agency. The major outcome of the Council was the agreement on a long-term strategy in which those biosphere reserves that are habitats of great apes species could play a critical role in the implementation of this strategy.

12. The urban agenda of MAB has been promoted through the new Biosphere Integrated Rural Urbanization Programme (BIRUP), the first phase of which is carried out in China (Ba'nán District, Chongqing). BIRUP is a new and evolving partnership among UNESCO-MAB, Chongqing City and its Ba'nán District and the private sector CHIC Group. Its main objective is to reconcile urban development with sustainable development, poverty reduction and conservation of natural rural areas. It takes a holistic approach to urban development by integrating the needs of peri-urban areas and their populations and the necessity to safeguard the provision of ecosystem services from the natural environment making full use of the biosphere reserve concept.

13. Work on climate change and biosphere reserves has been reinforced through collaboration with the UNESCO Intersectoral Platform on Climate Change under which several intersectoral and interdisciplinary projects involving biosphere reserves were launched in late 2012. Notably:

- SPARCK - Sharing Perceptions of Adaptation, Resilience and Climate Knowledge. A project coordinated by UNESCO's Apia Office on climate change adaptation and education project for Pacific Island countries;
- RENFORUS Initiative – a project to promote the use of biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites as field observatories on the sustainable use of renewable energy sources.
- The UNESCO Climate Change Adaptation Forum project which seeks to advance science and knowledge for informed climate change adaptation action, including in and around biosphere reserves.
- Climate Change Impacts in Major Mountainous Regions of the World – a multidisciplinary network for adaptation strategies involving biosphere reserves in mountain areas.

Regional activities:

14. Despite financial limitations, several important activities have been carried out in regional and sub-regional MAB networks, often sponsored through extra-budgetary support, and implemented by UNESCO field offices. In the Asia-Pacific region, the **East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN)** through the UNESCO-Beijing Office organized a one week training workshop in Changbaishan (China, 10-16 July 2012) focusing on new technologies used in the processes of biodiversity inventory including geographical information management, field survey, and data management. Seventeen participants from all 7 EABRN member countries participated in the training and the trainees had a chance to practice their newly acquired skills during a field visit to Changbaishan BR. EABRN is working on a joint research project on impacts of climate change on biodiversity and long-term monitoring involving Changbaishan BR (China), Mt Paekdu BR (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Mount Sorak BR (Republic of Korea) and Sikhote-Alinskiy BR (Russian Federation). The 13th EABRN Meeting will be held in Irkutsk (Russian Federation) from 14-18 October 2013 with a special focus on "Biological and Social Consequences of Global Changes".

15. A meeting of the **South and Central Asian MAB Network (SACAM)** was held in Ramsar (I. R. of Iran, February 2013), at which the five central Asian countries were admitted as new members to the SACAM network. SACAM activities were showcased at the 11th Conference of the Parties of the CBD in Hyderabad (COP-11, India, October 2012) during which the UNESCO-New

Delhi Office in association with the Government of India launched the “*Compendium of Indian Biosphere Reserves*“. Moreover, a high-level side event at COP-11 on “Sustaining Coral Communities: Sustainable and climate resilient future through the first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in Maldives“ was organized by the Government of Maldives, UNESCO, UNDP and the CBD Secretariat. The Minister of the Environment of the Maldives pledged that the entire country and its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) will become a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve by 2017; this pledge was made in response to the COP-11 Hyderabad Call for Biodiversity Champions, *inter alia* to significantly increase efforts to protect the marine environment. Another COP-11 side event (organized by GIZ and UNESCO) discussed “Biodiversity heritage sites for climate change adaptation: the role of UNESCO designated sites - natural world heritage sites and biosphere reserves“. The Government of Chhattisgarh (India) organized another COP-11 side event to mark the designation of Achanakmar-Amarkantak BR.

16. The UNESCO-Jakarta Office in collaboration with the Viet Nam MAB National Committee will organize a Strategic Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserves Networks from 22 to 25 April in Hanoi (Viet Nam, 22-25 April 2013) with the theme “The Role of Biosphere Reserves in Shaping the Future We Want for All” to which representatives from the Asian sub-regional networks (EABRN, PACMAB, SACAM, SeaBRNet) will be invited.

17. As regards the African Region, the MAB Secretariat and **AfriMAB** are partnering with the German Commission for UNESCO and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in the development of a “Management manual for managers of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Africa“. In February 2013, a meeting was organized in Mombasa (Kenya) to discuss and refine the contents of the manual. Twenty-five experts from 13 countries from Africa and Germany attended the meeting. The manual is meant for use for the entire African continent.

18. Following the priority identified by AfriMAB on promoting sustainable management of shared ecosystems through the establishment of transboundary biosphere reserves, the MAB Secretariat in collaboration with UNESCO field offices is implementing two projects aiming at assessing the feasibility of creating transboundary biosphere reserves in the Congo Forest basin (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon) in the TRIDOM area (proposed ‘Tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkebe’ biosphere reserve) and in the Lake Chad basin (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria).

19. In Rwanda, the Centre of Excellence in Biodiversity (CoEB) project is still going on supported by OneUN Funds. The MAB Secretariat with the UNESCO-Nairobi Office organized 3 training of trainers’ courses in taxonomy with lecturers from Burundi, Uganda and South Africa. Twenty- nine teachers from 8 institutions as part of the CoEB have benefitted from these training sessions.

20. During the last ten months, the Regional School for Integrated Management of Tropical Forests (ERAIFT, according to its French acronym) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has supported the training of 64 Masters and 33 PhDs. ERAIFT staff have attended several workshops and seminars which were directly linked to the daily activities of the school and for which they served as trainers in partnership with different organizations. ERAIFT has also undertaken several actions to reach excellence as a regional entity. For this purpose, missions have been carried out to Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) for the recognition of PhD degrees by CAMES (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education), and to Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire) to revive the proposal of extending ERAIFT into West Africa following UNESCO’s Executive Board decision 179EX/38.

21. The UNESCO Dar es Salaam Office organized two training courses (one on the mainland and one on the Island of Zanzibar) for the MAB National Committee of the United Republic of Tanzania following their request for more nominations of sites into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The training courses were sponsored through the Tanzania UNDP for 2012/2013. A total of 40 persons were trained during the two activities using a training manual which the UNESCO Dar es Salaam Office had developed incorporating also gender and culture issues. The overall aim of the courses were to provide the participants with relevant information to develop

successful nominations for a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Several new sites were proposed for biosphere reserve designations, including transboundary sites.

22. In accordance with the Madrid Action Plan and in order to strengthen the MAB National Committee for optimum performance of their roles and responsibilities as well as efficient delivery of their mandate, the UNESCO-Abuja Office organised a 2-day workshop from 26–27 March 2013 on “Strengthening the IHP and MAB National Committees for Effective Water Governance, Biosphere Reserve Management and Biodiversity Conservation”. The workshop was hosted by the National Water Recourses Institute/UNESO RC-IRBM in Kaduna (Nigeria). The meeting was well attended and participants committed to participate actively in MAB regional and global network activities.

23. Hosted by the MAB National Committee of Ghana, the next AfriMAB meeting will be organized in Accra (24-27 September 2013). Technical sessions will focus on the role of ecosystem services in African biosphere reserves in boosting green economy. In this context it is hoped that the proposed UNESCO project on “Green Economies in African Biosphere Reserves” benefitting Ghana, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania will be approved for funding by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

24. The **ArabMAB** Member States Network will organize its 8th Meeting & Regional Workshop on Green Economy and Biosphere Reserves in Dana Biosphere Reserve (Jordan) from 12-13 April 2013. The workshop will focus on ecosystem services, climate change and tourism.

25. The **IberoMAB** Network will have its 16th meeting in Venezuela in November 2013. The participation of 22 countries throughout the Latin America and Caribbean region as well as the Iberian Peninsula is envisaged. This meeting will determine the future of the network, its working modalities and its funding. The UNESCO Office in Montevideo in close cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Quito and the MAB Secretariat at UNESCO will organise this meeting jointly with the IberoMAB Secretariat located at the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Environment. A particular focus of this meeting will be the consideration of establishing transboundary biosphere reserves.

26. The Government of St. Kitts & Nevis and the MAB Secretariat organized an “Inter-Ministerial and Experts Conference on Biosphere Reserves in the Caribbean Sub-Region: Tools for Sustainable Development and Growth” which took place in St. Kitts & Nevis from 26-27 March 2013. The objective of this event was to facilitate discussions on the identification of appropriate locations for new biosphere reserves as well as their integration with local/national sustainable development agendas and plans for adaptation to climate change. The conference also encouraged participants to discuss the creation of an expert network for the designations of new biosphere reserves in the English-speaking Caribbean sub-region and to identify specific initiatives which can be developed in already existing biosphere reserve leading to the development and promotion of new products, services and employment. The meeting was attended by five Ministers in charge of environment related issues (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Maarten), and high-level delegations from Curaçao, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia.

27. In late 2012, the Government of Germany via its Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and the Bank for Reconstruction (KfW) decided to support the trinational transboundary Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve (El Salvador/Guatemala/Honduras) with a grant of € 11 million for a period of 5 years. Thus, Germany recognizes the work of local communities in promoting and managing their own development in line with the conservation of natural resources. For the trinational institution of the Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve, this support is also an acknowledgement of its responsibility to help improve the sustainable coexistence of people (some 370,500 inhabitants in the biosphere reserve) and nature.

28. The **REDBIOS** Network (East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network) will organize a workshop from 3 to 10 May 2013 in the Autonomous Province and Biosphere Reserve of Príncipe (São Tomé and Príncipe). The workshop will assemble participants from Spain (Canary Islands), Sao Tomé and Principe, Guinea Bissau, and Madeira and Azores (Portugal). The meeting will be concerned with interregional cooperation within the Macaronesian Region and linkages of REDBIOS with the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

29. In Europe, a workshop on Ecosystem Services in Biosphere Reserves was held from 13-14 September 2012 at the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve in Jönköping (Sweden) with support from the Stockholm Resilience Center. Managers and coordinators, mainly from biosphere reserves in the EuroMAB Network but also from South Africa, met to learn about and work actively with the concept of Ecosystem Services and its application in landscape management. The workshop followed up on the needs expressed during the EuroMAB 2011 meeting and aimed to provide a forum for knowledge exchange and skill development. The workshop was held during the inauguration week of Sweden's fifth biosphere reserve, the East Vättern Scarp Landscape BR. The next EuroMAB meeting will be hosted by Canada at the Frontenac Arch BR (Ontario) from 15-19 October 2013.

30. This report may be complemented with additional information provided by MAB Council members and observers under agenda item 6 of the provisional agenda pertaining to "Reports on actions undertaken by Member States / regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB". Despite UNESCO's serious financial situation during this biennium, the above-mentioned manifold activities give a very good testimony of the vitality and visibility of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves the world over.

Proposed Action by the MAB Council:

31. The MAB Council is invited to consider this report which will be introduced to its Members on 27 May 2013 and complemented with any new information that may emerge by this date. The Council may wish to make comments, recommendations and suggestions with regard to specific issues raised in this report.