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

Thirtieth session

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FINAL REPORT

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1. The 30th session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held in Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia, from 24 to 28 June 2018. The regular session of the MAB-ICC was preceded by a one-day international conference under the heading “International Forum on Biosphere Reserves for supporting SDGs” organized by the Indonesian authorities.

2. A total of 380 participants, including representatives of the following Members of the MAB Council as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 38th and 39th sessions, attended the session: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Vietnam. Observers from the following Member States were present: Belgium, Burkina Faso, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Maldives, Republic of Mozambique, Myanmar, Panama, Romania, Rwanda, Republic of Serbia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

3. The full list of the 380 participants is presented in Annex 1 to this report.

I. Opening by the Chair of the MAB-ICC

4. Mr Didier Babin, outgoing Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC), officially opened the meeting. He welcomed all Members and Observers, and thanked the Secretariat for preparing the session.

II. Opening remarks

5. Mr Shahbaz Khan, Director of the UNESCO Office in Jakarta and representative of the Director-General, welcomed the distinguished hosts and participants to the 30th MAB-ICC and commended the Indonesian authorities for their commitment to UNESCO’s ideals and dedication to its programmes. He then read the message addressed to the MAB-ICC by UNESCO’s DG, Mrs Audrey Azoulay. In this message, the DG expressed great satisfaction to see the MAB-ICC being held in Asia again, after the meeting held on the Jeju Island in the Republic of Korea in 2009, and commended the MAB Secretariat and Office in Jakarta for the excellent organization of this meeting. Since 2017, major progresses have been achieved thanks to the activities carried out by Member States: the significant expansion of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), and its continuous support to the implementation of the SDGs. She also stressed the complementarity of various UNESCO designation schemes (Biosphere Reserves, WH sites, UNESCO Global Geoparks), which are called to work together in the support of the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

6. In her message, the DG also welcomed Moldova and Mozambique who have decided to join the MAB Programme through the nomination of their first Biosphere Reserve in the WNBR, inviting also all 120 Member States contributing to the MAB Programme to cooperate

across their borders. She also highlighted the difficult and challenging times UNESCO is facing, which led the organization to undertake a financial dialogue with its Member States. She expressed the whish that Indonesia will play an important role in such dialogue and will be able to identify the necessary resources to support the programme in the implementation of its Lima Action Plan. She concluded by wishing all a fruitful session meeting and by expressing again her gratitude to Indonesian Authorities and donors for their support to the organization of the 30th Session of the MAB-ICC as well as a series of South-South cooperation projects including also Biosphere Reserves.

7. Mr Clüsener-Godt, in his new position of Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences Division and Secretary of the MAB Programme, expressed his gratitude to the distinguished hosts of the MAB-ICC meeting in Palembang, and to all attendees who accepted with pleasure the invitation to travel to Indonesia. He concluded wishing all fruitful discussions and exciting working sessions together.

8. Prof. Bambang Subiyanto – Vice Chairperson of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) greeted all hosts and participants in the MAB-ICC meeting on behalf of the Chairperson of LIPI, Dr Laksana Tri Handoko. He reminded the audience that the Indonesian MAB National Committee has the mandate of implementing the MAB Programme and its related network of BRs in Indonesia, thus supporting the implementation of SDGs in the country, making sure in particular that the delicate equilibrium between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development could be maintained in time, assuring a correct balance in the use of natural resources and human development. He explained how the Biosphere Reserve concept is of great help in this view, bringing into play the necessary scientific support, appropriate conservation schemes and the needed guidance for the management of natural resources, which all together will facilitate the achievement of SDGs. The contribution of sustainability sciences also includes social and citizen sciences, which should strengthen the role of local communities in ecosystems management and improve their livelihoods. He highlighted LIPI's leading role in logistical support to the MAB Committee and the mobilization of both public and private partners. He finally reminded the audience that Indonesia already has 11 biosphere reserves and hopes to add 3 new ones during the present session of the MAB-ICC, convinced that many more should come. He finally expressed his conviction that the meeting will boost the implementation of the Lima Action Plan, bringing benefits to all - communities and the environment.

9. Mr Wiratno, Director-General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems, representative of Dr Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, started by expressing his pride that Palembang has been selected to be the host of this important international meeting. He thanked the MAB Programme, the Governor of South Sumatra, the Indonesian MAB National Committee, the Institute of Sciences and all other partners involved in the organization of the meeting. The Representative of the Minister expressed the wish that the 30th session of the MAB-ICC will significantly contribute to achieve goals related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. He recalled that Indonesia is the world’s largest archipelagic nation, with 120. 6 million hectares of land, of which 63% are designated as state forest that contribute to provide multiple benefits for humans.

10. Mr Wiratno expressed his confidence that the meeting could generate a better understanding of sustainable development models in the region, with a particular focus on tools for the management of landscape ecosystems and cultural and biological diversity, with a view of extending our life on a fragile earth while continuously harvesting advantages for prosperity of humankind. He expressed his full support to the objectives of the biosphere reserves to maintain life support systems. He also underlined Indonesia's three-fold action plan concerning the biosphere reserves implementation: a) ecosystem-based management of landscapes for integrating the management of land, water and biodiversity for sustainable use; b) empowerment of institutions, legal aspects and human resources for promoting a sustainable use of natural resources; c) integration of fundamental scientific and socio-cultural approaches for the conservation and sustainable management of biological resources, land and water.

11. He mentioned that the Government of Indonesia is currently drafting two governmental regulations on the management of biosphere reserve's buffer zones in order to improve their legal status around protected areas. The representative of the Minister recalled that Indonesia is one of the mega-biodiversity countries and, should its large humid tropical forest areas be damaged or mismanaged, the consequences could lead to an ecological disaster at global level. According to him, the implementation of the biosphere reserve concept is, therefore, crucial and expected to provide benefits for sustainable development and a continuous improvement of social welfare in the region.

12. He confirmed that for Indonesia, the biosphere reserve concept provides a perfect example of how to improve landscape ecosystem management and involve actively all stakeholders (government, research institutions, universities, private companies, NGOs and communities). For Mr Wiratno, in an era of globalization, local, national and international networking and cooperation is a necessity to improve the people's welfare, to alleviate poverty and to maintain the health and quality of the environment. He recalled that Indonesia has 11 biosphere reserves and is proposing this year three new ones, underlining that all biosphere reserves in Indonesia have a protected area status for their core areas, and that they represent five major bioregions out of seven in Indonesia. He concluded wishing a fruitful meeting to all.

13. In his welcoming speech, the Governor of South Sumatra, H.E. Mr Alex Noerdin, welcomed all the Delegates and participants in Palembang, and thanked the MAB Secretariat for having chosen Palembang as the host of this meeting. In his description of the Island of Sumatra, he particularly stressed the importance of its rich natural resources as a potential for both domestic and foreign investments and development. Palembang is also the oldest city in Indonesia, and has been the capital city of the Kingdom of Sriwijaya, a center of trade of natural resources, but also culture and scholar's exchanges. He explained how such natural resource wealth must be managed and protected in a sustainable way to generate economic, social and environmental benefits, in appliance of the goals for sustainable development set by the Provincial Government of South Sumatra.

14. He confirmed the commitment of his government to the establishment of the Berbak-Sembilang Biosphere Reserve, covering 110,000 ha of undisturbed peat swamp forest ecosystems and 60,000 ha of freshwater swamp forests, mangrove forest areas and lowland forest areas, home of a high biodiversity of great importance for South Sumatra, Indonesia

and even for the world. In his view, this biosphere reserve is expected to generate positive impacts not only on the environment but also on social and economic aspects, people welfare in particular. He highlighted how his Government is actively involved in achieving SDGs, in particular implementing green economic growth (with a specific Master Plan already promulgated) and the Paris Agreement direction on climate change. He informed the audience that a management board for the proposed Biosphere Reserve has already been established.

15. He finally expressed his hope that this meeting could come up with recommendations and proposals applicable to Biosphere Reserves worldwide, in support of their role as models of sustainable development. Together with the Asian Games in August 2018, Palembang is proud to host another prestigious event like the MAB-ICC meeting, which is putting the City and the Province of Palembang under the world's attention. He then officially opened the MAB-ICC meeting.

III. Report of the Outgoing Chair of the MAB-ICC

16. The outgoing Chair of the MAB-ICC, Mr Babin, thanked the Indonesian authorities, national, provincial and local, and the MAB National Committee, for their warm hospitality and support to the organization of this session of the MAB-ICC. After having officially opened the Session, he presented his report on the past 2 years achievements, in a particularly challenging period for the MAB Programme, with the launching of the new Strategy for 2015-2025 and the Lima Action Plan, as well as the implementation of the Exit Strategy. He expressed his satisfaction for the new approach, which has been adopted following vivid debates during the 29th Session of the MAB-ICC, and his hope that efforts would be continued towards the improvement of the quality of the WNBR and the promotion of the role of the BRs as models and experimental territories for a more sustainable society. He welcomed Mr Clüsener-Godt in his new position of Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences as well as Secretary of the MAB Programme. He wished him personally good luck and courage in this new endeavour. He also thanked the 3 former Directors of the Division present in the meeting, Mr P. Bridgewater, N. Ishwaran and T. Schaaf, or their past leadership and contribution, with their respective teams, to the expansion of the Programme since its founding by the visionary Michel Batisse in the early 70's.

17. Since its origins, the MAB Programme positioned itself at the heart of the debate for a form of development in harmony with the Biosphere, and it can be proud that, today, the importance of such debate is universally recognized. The process of excellence and enhancement, as well as the technical guidelines, the communication strategy, and the growing MAB Youth community will be there to guide us, inspire us and support us in the endeavour of transmitting to the next generation a preserved planet. The outgoing Chair explained then how he promoted the role of the MAB Programme and its WNBR towards sustainable development and related biodiversity issues in various international instances including ECOSOC, the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, using a report prepared with the help of the Secretariat with particular reference to SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17.

18. The outgoing Chair recalled his participation in a round table on the implementation of

SDG 15, within the framework of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, organized during the “Science, Technology and Innovation” Forum, in June 2018 at UN Headquarters and which gave great recognition of the role of the MAB Programme. He also mentioned his proposal to the “Technological Facility Mechanism” on exploring the possibility of a collaborative partnership with the WNBR aimed at developing and experimenting, in full scale, with all socio-economic actors concerned, science, technology and innovations, which will facilitate the implementation of all the SDGs, everywhere and for all. He mentioned that during this meeting, a side event was organized jointly between the MAB Secretariat and the International Association for Human Values, to share experiences among colleagues from biosphere reserves from Nigeria, Canada, South Africa and Norway.

19. The outgoing Chair stressed that this outward recognition was essential but that it should be accompanied by UNESCO's internal recognition of the Programme's role in relation to biodiversity and the SDGs. To this end, he noted that the involvement of UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences is a very good signal. He also suggested to seize the opportunities that will arise in the next two years, to continue the work and consolidate these results. To that end, he referred to the importance to take an active part in the plenary session of IPBES, the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, to be held in 2019. He also spoke about the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Beijing in 2020, in the preparation of which he suggested that a MAB Youth Forum could be mobilized in 2019 in order to allow them to formulate, together with other Youth fora, their position and the vision for the future they want, which could help orient the post-2020 biodiversity agreement. Finally, the Chair warmly thanked all the members of the MAB Bureau for their effective collaboration during his two-year mandate.

IV. Election of the Bureau Members of the Council

20. The outgoing Chair invited members of the MAB Council to nominate candidates for Chairmanship of the MAB Council. Following the nomination of Ms Enny Sudarmonowati of Indonesia, proposed by Nigeria and supported by Republic of Korea, Australia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Madagascar, Côte d’Ivoire, Japan, France, Germany, Honduras, United Arab Emirates, Peru, Slovakia, Ms Enny Sudarmonowati was elected by acclamation. The incoming Chair took the podium and invited nominations for vice-chairs and rapporteur. Sweden (Group I), Estonia (Group II), Honduras (Group III) Nigeria (Group V-A) and Sudan (Group V-B) were elected by consensus. Sweden was appointed by the Council as the Rapporteur.

21. The new composition of the MAB Council’s Bureau is now as follows:
Chair: Ms Enny Sudarmonowati (Group IV)

Vice-chairs:
Sweden (Group I) serving also as the Rapporteur
Estonia (Group II)
Honduras (Group III)
Nigeria (Group V A)
Sudan (Group V B)

22. In her inaugural speech, the newly elected Chair of the MAB-ICC thanked the outgoing Chair for his dedication and achievements, and confirmed her personal commitment to the MAB Programme since the time of her studies and revitalization of the MAB Programme in Indonesia in the beginning of 2000. She announced the particular direction she would like to follow looking at the enhancement of BR recognition and reinforcement of linkages between the MAB Programme and other international programmes and initiatives, the promotion of BRs as models of sustainable development, the enhancement of communication, resources mobilization in support of BRs, science support to SDGs achievement in BRs. She clarified that these priorities should be included in the Palembang Declaration, which should be adopted by the 30th Session of the MAB-ICC. She concluded by thanking the MAB Secretariat for the organization of the meeting and for their assistance in running the sessions, and expressing her gratitude to the Jakarta Office and all Indonesian Authorities involved for the support they provided in organizing the meeting.

V. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

23. Australia asked clarifications on the “Palembang Declaration” proposed by Indonesia. The Chair clarified that the declaration would be discussed on Friday, in the session on “Other Matters”. No other comments having been made, the Agenda and Time Table of the Session were adopted.

VI. Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme

24. Opening his speech, the Secretary of the MAB Programme stressed the fact that “MAB Secretariat” is formed by the team working at HQ’s complemented by all colleagues working at Field Offices such as the Jakarta Office based in Indonesia, and others in order to support Member States in implementing the Programme. The Secretary introduced then document SC-18/CONF.230/4, providing the MAB Council with a brief overall update on MAB development since its last session in Paris, June 2017. The report was accompanied by a slide presentation available online with other MAB-ICC documents. He stressed how the WNBR is today home to over 250 million people and covers 735,450,187 ha, embracing high cultural and biological diversity. He also highlighted how in the past core areas were dominating while, following more recent developments, the transition areas are dominating today, as areas through which Sustainable Development can be promoted.

25. The Secretary informed the Council that during the 39th session of the General Conference, held in Paris in November 2017, new Member States were elected as members of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme. Furthermore, Resolution 38 C/DR.2 to establish a trust fund for sustainable financing of the African Biosphere Reserves Network (AfriBioFund) under the guidance of UNESCO’s MAB Secretariat was approved.

26. The Secretary recalled that the new Process of Excellence and Enhancement was adopted at the 29th session of the MAB-ICC as a follow-up to the Exit Strategy. The objective of this new Process of Excellence is to ensure that all biosphere reserves become fully

functional by 2020 and provide pending periodic review reports to the Council by 2019 latest, if they wish to remain in the WBNR.

27. The Secretary further mentioned that the 24th session of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) was held in February 2018, and its recommendations communicated by the Secretariat to the MAB Bureau and all the Member States concerned in a timely manner. On this point, the Secretary invited the MAB Council to express its sincere gratitude for the high quality and professional work accomplished by the IACBR members who have been undertaking enormous additional tasks in relation to the implementation of the MAB Process of Excellence and Enhancement. In this connection, he highlighted with satisfaction the fact that Moldova and Mozambique had decided to join the existing 120 participating Member States with their submission of their respective proposal for new biosphere reserve.

28. The Secretary pointed out that the MAB Programme organized for the first time ever a MAB Youth Forum. Held in September 2017 in the Delta del Po Biosphere Reserve in Italy, the MAB Youth Forum gathered together 282 youth delegates representing 142 biosphere reserves from 85 different countries. He also stressed with satisfaction the fact that MAB Youth have committed themselves to be actors of change in their territories, as this will be reported in detail later during the meeting.

29. The Secretary informed that the project financed by KOICA (Korea International Agency) “Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR): A Means to Poverty Reduction, Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in sub-Saharan Africa” ended successfully in December 2017. He further mentioned that the MAB-coordinated intersectoral project ‘Applying the model of transboundary biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites to promote peace in the Lake Chad basin through the sustainable management of natural resources (BIOPALT)’ was launched at the International Conference on Lake Chad, held on 26 February 2018, and is already to be considered a flagship project of UNESCO.

30. The MAB Secretary then informed that the MAB Programme and the WNBR have been duly reflected in the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change endorsed at the 39th session of GC. The Secretary stated that in 2018, the MAB Programme and the WNBR have continued their involvement in several events that form an important part of the international biodiversity agenda and will help to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular through its contribution to IPBES, the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

31. MAB Communication and Branding efforts need to be continued in the various networks, including Regional and Thematic Networks and their regular meetings, which are a fundamental component of the programme in close connection to the needs of BRs and the Member States in specific regions. He highlighted how their activities can be reinforced thanks to project like BRESEP (in LAC) and EVAMAB (in Africa). He also informed the Council about the elaboration of the “Technical Guidelines for BRs”, intended to support Member States in the establishment and management of biosphere reserves, which will be presented more in detail in the course of the week.

32. The Secretary further informed the Member States about the production of the “MAB Biannual Activity Report 2016-2017” and thanked the Austrian MAB National Committee for its financial support and assistance during the preparation of the report. Austria expressed its willingness to support the MAB Programme in the future.

33. He finally informed the meeting that according to the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance established by the General Conference at its 38th session, issues related to the governance of the MAB Programme would be also discussed with particular consideration of the role of the MAB-ICC vis-a-vis the MAB Bureau, the enhancement of the of the dialogue between the MAB-ICC and the IACBR with a view to strengthen the implementation of decisions at the national level, the need of seeing decisions better highlighted in reports and a work on draft decisions initiated prior to MAB-ICC meetings, the enhancement of the visibility of the MAB Programme also through UNESCO’s web page, and others.

34. He concluded stressing once again that much had been achieved so far but also that much still needed to be done to strengthen the contribution of Biosphere Reserves to mainstreaming Sustainable Development processes.

35. In the short discussion that followed, the Delegate from UK suggested that a mention be made to express ICC's appreciation for the work of the Advisory Committee. Noting that the Secretary mentioned many projects in Africa, he proposed a greater emphasis on projects in Small Island States (SIDS), in line with the direction given in the C5 document of the General Conference. He welcomed the Secretary's call for a research agenda for the MAB Programme, which would rebalance the emphasis of this intergovernmental science programme back from sites to research - which should be in support of these sites. Finally, he requested that, in future years, any reports on the implementation of the LAP prepared for the General Conference should be provided to the ICC, together with a summary of progress against C/5 targets.

36. The representative of France expressed support for the proposal made by UK. He stressed the importance of statutory work and proposed that it should be more consistent in analysing the work of the Advisory Committee by establishing a common evaluation grid for all countries, in order to avoid different assessments from one region to another. He also requested that the report of the Advisory Committee be transmitted rather in order to have more time to read it.

37. In response, the MAB Secretariat indicated that the Chair of the Advisory Committee could be asked to intervene. Regarding projects in Africa and Small Island Developing States, the Secretariat reported on the reduction of financial and human resources compared to the past. He stressed, however, that projects will support biosphere reserves in these areas. Regarding the reduction of the research component in the MAB Program, the Secretary acknowledged that statutory and management work has largely taken over. He suggested to raise this point in upcoming discussions on technical guidance to see how to mobilize more resources for research. Finally, the Secretary supported France's proposal to improve coherence in the work of the Advisory Committee.

38. The representative of Austria took a floor to provide some important details on the “MAB Biannual Activity Report 2016-2017”. He mentioned that this is now the third activity report co-financed by the Austrian MAB Committee and laid out in Austria by one of the world´s most awarded publisher of photography books, Lois Lammerhuber. The report was prepared in an excellent and very intense cooperation with the MAB Secretariat in Paris. At this point he wanted to highlight two persons: María Rosa Cardenas and Vincent Van Ryssegem. They had the extremely tough job to fulfil all the urgent and sometimes eccentric wishes and ideas coming from the artist. Without their commitment, this Activity Report would have never been finished. To conclude the representative of Austria emphasized that it was a pleasure for the Austrian MAB Committee to produce the Activity Report for the MAB Community, and that Austria would stand always ready to support UNESCO’s MAB Programme as effective as possible, and as long their Ministry would provide the budget for the MAB Committee.

VII. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States / regions/ regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB with a focus on the Lima Action Plan and discussion on collaborative thematic and research projects

39. The Chair of the MAB Council invited Member States to highlight activities that they had implemented at national, regional and international levels since the 29th session of the MAB Council. She also invited regional and thematic networks to provide reports on their activities. Australia, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, France, Indonesia, Honduras, Slovakia, Sweden, Spain, South Africa, Japan, Austria, Peru, Madagascar, Oman, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Germany, Mexico, Haiti, Estonia, Sudan, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Cote d’Ivoire, took the floor. Following these reports, the Chair invited any observers wishing to do so to deliver remarks. Egypt, Ecuador, Italy, Ghana, Slovenia, India, Maldives, the United States of America, Burkina Faso, Iran (the Islamic Republic of), Sri Lanka made statements in response.

40. Six regional networks also took the floor: Egypt for ArabMAB, Mexico for IberoMAB, the Republic of Korea for the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), France for EuroMAB, Nigeria for AfriMAB, and Vietnam for the Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet). Three thematic networks also took the floor. Sweden reported on the thematic networks NordMAB and Social Enterprise in Biosphere Reserves (SEBR). Finally, the Republic of Korea took the floor to deliver the report of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

41. Several Member States thanked Indonesia for hosting the 30th Session of the MAB Council and congratulated Dr Sudarmonowati on her election as the new Chair and Dr Clüsener-Godt on his appointment as the new Secretary of the MAB Programme. Several countries also thanked Dr Babin, the outgoing Chair, and the previous Bureau for their work in steering the MAB Programme through the LAP adoption and establishing the Process of Excellence.

42. A significant number of reports made reference to the potential of biosphere reserves as laboratories for sustainability where Agenda 2030 and the SDGs can be implemented. Here follows a summary of the reports given by Member States. The full report is available on the

MAB website, if submitted.

43. **Australia** stated that the process of excellence is being successfully implemented in the country, but two biosphere reserves may not make the deadline next year due to the extensive consultation needed with local and Aboriginal communities.

44. The delegate highlighted the importance of focusing on biodiversity-relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and other UN initiatives such as IPBES, and noted that it is encouraging to see UNESCO coordinating the work of four UN agencies (UNESCO, FAO, UNDP and UN Environment) in the IPBES context.

45. Representatives of Australian biosphere reserves will meet in March 2019 to discuss the future of MAB in Australia. Other countries have been invited to come and exchange their experiences.

46. The **Republic of Korea** is working on the new nominations and extension of biosphere reserves, experiencing the improvement of criteria and nomination form of the biosphere reserve in the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR). The country continuously promotes certification and marketing of the biosphere reserve brand as well as local community-based ecotourism.

47. The delegates also reported on a training course organized for the EABRN in September 2017 and biannual national workshops for biosphere reserve stakeholders. Other key activities include policy studies to strengthen legal and governance systems for biosphere reserves in the country.

48. The **United Kingdom** stated that all of its six biosphere reserves are referenced in national and regional policies. Four of the biosphere reserves are involved in two cooperative projects funded by the European Commission, with biosphere reserves in Canada, Finland, France and Norway (candidate biosphere reserve). The projects focus on synergies between cultural and natural heritage and tourism. Close collaboration has also been established with the Republic of Ireland.

49. All biosphere reserves have developed branding for local products and are currently collaborating with universities.

50. The vice-chair of the National Committee and a UNESCO Chair in Canada will be editing a book on biosphere reserves around the world, to be published in 2019. Among other international collaboration activities, the most important is the Blue Communities project, supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund. This will deliver capacity and capability building for marine science and marine planning in five Southeast Asian biosphere reserves over four years.

51. **France** reported that it has developed a new strategy for its 14 biosphere reserves with the objective of implementing the SDGs across the whole network. The strategy is based on the MAB Global Communication and Strategy Action Plan.

52. Following the success of the Youth Forum initiative, the country is collaborating with a youth association, which will soon be integrated into the French MAB Committee.

53. France is also carrying out various collaborative activities with Moldova, Morocco and Tunisia.

54. **Indonesia** drew attention to key challenging issues of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss. In order to address these issues, the government has developed its strategic programs for biosphere reserves by strengthening a legal aspect for BRs management system, developing and implementing the integrated management and action plan, enhancing cooperation and networking, involving multi-stakeholders by promoting local coordination, promoting capacity building, improving investment in ecosystem services, and establishing a sustainable financing scheme.

55. Indonesia aims to create new biosphere reserves and strengthen the capacities of existing ones, among others by including the Lima action Plan into the National Committee Strategic Roadmap of 2016-2025.

56. **Honduras** thanked UNESCO, the MAB Programme and the German Cooperation for the support it has received, which enables the country to continue its work in the region, especially in the Trifinio Fraternidad Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, which is shared with El Salvador and Guatemala.

57. The economic and technical support implemented has helped to reinforce training, inclusion and sustainable development programmes, and has strengthened local development and governance.

58. The country is now focusing its attention on the creation of the national committee. The management committees of the four biosphere reserves of the country have already been established. The country is also working to create new biosphere reserves that will include vital ecosystems.

59. **Slovakia** stated that it has strengthened its four biosphere reserves by undertaking a restructuring programme and mobilizing stakeholders. They have focused mostly on improving the three biosphere reserves that need to present their periodic reviews in the belief that they will meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework. Slovakia also underlined its participation in the campaign '#ProudtoShare. It affirmed that the MAB Global Communication and Strategy Action Plan has been discussed by all its biosphere reserves.

60. **Sweden** is preparing two new biosphere reserve proposals, which are expected to be nominated this year. The country is working on a new organizational structure for the national MAB Programme with the aim to strengthen its biosphere reserves, to increase support for the Network and raising funds.

61. The country has also been working to strengthen communication across the Network through the MAB communication toolkit. Sweden has launched an initiative entitled 'Biosphere for the Baltic' – a joint cooperation effort uniting nine biosphere reserves in seven countries in

the Baltic Sea to implement SDG 14.

62. The country is also working with schools to promote Education for Sustainable Development through the activity 'Biosphere Challenge 2018' in collaboration with UNESCO's Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

63. **Spain** proposed the establishment of a World Day of Biosphere Reserves in order to enhance the visibility of the programme. Spain adopted last year its Action Plan for its Spanish Biosphere Reserve Network.

64. It stated that an ecotourism strategy has been put in place for its biosphere reserves and that a Spanish 'Biosphere Reserve' brand has been launched and is backed by a legal framework. This brand will be stamped on products produced in biosphere reserves, in order to facilitate easy recognition by consumers. The products will then be sold on online platforms. Finally, Spain highlighted the development of a catalogue on intangible cultural heritage and geological heritage.

65. **South Africa** presented a new biosphere reserve at this council session. The National MAB committee in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Harare and organized a regional capacity building workshop in August 2017 on how MAB Programme could assist in mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Some 35 participants from Southern Africa participated.

66. The country is also providing support to Lesotho and Eswatini to establish their first biosphere reserves, and technical assistance to the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to submit nomination files for new biosphere reserves. In November 2017, a workshop on the MAB Communication Strategy was organized in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve.

67. **Japan** reported that the National MAB Committee conducted a survey of activities related to LAP at all biosphere reserves and made a simple analysis. As new initiatives, Japan shared experiences with university students working on evaluating SDGs activities at biosphere reserve through community services and international students exchange. Japan also called upon UNESCO Secretariat for assistance in sharing good practices and lessons learned on elaborating national policies on the needs of biosphere reserves in each country.

68. **Austria** is cooperating with biosphere reserves from Brazil, Peru, Greece, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland.

69. The Austrian MAB Committee has contributed significantly to the design of a call for research projects of the Austrian Academy of Sciences on "Water in Mountain Regions. The research project should help realize the objectives of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in Austria.

70. The Austrian MAB Committee has published a Position Paper on the use of renewable energies in Austrian biosphere reserves. The Paper intends to give biosphere reserves an opportunity to guide and support the country's 'energy transition' and to become model regions for the socially and ecologically sustainable production of renewable energy.

71. **Peru** reported that actions have been taken to reinforce eco-marketing and improve governance through the introduction of new rules on the organization of the National Committee, in line with the LAP and Agenda 2030. Following the MAB Youth Forum in Italy, the country will organize jointly with Ecuador, the 1st IberoMAB Youth Forum, to be held from 5 to 8 December 2018 in the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve of Bosques de Paz. The country has also updated its action plan and communication strategy with the support of the Flemish-funded BRESEP Project.

72. **Madagascar** informed the Council that it had conducted a US$4 million project on sustainable fishery on the west coast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean and in Mozambique. The project aims to safeguard food security, tackle coastal poverty and strengthen resilience to climate change in two existing and one planned biosphere reserves.

73. The Committee was also informed that a fourth nomination of a biosphere reserve is currently underway, and that three other potential reserves have been identified.

74. **Oman** stated that the MAB National Committee was created in 2016 and has since been working to elaborate a list of reserves that could be proposed as biosphere reserves in cooperation with the UNESCO MAB Programme. The MAB National Committee is also working to enhance ecotourism in protected areas.

75. **Colombia** offered its thanks for support received from the Government of Flanders through the BRESEP Project. It also thanked the Government of Spain. Several meetings and workshops were held in Colombia, notably the IberoMAB meeting, which was held in May 2018 in Santa Marta and saw the adoption of the IberoMAB Action Plan.

76. A new nomination is underway in the Choco region on the Pacific coast, one of the most biodiverse areas of the world. The main activities in Colombia's biosphere reserves concern sustainable development, climate change mitigation, biodiversity management and green economies. The country also informed the Council about efforts to place biosphere reserves at the heart of national policies.

77. **Azerbaijan** stated that its protected areas now cover 10% of the country's territory (higher than the global average). It cited several ongoing initiatives including the preparation of new projects on biosphere reserves, a scientific research project, the production of publications on sustainable development, the introduction of Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate degrees, and efforts to raise awareness of biosphere reserves children through the media.

78. **Germany** indicated that a new National Committee was appointed in March 2018. The country is currently working to implement the MAB Strategy and the LAP in German biosphere reserves, as models for sustainable development. The Committee also supported UNESCO's presence at COP 23 in Bonn.

79. As a MAB-ICC Member, Germany is supporting biosphere reserves projects to the amount of €100 million. The country highlighted several ongoing initiatives such as sharing best practices for bird monitoring in African biosphere reserves and activities to prevent poaching. Germany is also seeking new partnerships with southern countries, and has just

entered into a new partnership with Ghana.

80. The country also drew attention to the successful outcomes of a recent meeting on renewable energies held in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve.

81. Lastly, Germany congratulated Italy on the organization of the First MAB Youth forum in September 2017, and noted that a similar activity for youth from German speaking BRs will take place in the country in 2019.

82. **Mexico** stated that it is actively working to revise the governance of its biosphere reserves. It cited a current project to create a transboundary biosphere reserve with Guatemala in the Mayan rainforest, which would become the largest reserve after the Amazon. It pointed out that the management plans of all biosphere reserves are being revised, with a focus on transition zones. The country also drew attention to the work being done with the Chair on Urban Biosphere Reserves and the promotion of this model across the country.

83. **Haiti** thanked Spain for its support in the creation of two biosphere reserves. The country also highlighted the importance of the support (technical and financial) of the German cooperation at the level of La Selle reserve, which constitutes currently a transboundary biosphere reserve shared with the Dominican Republic.

84. The delegate then issued a request for technical support from other biosphere reserves that have experience in transboundary biosphere reserve management.

85. The country also announced the commencement of a new project on reforestation of La Selle Biosphere Reserve, financed by Spanish cooperation. The delegate emphasized the revitalization of the MAB National Committee and the organization of binational meetings of Haiti-Dominican Republic MAB Committees in 2017 and 2018.

86. **Estonia** stated that its only biosphere reserve now covers 10% of the country's territory. During recent years, the reserve has focused mostly on local-level solutions (involving NGOs, entrepreneurs, etc.). Estonia highlighted a few projects linked to sustainable energy solutions and ecotourism, which are funded by the LEADER programme of the European Union. Estonia also underlined its cooperation with other countries within the Coastal and Island network and the Baltic Sea, initiated by Sweden. Finally, the main achievements of the Estonia MAB Committee relate to economic, social and cultural issues. The main remaining challenges relate to cooperation and efforts to increase scientific interest in biosphere reserves. To this end, the country has organized two scientific conferences on marine research and social studies.

87. **Sudan** is preparing new nominations to cover new ecosystems. The MAB Committee has been restructured and is working to improve the communication and visibility of the MAB Programme in the country. Excellent relations have been achieved with governmental and non-governmental agencies, as well as with the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP).

88. The National MAB Committee has evaluated a proposed transboundary biosphere

reserve shared between Sudan and Ethiopia.

89. The Committee is also promoting a programme dedicated to youth, inspired by the MAB Youth Forum.

90. The **Russian Federation** noted that it had experienced difficulty with participating fully in EuroMAB due to the large size of the network. The country is currently celebrating the centennial anniversary of its system of protected areas. Russia has already one TBR with Kazakhstan: Russia (two transboundary biosphere reserves): first TBR and this year 2nd and will present a new Transboundary Biosphere Reserve between these two countries. The Russian Federation highlighted two important sectors for further action in biosphere reserves: the green economy and sustainable urban development. The country expressed its support for the Youth Forum initiative and underlined the importance of youth engagement. It also expressed its gratitude to Indonesia for the organization of the 30th session of the MAB ICC.

91. **Viet Nam** focused its presentation on the need for cooperation between biosphere reserves, notably through exchanges. It emphasized the need for management plans to encourage the sharing of information and experiences. The country also highlighted the importance of eco-certification and the publication of books on this topic.

92. **Cote d'Ivoire** stated that it is working on the preparation of two new biosphere reserves. The country emphasized the role of local governance and has strengthened the powers of local committees. To this end, more than 300 micro-projects are being implemented in the country's two biosphere reserves for the advantage of local communities with the support of development partners. Côte d'Ivoire also informed the Council that it will host the 6th general meeting of the AfriMAB network in 2019.

Regional and Thematic Network Reports

93. **Egypt** presented the activities carried out by the **ArabMAB Network**. This network organized a meeting in 2017 in Algeria. On this occasion, the network adopted the Lima Action Plan and the new MAB strategy. Modifications and Justifications on the legal structure of ArabMAB have been adopted. Several initiatives have been undertaken including cooperation with the AfriMAB network and IHP, the promotion of green economy activities, support for effective governance, production of an atlas, improvement in communication, documentation of traditional knowledge, and better involvement of women and youth. The cooperation with the AfriMAB network has resulted in the immediate creation of "AABRI", which is the Arab-African platform for sustainable management of biosphere reserves. **Côte d'Ivoire** supported this information.

94. As the president of **IberoMAB**, Mexico also highlighted the activities of this Network. In October 2017, Colombia hosted a seminar on biosphere reserve branding and the green economy in Cartagena de Indias. Colombia also hosted the 18th IberoMAB Meeting, which was held in Santa Marta on May 2018. On this occasion, the network adopted the IberoMAB Action Plan, and agreed to stimulate youth participation. Future activities will emphasize capacity-building activities to enhance disaster risk reduction.

95. The **Republic of Korea** presented the activities of the **East Asian Biosphere Reserves**

Network (EABRN). The 7th EABRN Training Workshop on Ecological Monitoring and Education for Sustainable Development in Biosphere Reserves was organized in September 2017 in Beijing, China, and subsequently in Gwangeung Forest and Mt. Sorak, Republic of Korea. At the 15th network meeting, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 29 May to 2 June 2018, participants focused on an EABRN strategy for the Lima Action Plan, youth engagement, and site-to-site cooperation. The meeting also highlighted the development of guidelines for ecotourism in biosphere reserves.

96. **France** reported on the activities of the **EuroMAB Network**, whose last meeting gathered together representatives from 36 countries. The next meeting will take place in the Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve (Ireland) under the theme 'Local solutions for global problems'. The meeting will consider three themes for the working sessions: (i) inspiring people to get involved; (ii) creating to strengthen the network, and; (iii) empowering stakeholders to take responsibility.

97. **Nigeria**, which chairs the **AfriMAB Network**, reported on the activities carried out by its network. These focused on the organization of the 5th session of AfriMAB, which was held in the country during September 2017. This occasion helped to strengthen the capacities of MAB committees at both national and sub-regional levels with regard to the management plan for the biosphere reserves. Additionally, the new AfriMAB Bureau has been established and consists of four coordinating countries: Côte d'Ivoire for West Africa, Kenya for East Africa, Cameroon for Central Africa and South Africa for Southern Africa.

98. **Viet Nam** presented the activities carried out by the **Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserves Network (SeaBRnet)**. The 11th SeaBRnet meeting was hosted by the Thailand MAB National Committee in May 2018 to explore, devise and advance local sustainability through the sharing of experiences between networks – as well as to promote and advance the BR concept as an efficient tool for sustainable economic and social development.

99. **Sweden** presented the activities of the **NordMAB Network**, a sub-network for Nordic cooperation within the WNBR. The Nordic Countries involved are Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Scotland and Sweden. The objectives of the network are to strengthen cooperation within the Nordic region, build collaborative partnerships with the private sector, and promote the inclusion of traditional and local knowledge. Sweden highlighted a flagship project entitled 'Students on ice', which has a mandate to educate the world's youth about the importance of the Polar region and inspire initiatives that contribute to global sustainability.

100. Sweden also presented the activities of the **Social Enterprise and Biosphere Reserve (SEBR) Network**, which is open to any biosphere reserve interested in engaging with socially responsible businesses in their region, with a particular focus on social enterprise and not-for-private-profit businesses that reinvest their profits in social and environmental benefit.

101. Within the framework of this network, the first OASIIS Biennial Report was published. OASIIS (Opening Access to Sustainable Independent Income Streams) aims to increase the impact of social entrepreneurs on sustainable development by collecting new data and connecting social entrepreneurs with opportunities across the WNBR. The report shows that OASIIS is recording US$11 million in turnover within the local economies of biosphere

reserves, with over 500 employment and training opportunities being created by social entrepreneurs within these areas.

102. **Republic of Korea** reported on the activities of the **World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves** (**WNICBR**). During the 7th network meeting held in 2017, Jeju, Menorca and UNESCO MAB signed the MOU on network activities for the next 5 years (2018-2022). The two research projects have been conducted regarding the strategies of island and coastal biosphere reserves addressing climate change. The 6th Training Course for Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve Managers will be organized by UNESCO MAB and Jeju Provincial Government in early October 2018, focusing on adaptation to climate change and promotion of sustainable development.

Observers

103. **Egypt** noted that the impacts of several national development plans and projects have affected the conservation functions of the Omayed Biosphere Reserve, in particular the two cores areas. The National MAB Committee and EEAA updated and made required modifications to core areas and buffer zone. Such amendments were approved by the IACBR in February 2018. The National Committee has revised and submitted the nomination file for the Jabel Qatrani site for inscription on the World Heritage List.

104. Each year, the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education offers six grants to young researchers to promote scientific research within the country's biosphere reserves. Egypt also highlighted important outcomes of a recent workshop on Strengthening Science and ICT for Sustainable Development organized in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO in the Omayed Biosphere Reserve.

105. Representatives of the National Committee participated in the 9th ArabMAB Meeting and thematic workshop on 'Governance, financial management and green economy', held in Algeria during May 2017.

106. **Ecuador** invited all Ibero-American countries to participate in the 1st IberoMAB Youth Forum, which will take place in the Bosques de Paz Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, between Ecuador and Peru, from 5 to 8 December 2018. Both countries are jointly organizing the event following the guidelines established by the 1st MAB Youth Forum organized in Italy in 2017. The event aims to provide a forum for youth to demonstrate their commitment to the MAB Programme and aims to include young people involved in the management and life of Ibero-American biosphere reserves.

107. **Italy** informed the Council that the country's National MAB Committee has been reconstituted and is presenting three new nominations to the 30th session of the MAB ICC. The country has approved National Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves including goals, priorities, indicators and monitoring processes to promote socio-economic development and respect ecosystem conservation. The country also reported on the successful outcomes of the 1st MAB Youth Forum organized in 2017 in the Delta del Po Biosphere Reserve, Italy. The 1st National Meeting of Italian Biosphere Reserves will take place in October 2018.

108. **Ghana** indicated that its national LAP would be launched in August 2018. The support of partners is expected to contribute to the effective implementation of this Action Plan. Ghana noted that it has also been involved in cooperation and experience-sharing activities with the Principe Island Biosphere Reserve (Sao Tome and Principe) and Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve (Germany). The activities focus on glass recycling involving women and capacity building of communities respectively. Criteria for Biosphere Certification have also been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

109. **Slovenia** has established an annual Action Plan in line with the LAP, and will present its initial activity report at the end of the year.

110. The country's three biosphere reserves presented a joint project proposal to promote and raise awareness about biosphere reserves in the country. Slovenia is also working to promote transboundary cooperation with Italy and Croatia.

111. In addition, the country is working closely with schools and young people. Three young representatives from Slovenia participated in the 1st MAB Youth Forum, and have since worked to increase public engagement across the country.

112. **India** expressed its willingness to work towards the creation of a new transboundary biosphere reserve. It highlighted a focus on networking and implementing the SDGs through Its national LAP. Activities carried out in its biosphere reserves seek to bring tangible benefits to local communities. The country also underlined the need to play a leading role in the elimination of plastic waste. Finally, India underscored its commitment to transforming its protected areas into biosphere reserves, and initiating a process for including 7 nationally designated BRs in the WNBR.

113. The **Maldives** has recognized the important role played by biosphere reserves in the conservation of natural resources and tackling climate change. Since its nomination, the inhabitants of the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve have been the recipients of economic benefits stemming from natural resource conservation. The principle benefits are derived mainly from ecotourism. The site is working in line with the SDG targets and the LAP on activities including youth participation, capacity building, management plan development and cooperation with universities and research centres. Additionally, a project is on-going to expand biosphere reserves in the Maldives.

114. The country expressed its concern regarding the use of plastic water bottles at the meeting.

115. The **United States of America** expressed its commitment to the MAB Programme, despite the withdrawal of 18 of the country's 47 biosphere reserves. It underlined its determination to move forward with the implementation of MAB Programme activities.

116. **Burkina Faso** elected a new MAB National Committee consisting of representatives of national government and civil society.

117. Activities undertaken in the last year include training courses, promotion of forest

products, management of pastures and the prevention of wildfires. The delegate thanked the technical and financial partners that have supported the above-mentioned activities (GIZ, EU, World Bank, universities and national research institutes, University of Michigan, etc.).

118. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** explained that nine of its biosphere reserves have presented periodic reviews in the last few years. The LAP has been translated into Persian and was presented at a workshop to a variety of different stakeholders. The country is currently working on a proposal for a possible transboundary biosphere reserve with Armenia.

119. The Hamoun Biosphere Reserve is in need of urgent action to address the impacts of major droughts. The management plan has been adapted to confront this critical issue. The country asked international organizations and Member States for economic and technical support to tackle this pressing issue.

120. **Sri Lanka** explained that one of its biosphere reserves, which is located in a former conflict zone, is gradually recovering, nine years after the end of the conflict. The country underlined the importance of efforts to address confrontations between the human and monkey populations, and to resolve problems related to waste management. Sri Lanka is working on the preparation of a biosphere reserve and a geopark located near the country's capital.

VIII. Implementation of the Lima Action Plan

121. The MAB Secretariat introduced the item focusing on the information generated through the on-line Lima Action Plan (LAP) implementation form prepared by the MAB Secretariat and addressed to MAB National Committees, biosphere reserve managers and focal points. In total, some 150 submissions had been made, 77 % of which represented biosphere reserves. Key survey results included:

Table 1. How would you rate the overall progress in the implementation of the LAP actions that you/your stakeholder group(s) are responsible for?

	Excellent progress	Good progress	Limited progress	No progress	Don't know
Percentage of respondents	7.4	40.9	49.0	1.35	1.35

Table 2. What is the impact of your stakeholder group's LAP implementation in relation to the vision and mission of MAB?

	Significant and positive	Quite significant and positive	Limited but positive	None	Negative	Don't know
Percentage of respondents	22.1	30.2	44.3	2.7	0	0.7

Table 3. Challenges experienced in implementing the LAP?

	None	Some	Many	Don't know
Percentage of respondents	0.65	60	38.7	0.65

122. Based on the information received, which included 76 short descriptions of LAP implementation success stories and lessons learnt, the MAB Secretariat's reading of the survey results was that valuable progress has been made in the implementation of the LAP around the world. It was also clear that the majority of stakeholders experienced various implementation challenges, notably lack of financial and human resources.

123. In terms of next steps, and in preparation of the mid-term LAP evaluation scheduled to be completed in 2020, the MAB Secretariat foresaw the need for a further refined survey tool, including cross-references with the LAP performance indicators and to relevant SDGs, while recognizing that this will require additional inputs from stakeholders. The Secretariat also noted the need for efficient modalities for structuring and sharing success stories and lessons learnt, as well the possible consideration of an extrabudgetary support programme/project for countries in need of LAP implementation support.

124. Finally, the MAB Secretariat informed the Council that a complete overview of the survey results are contained in the July 2018 LAP Implementation Monitoring Report available on the MABNet, together with an updated version of the roadmap outlining the MAB Secretariat's LAP activities.

125. The MAB Council was invited to discuss LAP implementation experiences, lessons learnt and good practices, and to provide its guidance and recommendations regarding effective LAP implementation and related reporting and evaluation tools and processes.

126. The following Council Members took the floor on the item: France, Indonesia, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Sudan, Australia, the Russian Federation, Japan, Sweden and Peru. Several Council members welcomed the survey report and the progress made in the implementation of the LAP. France stressed the importance of linking this item with the item on the MAB Communication Strategy and Action Plan, and on the important role to be played by the regional MAB networks. France also emphasized the importance of discussing LAP evaluation during the next session. Indonesia and the Republic of Korea underlined the benefits of MAB National Committees and MAB networks to prepare their own strategies and action plans in-line with the LAP. Sudan underlined the role of media in promoting LAP implementation. Kenya referred to the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs and business. Japan also referred to business and international partnerships and Peru noted with appreciation international cooperation, such as with Germany, in support of their LAP implementation.

127. The Russian Federation stressed the importance of surveys in national languages and that strong ministerial support for biosphere reserves help in LAP implementation and reporting. The United Kingdom made the point that more responses would have been received if there had been more time to respond to the survey, and if the survey forms had been tailored to the different stakeholder groups, and that while the request for success stories is a good idea, these should include the specific contributions of the success story to the implementation of LAP actions. Australia suggested that UNESCO perhaps could collaborate with the UNDP on the links between the LAP and the SDGs, and that the vision statement in the MAB Strategy/LAP, is perhaps not be truly visionary. Sweden recalled that their national biosphere

reporting is successfully based on the LAP matrix.

128. On the issue of how to best move forward on LAP implementation and on preparations towards the mid-term LAP evaluation, several Members underlined the importance of the MAB Secretariat facilitating the sharing of experiences of LAP implementation among stakeholders as it was often difficult for them to interpret the LAP in the context of their local circumstances. There was no clear position within the Council on the best way to reflect progress in LAP implementation in relation to the LAP performance indicators. Subsequently, The Council entrusted the MAB Secretariat to consult with the MAB Bureau on the format and process for taking LAP implementation and related reporting and information sharing forward. In this context it was proposed that in-depth interviews could be useful.

129. In closing, the MAB Secretary thanked the Council for its contributions and support and its appreciation of the initial information collected through the survey, which also would be helpful for the MAB Secretariat in its own reporting to the UNESCO Executive Board. The MAB Secretary also referred to opportunities and limitations at UNESCO for providing the broader MAB community with access to an open, on-line reporting space. The MAB Secretary finally welcomed the opportunity for the MAB Secretariat to collaborate with the MAB Bureau on taking the LAP implementation and associated reporting and information sharing forward.

IX. MAB Youth Forum 2017 and Way Forward

130. The MAB Secretariat provided the MAB-ICC with a report summarizing the main outcomes of the first MAB Youth Forum together with the results of various analysis performed by the organizers of the Forum. Altogether they form a basis for discussions and sound decisions concerning the future of youth engagement in the MAB Programme and its WNBR. This report was supported by a slides presentation and a short video.

131. The Secretariat briefed the Council that the 2017 MAB Youth Forum was part of UNESCO's efforts to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programmes affecting them, and that it leads action to promote peace and sustainable development in their countries and communities. It further mentioned that the 1st MAB Youth Forum was organized to offer an opportunity for young people who care about the special territories in which they live in to become active in the MAB Programme and to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, in line with the Lima Action Plan. The main organizational aspects of the event, its main outcomes (Final Declaration and related Action Plan for MAB Youth) were illustrated together with some of the main follow-up actions, which have already been taken:

- MAB Youth participation at UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris (October 2017);
- MAB Youth side event at the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2018 in New York (January 2018);
- Creation of MAB Youth Associations in France and Italy;
- Organization of MAB Youth Summer Camps (Monviso between France and Italy, Indonesia, etc.).

132. Based on information collected during the MAB-ICC itself, there could be many more activities coming up in the near future, such as a MAB Youth Forum of the IberoMAB network

co-organized by Ecuador and Peru in December 2018, or a MAB Youth Forum for German speaking MAB Youth organized by Germany in 2019, or even a MAB Youth Forum to be organized in 2019 as a preparatory forum of the CBD COP to be held in China in 2020, as suggested by France. Coming to the possible actions towards the enhancement of youth engagement with the MAB Programme, this report finally stressed that the MAB-ICC may wish to consider:

- To encourage BRs to engage more with youth, involve them in their governance and support projects implemented by youth / benefitting them – Specific questions in Periodic Review;
- To recommend MAB NCs to establish MAB Youth Focal Points and support national MAB Youth networks/associations;
- To ask the MAB Secretariat to provide a coordination mechanism and to promote Mab Youth presence in relevant international forums / networks / events / projects;
- To ask thematic and regional networks to enhance the presence and participation of Youth in their meetings and activities.

133. In the debate that followed, Members of the Council expressed great appreciation and support to any further action engaging more with MAB Youth. The Delegate from Estonia raised the issue of how MAB Youth network(s) could be formally organized, and at which levels. The Delegate from France stressed in his intervention the very high importance of working with youth today, and confirmed that in France measures had already been taken to create and support a MAB Youth Association (named Co'MAB) formally connected to the French MAB National Committee and being involved in various actions related to the implementation of SDGs. He encouraged all MAB stakeholders to engage more with youth in various frameworks, also outside the MAB Programme. In this connection, he reiterated his suggestion that a Youth Forum should be organized in 2019 as a preparatory event of the COP 15 of the CBD, which will be held in China in 2020, with a view of engaging with youth in the preparation of working documents for that Conference. He expressed his hope that other Members of the Council would support this proposal, and that support could be raised to organize it.

134. The Delegate from Colombia commended the Secretariat and the Venice Office for the great efforts spent to organize this first ever MAB Youth Forum, and warmly welcomed the following-up initiatives already undertaken by other Member States to organize a IberoMAB Youth Forum in Loja, Ecuador, in December 2018, and a German speaking MAB Youth Forum in Germany in 2019. In the light of the outcomes of the first global MAB Youth Forum, he invited all Members of the Council to modify their perception of youth's involvement in the Programme and to seriously consider all the benefits, which would derive from engaging more with them. He addressed also a question concerning the possibility of mobilizing additional young human resources in the Secretariat, in particular support of MAB Youth activities. He finally suggested that ties should be built with World Heritage Youth Forums and that issues such as Peace and Extreme Violence Prevention could be considered by MAB Youth Forum in the future.

135. The Delegate of the Russian Federation commended the Venice Office for the huge efforts spent in favour of this initiative, and thanked again Italy for the support provided to young participants from his country. He reported to the Council that those participants have

been very active at their return form the Forum in disseminating its outcomes in Russia, producing articles and reports and connecting with youth associations. He finally informed the council that the East Asia Biosphere Reserves Network has discussed the issue of youth engagement in its recent 15th meeting held in Kazakhstan, envisaging the organization of an EABRN MAB Youth Forum in the near future.

136. In his reply, the Secretary reassured the Council that the MAB Secretariat would continue to backstop all efforts towards a strengthened involvement of youth in the Programme, also mobilizing resources from existing Young Professionals Programme and other voluntary schemes supported by some Member States in favour of the employment in the organization of young professionals from developing countries.

137. Observes were welcomed to submit comments in writing due to time constraints.

X. Proposals for New Biosphere Reserves and Extensions/ Modifications/ Renaming to Biosphere Reserves that are Part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

138. In introducing this item, the Secretariat referred to document SC-18/CONF.230/8. It outlines that at its 24th meeting held in UNESCO HQ from 5 to 8 February 2018, the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IABCR) had examined 27 proposals, including 24 new proposals, one (1) resubmission and three requests for extension/modification or rezoning of already existing biosphere reserves.

139. The MAB Bureau met in conjunction with the 30th session of the MAB ICC. The members decided that for sites recommended for approval, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee be forwarded to the Council without any change.

140. In some cases, the Advisory Committee had recommended that further information be requested from Member States by 30 June May 2018. The additional information received by the MAB Secretariat by that date was subsequently reviewed by the MAB Bureau. The MAB Bureau's recommendations thereon was reported orally and on the screens to the 30th MAB ICC.

141. Taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves contained in SC-18/CONF.230/8 and the Bureau's further deliberations on 24 and 25 July 2018, the MAB-ICC took the following decisions:

A. New nominations

142. **Arly (Burkina Faso).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

143. **Mount Huangshan (China).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

144. **Mt. Kumgang (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

145. **Khangchendzonga (India).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

146. **Berbak-Sembilang (Indonesia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

147. **Rinjani-Lombok (Indonesia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

148. **Kopet Dag (Islamic Republic of Iran).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

149. **Quirimbas (Republic of Mozambique).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

150. **Maasheggen (The Netherlands).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

151. **Charyn Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

152. **Zhongar Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

153. **Suncheon Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

154. Indonesia delivered congratulatory remarks on the designation of Mountain Kumgang of DPRK and Suncheon Biosphere Reserve of RoK to be part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Indonesia wishes that the designation of both biosphere reserves will enable both communities in the Korean Peninsula living in lasting harmony with nature and support

sustainable peace between the two countries. Indonesia further wishes that with this momentum, DPRK and RoK will have more collaboration in the future, including but not limited to the development, research, and conversation on biosphere reserves. Indonesia hopes that the potential collaboration in the MAB forum between the two countries can serve a bridge between both to share vision of peace and prosperity as well to cooperate more closely with each other. Indonesia expresses its readiness to collaborate with the DPRK and RoK in their future endeavours.

155. In response to the congratulatory remarks by Indonesia, delegation of DPRK and RoK conveyed their appreciation of Indonesia's support to the sustainable peace and development in the respective countries as well as the Korean Peninsula.

156. **Mountainous Urals (Russian Federation).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. The proposed site was recommended for approval by the Advisory Committee. The Bureau welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities following the encouragement of the Advisory Committee, namely the establishment of a biosphere reserve coordinating council and updates on creation of stakeholders based management structures and update on progress made on the management plan. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

157. **Betung Kerihun Danau Sentarum Kapuas Hulu (Indonesia).** The MAB Council welcomed this well written and high-quality proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely the documentation demonstrating that mining activities do not have any adverse impacts on the proposed biosphere reserve, and legal documents and measures guaranteeing that only activities compatible with the conservation function of the biosphere reserve are undertaken in the core area. The data provided were fully satisfactory and therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site.

158. **Monte Peglia (Italy).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely additional information on the legal status of *Sistema Territoriale di Interesse Naturalistico Ambientale* (STINA) areas, as well as a detailed governance scheme for the proposed biosphere reserve.

159. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site. The MAB Council requested that the management plan/policy for the proposed biosphere reserve be sent to the Secretariat as soon as available as and no later than 30 September 2018

160. **Valle Camonica – Alto Sebino (Italy).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely on the rationale why the Northern and Eastern parts of the biosphere reserve not surrounded by the transition area for topographic (as it is river basin) and ecosystem (mountain region) aspects. It also welcomed the information provided on the impact of tourism and acknowledged the plan to conduct socio-economic

studies in the proposed biosphere reserve be pursued, including with the involvement of energy companies in the proposed biosphere reserve activities.

161. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

162. **Tsimanampesotse-Nosy Ve Androka (Madagascar).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely a revised map compliant with the activities defined in the decree of creation of the category V protected area of IUCN and the biosphere reserve zonation and clear explanation on why EIA for the mining company in the area are not available. The map provided was satisfactory. The national authorities explained that EIA are not done until the company will be issued an exploitation permit, which is not the case yet.

163. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site. It further noted that the biosphere reserve status will reinforce sustainable management of the area with regards to possible impact of mining exploitation.

164. **Lower Prut (Republic of Moldova).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely the comprehensive draft Management Plan for the biosphere reserve requested by the Advisory Committee including details of how the authorities responsible for management of the oil exploitation field will be involved in the management of the biosphere reserve.

165. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

166. **The Mura River (Slovenia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely a comprehensive draft Management Plan for the biosphere reserve including details of how actors in the industrial sector may be involved in the biosphere reserve with a view to reducing negative impacts; more detailed information on the participatory management structure for the overall governance of the proposed area; explanation of the lack of buffering around some parts of core areas.

167. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

168. **Marico (South Africa).** The MAB Council welcomed this proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the national authorities as per request of the Advisory Committee, namely the explanation of the concept of conservation-friendly agriculture and information on mitigation measures of tourism impacts in the core area.

169. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

170. **Ponga (Spain).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely comprehensive evidence that demonstrate that hunting activities have no impact on conservation of the core area.

171. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

172. **Gombe Masito Ugalla (Tanzania).** The MAB Bureau welcomed this proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information provided by the national authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely explanation on the management structure of the area and information on the mitigation measures of social and environmental impacts of refugees.

173. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

174. **Wadi Wurayah (United Arab Emirates).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely the missing endorsement signatures, indicators regarding women's involvement, further information regarding planned sustainable development projects, and clarification of actions to be taken to address threats to migratory birds.

175. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

176. **Chocó Andino de Pichincha (Ecuador).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Although the Advisory Committee recommended in document SC-18/CONF.230/8, that the site be deferred due to the high population living in the core area (158,000 people) the country has submitted information clarifying that this high number was a miscalculation. The official census data (2010) confirms that in the core area there is a total permanent population of 110 people. Their main activities are ecotourism and research.

177. The MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the country and agreed that it was correct. The Bureau congratulated the country for their great effort to rectify this error and the important commitment shown by its local population, and its regional and national government.

178. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

B. Extension, rezoning or renaming of already existing biosphere reserves

179. **Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve (Germany) - extension and renaming of the former Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve (Germany)**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of already existing biosphere reserve and endorsed

all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

180. **Ticino, Val Grande Verbano Biosphere Reserve** - **extension and renaming of the former Valle del Ticino (Italy).** The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

181. **Land of the Leopard Biosphere Reserve** – **renaming of former Kedrovaya Pad Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely information on why there is no buffer zone adjacent to the southern core area. The information received from the authorities indicated that the reason is that it is constituted of a marine area bordering the sea and that the biosphere reserve (Land of the Leopard National Park) has no authority on it.

182. Based on the information provided, the Bureau was not clear on the status of the marine area bordering the south core area as indicated in the reply from the authorities. It recommended to send clearer zonation map as it seems that the area was terrestrial. It also recommended the biosphere reserve authorities to seek cooperation with the authorities in charge of the marine/terrestrial area in the south of this core area to ensure that this core area will not be under threat and to consider the possibility to establish a buffer zone. It requested that a clearer zonation map as well as comprehensive information on the issues above and report on progress made be provided to the MAB Secretariat by 30th September 2018.

183. The Council decided that the proposal for extension and renaming **is deferred**.

C. Voluntary withdrawals

184. The MAB Secretariat had received letters for voluntary withdrawal from five Australian sites, 1 site from Netherlands and one US site. The MAB-ICC therefore took note that the following biosphere reserves no longer are part of the WNBR:

- Wilson's Promontory, Australia
- Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Australia
- Yathong, Australia
- Barkindji, Australia
- Prince Regent, Australia
- San Dimas Experimental Forest, USA
- Waddenzee, Netherlands

185. With 24 new Biosphere Reserves approved by the MAB Council and the withdraw of 7 BRs, the WNBR counts now: 686 BRs in 122 countries including 20 transboundary sites. Two new countries joined the WNBR: the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of Mozambique.

XI. Implementation of the "Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR as Well as Quality Improvement of All Members of the World Network"

186. In June 2017, at its 29th session, the MAB Council adopted a Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network' (see Annex 2). It decided to complete the "Exit Strategy" in 2020 and to institute this process to ensure that biosphere reserves serve as models for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

187. The MAB Secretariat presented the document SC-18/CONF.230/9 containing an update as regards the sites concerned by the excellence process as well as an update on sites that are not meeting the criteria and were not included in the exit strategy (for the period 2014-2017).

188. The Secretariat informed the Council that all sites concerned by the excellence process have been in contact with the Secretariat. All sites concerned by the September 2017 deadline have provided information, which was examined by the Advisory Committee at its last session in February 2018. Sites concerned by the excellence process are indicated clearly in the colour table that will be presented by the Secretariat when item 12 on periodic review and follow-up will be examined. The number of sites concerned by the excellence process will then be updated after the Council decisions at this session.

189. The Secretariat further reminded that as per Council request at its last session, the MAB Secretariat has reviewed all recommendations issued by the MAB Council in 2014, 2015 and 2016 for sites, which were not concerned by the exit strategy and thus are not part of the excellence process. Nine sites from eight countries do not meet the criteria, have not provided sufficient information for the Council to decide if the site meets the criteria or were asked to send additional information.

190. The Secretariat indicated that the majority of the cases where the sites were not meeting the criteria or were requested additional information was due to zonation and governance issues.

191. Several countries thanked the secretariat for the report presented. Several delegates took the floor to indicate that the excellence process should not end by 2020. Such a process should be continued and improved to ensure that each site is meeting the criteria and that support is provided to biosphere reserves, which need it, including through the World Network. Several delegates mentioned that this work should be linked to the technical guidelines work. France suggested the establishment of a working group on this issue as soon as possible, before the next MAB Council, and that they wanted to be part of this working group. This proposal was supported by several countries including Australia, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Slovakia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. One delegate was in favour that this issue be treated within the existing working groups elaborating the technical guidelines. This working group will provide supplementary guidance on improving the implementation of the excellence process and not modifying anything in the Statutory Framework.

192. One delegate mentioned that some sites may face difficulties to complete the periodic review reports by 2020. The delegate further asked the question on what could be the process for these sites that are committed and progressing but could not complete by 30th September 2019. One delegate mentioned the lack of clear guidance on the periodic review process as well as the need for clear deadlines. The Chair of the Advisory Committee took the floor to express support for continuing the excellence process and highlighted the available resources that could be mobilized within the biosphere reserves and within the World network in terms of expertise and good practices. Several delegates expressed their satisfaction on the work of the Advisory Committee. One delegate expressed the need to reinforce the Advisory Committee, both in terms of capacity and resources as well as the Secretariat as the workload is increasing. The delegate also expressed the need to pay particular attention to coastal and marine as well as urban sites as regard zonation. One delegate mentioned the specificity of transboundary biosphere reserve as regards the zonation. Some delegates also mentioned the need for the Advisory Committee to take into account the national legislation in particular countries while elaborating their recommendations in order to not create difficulties. Several delegates highlighted the need for sites to benefit from building capacity activities in the process.

193. Mexico stated that they received two recommendations from the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, the first one recommending to replace the Mexican Biosphere Reserve denomination with an alternative term in order to avoid confusion with the UNESCO denomination. The country declared the inconvenience that represented a recommendation to modify the Mexican law. Mexico recalled that it was a recommendation of the 1995 meeting that countries include the category of biosphere reserve in their legislation. Regarding the second observation of including the transition zone in the management plans of the 14 reserves, the Mexican government declares that these reserves were approved in 2006 including all the zones and that the transition zone has been included in the plans since then. The Secretary of the MAB Program responded that a letter had been received from the Mexican delegation to UNESCO pointing out these issues and that they would answer in the coming days. The Secretary also explained that this was only a recommendation from the experts of the Advisory Committee and that the position of the country was well-noted.

194. **The Council decided to establish an ad-hoc group working on the** "Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network" in order to take advantage of the opportunities of the process beyond 2020.

195. **The Working group has following mandate:**

- To further develop the "Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network" and its implementation;
- To prepare input for discussion and to allow a decision on the Excellence Process and its implementation to be taken by the 32nd Session of the MAB-ICC in 2020.

196. The Council requested the working group to take into consideration the decision taken at the 29th MAB Council session on the “Exit strategy” and the lessons and results learnt from this strategy as well as the Periodic Review Process in general.

197. It furthermore requested the WG to present its findings and recommendations for discussion and consideration to the next 31st Session of the MAB Council as to provide further guidance to the process.

198. The Council also requested the Secretariat to call on the Member States to nominate the representatives to the ad-hoc working group by early September.

199. **The Members shall be as follows:**

- 2 ICC-members by UNESCO Regional Group
- The Chairperson of the ICC
- The Chairperson of IACBR

200. The Secretariat indicated that after the approval of the periodic review and follow up recommendations by the MAB Council, 64 sites in 31 countries were still concerned by the excellence process. Delegates expressed their satisfaction on the progress made so far and the need to pursue the efforts in the implementation of the excellence process.

XII. Periodic Review Reports and Follow-Up Information Received since the last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC) Meeting

201. The Secretariat presented the recommendations for the periodic review and the follow-up recommendations, using the tables available in the annex 1 and 2 of the document with a color code (red for sites not meeting the criteria, green for sites meeting the criteria and blue for sites for which more information was requested). It was clearly indicated in a column if the site was part of the excellence process.

202. The Secretariat indicated that additional information received has been examined by the MAB Bureau and highlighted the cases when the final recommendation was changed by the Bureau for approval by the Council.

203. The Secretariat informed the Council that since the last MAB-ICC session, the Secretariat received 82 reports and 57 follow-up information from 49 countries, including 67 reports and follow-up from 31 countries as implementation of the Excellence Process.

204. The Council welcomed the periodic review reports as well as follow-up information and endorsed the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee as contained in Annex 4 (Document SC-18/CONF.230/10).

205. Regarding sites concerned by the excellence process, which did not send requested information by 30 June 2018, the Council requested that missing information be provided by 30th September 2018. The Council requested that, at future sessions of the ICC, the color-

coded table showing the extent to which sites met the criteria should be provided in advance to participants of the MAB-ICC by email and, if possible, hard copy.

206. After examination by the Bureau of additional information requested by the Advisory Committee, the Council made the following decisions for the following sites:

207. **Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany)**. The Council welcomed the clarification on why some of the core areas have no buffer zone. Based on the information provided and acknowledging that the authorities are in the process to establish the buffer zones, the Council encouraged the authorities to pursue the establishment of buffer zones and to provide an update by 30 September 2019.

208. **Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (Montenegro).** The Council requested that the national authorities submit by 30 September 2018 latest to be in line with the excellence process requirements and deadline, the information requested by the Advisory Committee, in order to assess **if the site meets or does not meet the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves the criteria:

- Endorsements of all members participating in the Coordination Body and a copy of the protocol of cooperation;
- To provide rationale on why some core areas are not surrounded by buffer zone in the northern part and southern part;
- Submit a new zonation map showing the reduction in size of National Park Durmitor and the newly established protected areas;
- The action plan of the biosphere reserve.

209. **Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities. It welcomed the creation of buffer zones adjacent and surrounding the core areas as per the Statutory Framework.

210. It also welcomed the detailed information on development function in the biosphere reserve and the involvement of the local communities in this regard. It further encouraged the authorities to set up the social council to involve local communities and to provide an update on this by 30 September 2019 latest. It also welcomed information on the management of the Polish part of the reserve. The Council considered that the site **meets the criteria.**

211. **Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Council welcomed the additional information received, including the strategy of education for the Tatra national park and a document summarizing the objectives of a policy for the biosphere reserve. However, the Council did not receive information as regards the establishment of a biosphere reserve coordinating body that includes the authorities, local communities' representatives and other stakeholders, and business representatives as requested by the Advisory Committee. The Council also requested that information be provided on a revised zonation scheme enlarging the transition area towards inhabited areas currently adjacent to the border of the biosphere reserve to facilitate development by 30 September 2018. The Council considered that it was not able to assess **if the site meets or does not meet the criteria.**

212. **Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** As the site is included in

the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Council requested that the above information be provided by 30 September 2018:

- a draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the entire biosphere reserve;
- actions taken to establish an overall biosphere reserve coordinating body that will involve the authorities, local communities and other stakeholders, with detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement;
- revision of the zonation scheme with a proper buffer for the core areas or a rationale for its absence, and a clear zonation map showing the borders of the reserve.

213. **Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council requested that the information requested by the Advisory Committee be provided by 30 September 2018:

- Confirmation on the extension of the transition area,
- Rationale on current zonation,
- Inclusion of local communities since last report of 2017.

214. **Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council acknowledged with thanks the information provided by the authorities on zonation and revision of zonation with map in English delineating zones of biosphere reserve. The Council considered that the rationale was not explaining sufficiently how the three zones were delineated, apart from main use activities and some inconsistencies such as transition areas in the core areas. It requested the authorities to reconsider the zonation so it meets the statutory framework criteria and send all pending requirement by 30 September 2018.

215. **Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report).** The Council welcomed the information provided by the authorities on a rationale as how the western part of the core area is in fact buffered as well as an English summary of the Action Plan. It also welcomed the information on the involvement of local stakeholders in biosphere reserve governance. Based on this information, the Council considered that the site **meets the criteria** and requested the authorities to send a zonation map that reflect the existence of buffer zones by 30 September 2018.

216. **East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report).** The Council welcomed the rationale explaining how the core area in the central and southern part of the biosphere reserve are surrounded by a buffer zone. Based on this information, the Council considered that the site **meets the criteria** and requested the authorities to send a zonation map that reflect the existence of buffer zones by 30 September 2018.

217. **Camili Biosphere Reserve (Turkey)**. The Council welcomed the corrected zonation map provided by the authorities and the willingness to create a formal biosphere reserve governance structure that would include authorities responsible for the core area and buffer zones as well as other local stakeholders (e.g. Union of Villages) participating directly in overall management and decision-making processes. It requested that update information on this creation be provided by 30 September 2019.

218. **East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine, national report).** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities including a

comprehensive zonation map of the biosphere reserve as per the Statutory Framework. It also welcomed the detailed information on the involvement of local communities in development efforts and the management of the biosphere reserve. It welcomed the creation of a Coordinating Council of the Ukrainian part of the East Carpathians TBR (CC UP East Carpathians TBR), which consists of the representatives of the Uzhansky National Nature Park, Nadsansky Regional Landscape Park, local communities, local authorities, land users, representatives of tourist enterprises, manufacturers and other stakeholders on the Ukrainian part of the East Carpathians TBR. It welcomed the draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the biosphere reserve. Based on these information, the Council considered that the site **meets the criteria**.

219. **Renaming Apalachicola (former Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve, United States of America).** The Council thanked the authorities for providing clarification regarding the absence of a buffer zone surrounding the core area in part of the east and along the western and northern terrestrial part of the biosphere reserve. It encouraged the authorities to build partnerships, and establish MOU's with the cities, landowners and forest corporation to establish a buffer zone and to send a zonation map to the secretariat reflecting the three zones by 30 September 2018.

220. It also noted the request to change the name of the Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve to the Apalachicola Biosphere Reserve, to pay tribute to the primary feature of the area: the Apalachicola River and Bay System.

221. **Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Council invited the biosphere reserve and the US authorities to submit additional information and complete the Periodic Review and the zonation by 30 September 2018.

222. **Guanica Forest Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council thanked the authority for providing clarification regarding the surface area of each zone (and that the transition are total 39.78 km²) as well as more detailed information on the management of the 700,000 annual tourists that visit the core area and their impacts on the biosphere reserve. It also acknowledged information on the proposed Management Plan/Policy of the biosphere reserve.

223. **Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Council welcomed the information provided on the zonation. It took note that Protective land use agreements, or conservation easements, are functioning as buffer zones in these areas and that these agreements are voluntarily entered into by private property owners. Based on these explanations, the Council requested that the biosphere reserve sends a zonation map reflecting the three statutory framework zones by 30 September 2018.

224. **University of Michigan Biological Station (United States of America).** The Council thanked the authorities for the explanation provided and for the commitment of the authorities to remain part of the World network. It encouraged the authorities to pursue the on-going activities and build partnerships and to develop a vision. It invited the authority to resubmit a periodic review by latest 30 September 2019, with an appropriate zonation using the

successful examples of several US biosphere reserves with assistance of the MAB Secretariat and the Advisory Committee members to be considered by the MAB Council in 2020 for its final decision.

225. **Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Croatia).** The Council thanked the Croatian authorities for providing a new zonation map as well as support letters for the enlargement of the transition area as recommended by the Advisory Committee. It requested additional information on the separated transition area on the map and provide the rationale on the zonation and requested that the authorities provide these information by 30 September 2018.

226. **Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (Hungary).** The Council thanked the authorities for providing the final zonation map and considered that the site **meets the criteria.**

227. **Middle Volga Complex (Russian Federation).** The Council thanked the authorities for the detailed explanation of the overall biosphere reserve management structure and how the different stakeholders, including local communities, are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve. It considered that the site **meets the criteria.**

228. **Okskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council thanked the authorities for sending the Management Plan in Russian with some English summaries. It also noted that no evidence of wide-ranging scientific cooperation was provided as requested by the Advisory Committee. It also requested an update on the progress made on the creation of buffer zones and that the information missing is provided by 30 September 2018.

229. **Pechoro-Ilychskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council thanked the authorities for submitting the Management Plan and evidence of development and considered that the site **meets the criteria.**

230. **Sokhondinskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council thanked the authorities for submitting the Management Plan with a zonation map using the standard terminology of 'core area, buffer zone and transition area' established by the Statutory Framework.

231. **Tsentral'nolesnoy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Council thanked the authorities for submitting the Management Plan.

232. **Organ Pipe (United States of America).** The Council acknowledged with thanks the letters from the authorities indicated the work in progress, the lead taken by the International Sonoran Desert Alliance to submit a proposal and the willingness to remain in the World network and to submit a biosphere reserve proposal for Organ Pipe, including renaming of the site by 30 June 2019.

233. The Council encouraged the authorities to seek guidance and support from the MAB Secretariat if needed to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements and to submit the form by latest 30 September 2019.

234. **Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Council acknowledged with thanks information on (i) a revision of the zonation scheme in order to expand the biosphere reserve area and include villages and local people accordingly; (ii) actions taken to involve local authorities and communities, as well as other stakeholders, in biosphere reserve management, and detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement; and (iii) interventions to enhance sustainable development has been progressed.

235. However, the Council considered that a revision of the zonation scheme is still in a process and there is not any revised zonation agreed by authorities and accompanied by a revised zonation map. As the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Council requested that the above information be provided by 31 December 2018.

236. **Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Council noted with a satisfaction that the Chinese authorities submitted the additional information as per Advisory Committee request, namely a rationale as to why the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones and transition areas to ensure their effective protection. In addition, details were provided on a process to set up policies for these plantations to ensure that there is no negative impact on forest biodiversity. The Council considered that the site **meets the criteria.**

237. France mentioned the need to establish an alert system for sites that are facing difficulties and challenges and requested the secretariat to reflect on a possible alert process to be presented at the next MAB Council session.

238. The Council recognized and congratulated the 80 sites that meet the criteria from 31 countries, including 23 sites from 13 countries, which were concerned by the excellence process.

XIII. MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme

239. The Secretariat presented the document SC-18/CONF.230/11 in which it recalled that the MAB-ICC at its 29th session from 12 to 15 June 2017 adopted the new criteria and conditions for the selection of the MAB Young Scientists Award winners that address the Lima Action Plan (LAP) for Biosphere Reserves and relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Council also agreed to enhance the visibility of the MAB YSA Scheme's achievements and impacts, and to mobilize additional funds in order to increase the visibility of the achievements and strengthen the impacts of the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme.

I. Selection of MAB Young Scientists Awards (MAB YSA)

240. The Part I of the document, which focused on a selection of MAB YSA 2018 winners according to the new criteria and conditions, was introduced by the former Chair, Mr Didier Babin.

241. The MAB Secretariat received twenty-nine (29) eligible applications from nineteen (19) countries, four (4) of the applicants were women.

242. Mr Babin, recalled the criteria for the assignment of the awards, concerning in particular references to the present MAB Strategy, the LAP, and links to the implementation of SDGs. These have been taken into consideration in the evaluation of the candidates. He also stressed that the total sum available for the awards amounted to 30,000 US$, usually to be distributed among six (6) candidates. This year this amount will be shared among seven (7), due to the fact that there were ex aequo candidates for the 6th place.

243. Commenting the final selection, he highlighted that a good balance between gender and regions had been maintained even if, as discussed in the Bureau, two regions in particular seem to be under-represented in the number of proposals received: Arab States and Europe and North America. He concluded saying that efforts need to be undertaken to better disseminate the MAB YSA Scheme in these regions in order to attract more proposals in the future.

244. Comments were made by the Delegate from Colombia who stressed the fact that the criteria should refer particularly to the LAP and be in line with the Excellence Process. He also invited the Members to work more with universities and other research institutions, and finally suggested that young scientists should be given the possibility to develop their projects in several phases over various years. He also asked to extend the age limit to 35 years if possible, to better reflect the present definition of “young” in UNESCO and the UN system. The Secretariat clarified that revised criteria and conditions were adopted by last MAB-ICC session.

245. The MAB Secretariat then continued in a presentation of the document SC-18/CONF.230/11. In order to enable each Bureau to evaluate well in advance applications, the Secretariat proposed to include in the Council recommendations that per current practice each Bureau shall evaluate the MAB YSA twice per its mandate – once as the new Bureau after one year of its mandate and once as the outgoing Bureau. The Council has not given any objections to this proposal.

246. The MAB Council then endorsed the seven winners of the 2018 MAB Young Scientists Awards. The winners and the titles of their research studies are:

Position	Name	Country	Region	Gender	Title of study
1.	Esteban BRENES MORA	Costa Rica	Latin America and Caribbean	male	Understanding Population ecology and potential habitat of the endangered Baird's Tapir in Savegre and La Amistad MAB BR in Costa Rica
2.	Ryu KUM HYOK	DPR Korea	Asia and Pacific	male	Assessment on the service function of forest ecosystem and ways of the enhancement in Mt. Myohyang Biosphere Reserve
3.	Chung Song RI	DPR Korea	Asia and Pacific	male	Fundamental study on assessment of functions of Mundok Migratory Birds Reserve and preparation for nominating as a coastal biosphere reserve in DPR Korea
4.	Angelina SHARAPONOVA	Russian Federation	Europe and North America	female	Management of the restored landscapes: "assessment of the restoration of degraded wetlands in the BR "Volga-Akhtuba floodplain", with use of biological indicators"
5.	Thuy Linh NGUYEN	Viet Nam	Asia and Pacific	female	Mitigation of human-elephant conflict in Dong Nai BR to support the elephant conservation and local community sustainable livelihood

6-7.	Somaya GHORABA	Egypt	Arab region	female	Assessment of environmental degradation of Burullus Wetland as a potential Biosphere Reserve according to IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) using remote sensing
6-7.	Abena Dufie WIREDU BREMANG	Ghana	Africa	female	The effect of land use and land cover change on water quality: a case study of the lake Bosomtwe Biosphere Reserve

II. Enhancement of MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme

247. The Part II of the document included a project concept note for the project titled "UNESCO MAB Young Scientists Awards: helping young people help the planet".

248. The Secretariat recalled that the last MAB-ICC adopted new criteria and agreed to enhance the visibility and to strengthen the impact of the MAB Young Scientist Award scheme, and that is why the concept note (attached to document) has been prepared.

249. The long-term goal of the proposed project is to enhance the young scientists with opportunities and capacities to conduct scientific studies and research in biosphere reserves addressing the LAP and contributing to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to strengthen biosphere reserves as "sites of excellence" and "learning sites for sustainable development". The project will also increase the award amount, raise the annual number of awards and enable the winners to present their research projects through videos or presentations on different occasions such as during the meetings of the MAB-ICC, regional and youth networks, and other relevant events.

250. This note was briefly illustrated, highlighting the fact that the main aim would be to adopt an integrated approach to increase the number of young scientists awarded and, at the same time, let them engage in promotional and dissemination activities through various communication activities (conferences, video messages, posts, etc.).

251. The Council was therefore asked to comment on this document in view of its endorsement.

252. Estonia came back to the introduction made by the outgoing Chair, referring to the criteria, which limit somehow the applications from developed countries, thus limiting the number of candidates considered from the Europe and North America region. Italy expressed its support to the Award scheme and the increase of the number of awarded young scientists, even if establishing a Fund in Trust fund to this end remains a delicate issue. That is why they requested more information on that very point from the Secretariat.

253. The Secretariat clarified that a Fund-in-Trust (FIT) could be one modality for funding but that other option should be explored. It asked therefore for recommendations from the Council on other and possibly more feasible solutions.

254. The Delegate from Egypt expressed it support to the concept note, recalling the fact that she was herself a beneficiary of that Award in 1991, and that this had changed forever the development of her career. France confirmed its support to the scheme and welcomed the new procedures, even if a concern remained for what regards the concept note and its

budgetary implications. They stressed the fact that the proposed budget of 360,000 US$ in 4 years is an important amount which would help multiply by 4 the number of awarded scientists, but were not clear about the opportunity to create a FIT to cover it.

255. The Secretariat responded reminding the Council that this had been elaborated in implementation of the decision made by the 29th MAB-ICC, asking the Secretariat to prepare a concept note, which was presented and discussed for the first time at the 30th session to the MAB-ICC. The Secretariat also clarified that the amount proposed was not referred only to award grants, but also to other promotional activities such as publications, videos, networking and discussion platform, justifying the amount proposed. It finally clarified that after discussion and recommendations by the MAB-ICC, this would be transformed into a project document for potential donors.

256. The delegate from UK stressed the fact that the programme needs to think more generally about research in the programme, the Young Scientists Award Scheme not being all about it. He also expressed the conviction that promotional activities are important but probably do not need a FIT to be implemented, considering in particular the possibility to achieve a better visibility through existing networks with some minor extra money. To his view, a FIT is premature and the MAB-ICC should think more broadly about research in the MAB Programme.

257. The Secretary replied that the Secretariat was requested to work on the improvement of the MAB YSA Scheme, and a need for funding was identified. He also clarified that an endorsement was needed in order to be entrusted and supported in the search for partnerships and funding.

258. Colombia suggested to use existing platforms such those ones used by the ED sector to call for support for research, specifying that they are special needs in support of research in BRs. Cote d'Ivoire supported the reference made by UK to a broader vision on research activities in the MAB Programme, even if it is clear that UNESCO does not have today the resources to support research itself.

259. The Secretary informed the Council that funding is important but that other means should also be considered such as the alumni network, which has not been used enough in the past. Increased funds would be used also to monitor the effects of the scheme, its "history", as well as to engage in more collaborative research projects, focusing on regional needs and focusing on new priorities like those inspired by the Excellence and Enhancement process while selecting candidates. He expressed his confidence that raising funds should be facilitated by the present focus put on Youth involvement. The Secretariat took note of all remarks made and confirmed that the concept note would be improved on that very basis, then be used to raise funds in support of its implementation. He finally reassured the Council that reports would be presented on any relevant development.

260. Italy requested a more formal approval of the concept note. ROK representative, reminding that the scheme has a long history, expressed their endorsement without modifications of the concept note, as it is their conviction that its implementation would help enhance youth participation. UK clarified that the Secretariat does not need the ICC approval to raise funds and establish FIT, and therefore suggested that the substance of the concept

note could be endorsed separately from the budgetary considerations and the proposed FIT.

261. Sweden encouraged the Secretariat to continue to work in the direction indicated within the concept note and confirmed their endorsement. France commended the work done by the Secretariat for the elaboration of the concept note but confirmed that, to their understanding, the approval of the MAB-ICC on budgetary aspects was not a usual practice and should not be requested. Cote d'Ivoire expressed its full support to the concept note. Colombia expressed its support to the concept note, and recalled the possibility to present it at the forthcoming donors Conference to be held at UNESCO HQ's on 12 and 13 September 2018.

262. Austria endorsed the document in its substance, as this will enforce the Secretariat in its approach of donors. Australia declared itself on the same position, asking the Secretariat to regularly interact with the Bureau and eventually report on its efforts to the next ICC. Nigeria and Spain agreed to support the suggestion made by UK to keep separated the substance of the concept note, which they endorsed, and the Fund-in-Trust aspects, which would require more elaborations. South Africa recalled the Declaration of the first MAB Youth Forum, which includes the involvement of young researchers in exchanges and cooperative research as one of its priorities, and supported the proposal made by Nigeria and Spain.

263. Finally, the MAB-ICC endorsed in general the concept note and encouraged the Secretariat to follow-up on mobilizing an appropriate funding of the MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme and keep the Bureau well informed.

XIV. MAB Communication Strategy and Action Plan

264. The Secretariat highlighted the collaborative nature of the development and design of the Global Communication Strategy and Action Plan, and warmly thanked the UNESCO National Commissions, particularly of Canada and Luxembourg for their support, as well the UNESCO Regional Offices, the MAB Council members, the Advisory Committee members, the MAB National Committees, the pilot biosphere reserves and colleagues from the MAB Secretariat.

265. During the presentation, the Secretariat invited Hans Thulstrup (UNESCO Jakarta Office), Vongani Maringa (MAB National Committee in South Africa), Catherine Cibien (MAB National Committee in France) and Eve Ferguson (Manicouagan Uapishka Biosphere Reserve in Canada) to share their experience and provide their feedback on specific aspects of the communication strategy.

266. The Secretariat highlighted key learning as regards the five big shifts that need to be made to communicate efficiently. The second key learning is the need for a consistent story told in a convincing way. The story helps to build trust in a consistent message. The strategy gives guidance on how to make this for each biosphere reserve. The story can be used through the three key objectives of INSPIRE, EMPOWER, BELONG to create communication activities, increasing the commitment in the MAB vision.

267. The Secretariat indicated that each communication strategy has 6 building blocks,

included in the MAB global strategy. A formula has been tested to tell an informative and powerful story in one minute. Four key audiences that every biosphere reserve want to engage with were identified (community leaders, local businesses, children and youth, and local residents). The strategy provides guidance on how to reach these audiences with specific messages that works for them, tested globally. Activities are provided for each objective to reach any of these four audiences. The measurement is essential to assess the impact and efficiency of the communication activities. The #ProudToshare video campaign videos was used as an example to illustrate this aspect. Finally, activities scheduled for 2018-2020 were presented, including that each biosphere reserve produces a #ProudToshare video as well as capacity building workshops (train the trainers session as in Namibia) and mentorship programme.

268. Australia, Colombia, France, Sudan, Peru, the Russian Federation, Sweden and UK took the floor to congratulate the Secretariat for the excellent presentation and to express their support for the strategy. Several delegates highlighted the success of the videos and the importance of producing these. It was mentioned that the meetings of the regional networks represent opportunities to implement the strategy. France indicated that the communication strategy is fully in line with the Lima Action Plan and should be used to report on its implementation. Sudan acknowledged the audiences targeted, based on research work carried out in the country, as a successful way to inform these audiences about the values of the biosphere reserves and create ownership. Peru indicated that they will implement it in their mangrove biosphere reserve.

269. In the replies to questions, the Secretariat indicated that the videos were available on UNESCO You Tube channel and on the UNESCO MAB website. It was planned to translate the strategy in Spanish and the Secretariat was also seeking support for countries to translate it into other languages (as was done for the tool kit on communication and branding). It also indicated that the strategy will be sent to the countries and put on line as a living document to be updated with additional case studies and stories.

270. The MAB Council adopted the communication strategy and action plan.

XV. Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR)

271. The MAB Secretariat introduced the item referring to document SC-18/CONF.230/13, recalling the decision of the 29th session of the MAB-ICC to develop Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves and reported on the work done so far.

272. The MAB Secretariat informed the MAB Council that 47 nominations has been received from 23 Member States and that all the experts were included in the working group (WG). Based on the discussion of the 29th session of the MAB-ICC and taking into account regional distribution, expertise, preferred themes and gender balance, the WG is divided in four thematic sub-groups (TSG): zonation of biosphere reserves; governance of biosphere reserves; policy, management and business plans and data management and monitoring.

273. The first virtual meeting of the working group was held on 6 July 2018. The first task of the WG was to review the draft of its Terms of reference (ToRs) and road map prepared by the MAB Secretariat and to be submitted consequently to the MAB Bureau for approval as per 29th session decision. The MAB Bureau approved the documents in Annexes of this report entitled “Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR)”and “Road Map (May 2018 – August 2020)” on 25 July 2018.

274. Subsequently, the MAB Secretariat presented the above documents to the MAB Council in order to endorse the composition of the working group and to provide guidance and recommendations regarding the ToRs and the road map.

275. The Chair gave the floor to the members of the MAB-ICC to express their views. Several delegates took the floor:

276. The Republic of Korea welcomed the progress made by the MAB Secretariat. The delegate proposed to develop a synergy between the Working Group on Technical Guidelines and the Process of Excellence, to avoid duplication. She suggested the participation of the members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IABCR) to the working group in order to share their experiences and expertise.

277. Côte d'Ivoire congratulated the MAB Secretariat for the work done. The delegate indicated that it proposed the participation of two experts in the working group: a botanist and a site manager but their names did not appear on the list of experts. Côte d'Ivoire expressed interest in participating in the working group.

278. Australia is an incoming member of MAB ICC**.** The delegate indicated that they find the process too bureaucratic and questioned the rationale of establishing such WG, which is an additional layer to the existing technical organs of the Council. He also questioned the clause of termination of the WG. He also asked why all the experts were included in the WG without selection. The delegate supported the view expressed by the Republic of Korea on synergy with the other organs of the MAB Programme. He welcomed the possibility of extending the tasks of the working group. He also suggested increasing the representation of Latin America and Arab States.

279. Germany thanked the MAB Secretariat for the well-organized and structured work done on the working group. The delegate indicated that a member of the Advisory Committee is participating in the working group and further proposed that the ToRs of the working group specify, in points 5.1 and 5.2, how to increase synergy with the Advisory Committee. The WG would participate to the future working group on Implementation of the Excellence process, bearing in mind that these two WG have different objectives.

280. France expressed its commitment to the implementation of the technical guidelines and thanked the MAB Secretariat for the work done to this end. It suggested that the members of the Advisory Committee be involved early in the process of developing these guidelines, which will undoubtedly strengthen biosphere reserves. France requested that a different working group be set up to reflect on the process of excellence.

281. Mexico also commended the work of the MAB Secretariat. The low representation of Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region in the WG astonished the delegate. The region has a proven expertise in MAB and BR matters, which should be considered. Mexico also proposed that in the working group, should be a subgroup on the new MAB research programme.

282. Estonia mentioned the long lasting need to develop the technical guidelines for BR. The delegate supported the views expressed by the Republic of Korea on synergy with the Advisory Committee and by France on the process of excellence.

283. The United Kingdom agreed with the German proposal to add a mention of the contribution of the IABCR into points 5.1 and 5.2 of the TORs of the working group. Regarding the new working group on the process of excellence, the delegate proposed to wait for its results at the next MAB Council before discussing how these might be considered in the work of the TGBR WG.. With regard to the sub-working group on the research programme proposed by Mexico, the United Kingdom considered that it was necessary to first focus on priority areas and that this could be considered later.

284. Sudan commended the importance of the Technical Guidelines and stressed the need for coherence with the other components of the MAB Programme. The delegate also requested that the Arab States region be more represented in the working group.

285. South Africa supported the MAB Secretariat on the way it selected all the experts proposed by the Member States. It suggested giving additional time (10 days) to underrepresented regions to propose additional experts.

286. Haiti supported Mexico's comments on the low representation of LAC region in the working group and proposed to increase number of experts for a better regional representation. The delegate also urged countries to make greater efforts to increase women's representation.

287. **In its response, the MAB Secretariat** reminded Member States that the MAB Council had not requested the Advisory Committee's participation in the working group at its last session in 2017, therefore this has not been taken. Nevertheless, the representative of the MAB Secretariat mentioned that the MAB Bureau has already highlighted the need of the contribution of the AC to the TGBR working group. She informed that the Chair of the Advisory Committee participated to the face to face meeting of the TGBR working group organized in the margin of the MAB-ICC on 25 July pm. The MAB Secretariat gave insurance that the synergy requested by the Member States will be taken into account in the revised ToRs of the working group. The MAB Secretariat recalled that all the experts proposed by the Member States were retained in the working group and that the imbalance in regional representation and gender was due to the nomination received from the Member States since no one has been left behind.

288. In conclusion of the discussion, the **Council:**

- **Decided** to go for a second round of call of nomination for experts to serve in the TGBR working group to address the issue of uneven regional distribution and gender. It requested the MAB Secretariat to send a letter to the Member States by end of first week of August requesting additional nomination of experts. The name, CV and preferred thematic will be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 August 2018, so as not to delay the work of the working group that has already started.

- **Approved** the TORs and the road map of the WG with the provision of mention of the synergy of the WG with the IACBR.

289. The following observers took the floor:

290. Italy thanked the MAB Secretariat and informed that it would propose experts for subgroup 2 (governance of biosphere reserves) and 3 (policy, management and business plan) and that it would take into account equity.

291. Egypt also supported the working group and welcomed the synergy that will be developed with the Advisory Committee.

XVI. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Biosphere Reserves: Best Practices Sharing.

292. The MAB Secretariat introduced the Agenda Item XVI on best practices in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for biosphere reserves, highlighting the importance of strengthening and creating new opportunities of partnerships and alliances with the private sector to achieve the goals of the MAB Programme.

293. The Chair of the MAB-ICC then invited successful cases to be shared with the audience.

294. A representative of Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) explained that the Giam Siak Kecil – Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve is the first biosphere reserve in the world to be co-initiated and co-managed by private sector.

295. Some of the activities that were successfully implemented in the biosphere reserve are: Mitigation of human – wildlife conflicts; wildlife habitat restoration; protection of endangered species habitat protection; working together with local community in forest patrol, enabling quicker identification and prevention of deforestation; establishing bio-villages; and creating alternative livelihood opportunities through agroforestry programmes.

296. Future plans are to increase the collaborations with other stakeholders and support other biosphere reserves – Berbak Sembilang in South Sumatra.

297. A second presentation was done by The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) - Indonesia. IDH works in the Berbak-Sembilang Biosphere Reserve as well as with various Indonesian islands (Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimatan, Papua, among others).It convenes governments, companies, CSOs, and others in public-private partnerships. Their approaches are designed to drive sustainability from niche to norm in mainstream markets, delivering

impact on Sustainable Development Goals. IDH focuses on creating positive impact on deforestation, living incomes and wages, working conditions, toxic loading and gender.

298. All IDH stakeholder drive the joint design, co-funding and prototyping of new economically viable approaches to realize green & inclusive growth at scale in commodity sectors and sourcing areas such as palm oil, cocoa, coffee, pulp and paper, aquaculture and spices.

299. A third presentation was done by the Head of the Regency of Musi Banyu Asin, who present the Regency work on “Empowered Economy through Smallholders Transformation”.

300. The programme focuses on enhancing good governance; enhancing economic resilience, community empowerment and poverty alleviation; and optimum and responsible natural resources management with specific focus on environmental protection.

301. The representative of the German Commission to UNESCO presented via Skype conference, the Partnership that Danone Waters Germany has with the 16 German UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

302. The partnership started in 2008 and different activities have been done in all German biosphere reserves: building a drainage pond to reduce nutrient load in Lake Schaalseee, restoration of floodplain ecosystems and ponds; production of educational material; water-saving irrigation for a communal herb garden; scientific research on how to clean coastal waters effectively, among other projects.

303. The last presentation was done by the representative of the German MAB National Committee who presented the outcomes of the International Workshop “Biosphere Reserves and Renewable Energies” organized in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve in September 2017, and how renewable energy is linked to Public-Private Partnerships.

304. Biosphere Reserves are well placed to promote renewable energies, since as model regions for sustainable development; they are places for innovation, participation, creation of local value, negotiation of interests and education.

305. Three concrete case studies were presented: Master plan “100 % climate protection” in the Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve in Germany; development of new energy sources in the Kafa Biosphere Reserve in Ethiopia; and a project between Schwabian Alb Biosphere Reserve (Germany) and an energy supplier company linking renewable energies and the protection of bees and their habitats.

306. After the presentations, the MAB Secretariat invited Member States to keep providing ideas and suggestions for strengthening public-private partnerships for biosphere reserves to implement the SDGs 2030 and the Lima Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves 2016-2025.

XVII. Date and venue of the 31th session of the MAB-ICC

307. The MAB Secretariat proposed that the 31st session of the MAB-ICC will be held in the period of June 2019 in UNESCO in Paris, France. The MAB Secretariat will inform all MAB Council members once a date is determined. Nigeria expressed its interest to host the 32nd

Session of the Council, as Africa has never hosted the MAB-ICC, even if a decision should be taken by the next MAB-ICC in 2019.

XVIII. Other matters

308. The first part of this session focused on the Palembang declaration from the International Conference on Biosphere Reserve, entitled “Engaging Stakeholders towards Community Empowerment” which took place on July 2018. After the reading of this Declaration by Indonesia, several countries made comments and suggestions.

309. South Africa suggested, on behalf of AFRIMAB, that Indonesia be commended for this great initiative. It also recommended that harmonization between the MAB Programme and UNESCO’s other programmes be highlighted.

310. Egypt suggested that the Palembang declaration mentions the first MAB Youth forum and the MAB scientific Programme.

311. Australia indicated that the MAB-ICC needs only to take note and welcome the Palembang declaration but not to approve it. France supported Australia’s view on the Palembang declaration. In a conclusion, the Palembang declaration has been noted and welcomed.

312. The second part of the session was dedicated to the motion made by France on the new Biodiversity strategy. This motion is formulated as follows:

- The MAB ICC, meeting for its 30th session from 23 to 28 July in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia, wishes to highlight the importance of the MAB Programme and its World Network of 686 Biosphere Reserves in 122 countries for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its vision for 2050 "Living in Harmony with Nature".

- At the time the international community is preparing for a post-2020 global biodiversity framework in line with the United Nations agenda 2030, the MAB-ICC emphasizes the essential contribution of MAB and its WNBR in particular on special areas of conservation, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to biodiversity and ecosystems, the sustainable use of the elements of biological diversity, the involvement of youth and gender equality.

- Therefore, the MAB-ICC asks the Parties of the CBD and UNESCO to facilitate the consideration of the activities and experiences of the MAB Programme and its WNRB into the preparation and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

313. Colombia, Germany, Haiti, Slovakia and Nigeria supported this motion and the MAB ICC endorsed it.

314. The last point of the session was about the initiative made by Colombia on the organization of an important meeting, within the framework of IPBS at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in 2019. Colombia suggested that this initiative be mentioned on the MAB-ICC report. France supported Colombia’s proposition.

XIX. Adoption of the Report

315. Ms Johanna Mac Taggart (Sweden), Rapporteur of the Council, presented the draft report of its 30th session to the Members and Observer Delegations section by section, and paragraph by paragraph where appropriate. A small number of modifications, additions and deletions introduced by delegations were noted.

316. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed during the review of the report on 27 July 2018, the last day of the 30th session of the Council.

XX. Closure of the session

317. Ms Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, delivered a statement via video message, at the closing session of the MAB-ICC. She congratulated the newly elected Chair of the Council, Mrs Sudarmonowati and the new Bureau members for their appointment.

318. She also thank to all delegates for the tremendous work, to Mr Didier Babin and the former members of the Bureau for their outstanding contribution to the MAB Programme.

319. On behalf of UNESCO and its Natural Sciences Sector, she expressed her deep gratitude to the Government of Indonesia, of South Sumatra as well as the local government of Palembang for hosting this 30th session of the International Coordinating Council with such a success.

320. She also congratulated all countries that submitted successfully new biosphere reserve proposals, including two new countries, Moldova and Mozambique.

321. Ms Schlegel expressed that UNESCO was also proud of the progress of the “Strategy for Excellence”, the outcomes of the MAB Youth Forum, and the development of the BIOPALT Project. She also congratulated Member States for the adoption of the MAB global communication strategy and action plan, and encourage them to keep sharing their stories and achievements on #ProudToShare.

322. The MAB Secretary expressed his sincere thanks to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the 30th session of the MAB-ICC, as well as the new Chair, the MAB Council members and all delegates for their important work and for their continuous support to the MAB Programme.

323. He thanked all MAB Programme colleagues working both in Paris and in the UNESCO field offices, and the interpreters for their hard work.

324. The Head of Regency of Musi Banyu Asin, Mr Dodi Reza Alex Noerdin, expressed that important efforts were done by the Regency Government in safeguarding the environment and carrying out sustainable green development and maintaining the cultural heritage of the

Sembilang Park.

325. He also highlighted that this meeting was a great opportunity to exchange ideas with other countries, and he reiterated his commitment to protect the Berbak-Sembilang Biosphere Reserve.

326. The Chair of the Council closed the 30th session of the MAB-ICC by noting that this was a fruitful session. She expressed that these positive results were possible to achieved thanks to the important work and contributions of all ICC Members and Observers. She also expressed her sincere thanks to the Bureau members, the MAB Secretariat, the technical support staff and the interpreters.

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Annex 2: Document SC-18/CONF.230/8

PROPOSALS FOR NEW BIOSPHERE RESERVES AND EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS/RENAMING TO BIOSPHERE RESERVES THAT ARE PART OF THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (WNBR)

1. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions to biosphere reserves that are already part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) were considered at the 24rd meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 5 to 8 February 2018.

2. The members of the Advisory Committee examined 27 proposals for new biosphere reserves (including one re-submission of a proposal for new biosphere reserve) and three requests for expansion/modification and/or renaming of already existing biosphere reserves and formulated their recommendations regarding specific sites in line with the recommendation categories as follows:

1) ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval***: the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional information is needed. For already existing sites, the proposed changes are recommended for approval.

2) ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information***: the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve or the proposed changes for already existing sites are recommended for approval **subject to** receiving the specific information as requested by the Advisory Committee. If the MAB Secretariat receives the information by 31th May 2018, it will be considered by the MAB ICC at its 30th session to be held from 23 to 28 July 2018 and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR. If submitted by 30 September 2018, the information will be assessed by the MAB ICC at its 31 st session in 2019.

3) **Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to existing biosphere reserves recommended for deferral**: the proposed site is recommended for deferral or the proposed changes for existing biosphere reserves are recommended for deferral as they do not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and/or major clarifications with regard to application of the Statutory Framework to the proposed area are requested by the Advisory Committee. The relevant national authorities are therefore invited to revise the nomination and/or provide the requested clarifications for submission to the MAB Secretariat at their earliest convenience.

3. The MAB Secretariat received six notification for voluntary withdrawal: five from Australia (Wilsons Promontory Biosphere Reserve, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne Biosphere Reserve, Yathong Biosphere Reserve, Barkindji Biosphere Reserve and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserve) and one from the United States (San Dimas Experimental Forest).

4. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the attached recommendations of the IACBR as well as the additional information received by the MAB Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information. The Bureau will recommend for the consideration of the MAB ICC final decisions on all sites included in this document.

5. The MAB ICC is invited to decide on the new sites for inclusion in the WNBR and extensions/modifications and/or renaming of biosphere reserves already included in the WNBR that could be approved.

6. The MAB-ICC is invited to take note of the decision of five Australian sites (Wilsons Promontory Biosphere Reserve, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne Biosphere Reserve, Yathong Biosphere Reserve, Barkindji Biosphere Reserve and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserve) and one US site (San Dimas Experimental Forest) authotrityies for voluntarily withdrawal.

EXAMINATION OF NEW BIOSPHERE RESERVE NOMINATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR EXTENSION/ MODIFICATION/RENAMING TO DESIGNATED BIOSPHERE RESERVES THAT ARE PART OF WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES

7. **Arly (Burkina Faso).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the well-prepared nomination for this area situated in the West African savannah. The Arly region is one of three areas of the W-Arly-Pendjari landscape, and constitutes a unique natural heritage. The proposed biosphere reserve has a core area of 218,429.651 ha, a buffer zone of 614,534.06 ha and a transition area of 1,287,715.73 ha. It encompasses a Ramsar site and a Natural World Heritage site.

8. The biological diversity observed in the proposed biosphere reserve is related to the remarkable heterogeneity of the plant formations, accentuated by the presence of the Pendjari stream, one of the main rivers and its tributaries. One of the major assets of this region is its wide variety of habitats ranging from sandstone crustal plateaus to water bodies of major rivers. The relief determines a diverse range of landscapes which are among the main tourist attractions of this region. There are five major types of habitats: wetlands with aquatic meadows, gallery forests, dry clear forests, and tree and shrub savannahs, which are the most common type of vegetation. The area is the natural habitat for a number of endangered plant species including *Vitellaria paradoxa, Afzelia africana, Khaya senegalensis* and *Adansonia digitata.* Vulnerable and endangered animal species such as cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), lion (*Panthera leo*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), damalisque (*Damaliscus lunatus korrigum)*, oricou vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) and crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina)* are also found on the site.

9. The main economic activities of the 685, 814 inhabitants are crop, livestock and agriculture. The main cultivated crops are cereal (millet, sorghum), cash crops (peanuts, cotton), potatoes and vegetables, while animal livestock includes donkeys, oxen, rams and goats.

10. The Advisory Committee commended the highly participatory process surrounding the designation of the biosphere reserve, which included several village information meetings that brought together local opinion leaders, traditional leaders and local

leaders, the regional planning session of the Territory, which brought together technical services, NGOs and administrative authorities at the regional level, and the national validation workshop.

11. The Advisory Committee noted the lack of management plan for the entire proposed biosphere reserve, but acknowledged with satisfaction the provision of information on the composition of the management unit of the proposed biosphere reserve including the roles of each of the stakeholders. The Committee therefore recommended that the site **be approved** and the authorities are encouraged to seek funding and build the partnerships needed to implement the management plan. The Advisory Committee also acknowledged the cooperation between the proposed biosphere reserve and Pendjari Biosphere Reserve of Benin and encouraged the two countries to develop a transboundary site proposal.

12. **Mount Huangshan (China).** The proposed Mount Huangshan Biosphere Reserve, located in southern Anhui province, China, is situated in the hilly region of Nanling Range in southeast China. The total area of the proposed reserve 42,558.48 hectares (ha). The core area occupies 7,743.84 ha, the buffer zone covers 4,958.35 ha and the transition area encompasses 29,856.29 ha. There are no inhabitants within the core area and buffer zone, with a permanent population of 24,782 people in the transition area.

13. The area has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1990 and a UNESCO Global Geopark since 2004.

14. The forest ecosystem of the proposed site has been left most intact since the last glacial epoch. In addition, due to the impact of the Quaternary glacial period, Mount Huangshan has become a sanctuary for many ancient animals and plants. It is thus one of the distribution centres for ancient species in East Asia and the world.

15. With a forest coverage rate as high as 90.51%, the rich variety of the plant community and the complete vertical band spectrum, the area functions as an important germplasm gene bank and a hotspot for animal and plant species.

16. The proposed area is also an important water source for the Xin'An Jiang river system, the Changjiang river system, the Qing Yi river system and the Qiupu river system. In addition, it functions as an important migrating channel for many organisms between north and south China, a key ‘beacon’ for migratory birds, an important ‘stepping stone’ linking the Asia-Pacific West Bank islands with internal Eurasia and a hotspot of the West Pacific Rim biosphere stretching back to the Mesozoic era.

17. The buffer zone is not suitable for large-scale farmland cultivation due to the mountain topography. The main form of land use is tea plantation, which is conducive to the mountain climate or microclimate and does not affect the indigenous vegetation. Traditional tea cultivation and manufacturing technology reflects local residents’ understanding of the harmony between people and nature.

18. The Advisory Committee noted that Mount Huangshan has played a very important role in ecological resource conservation and regional economic promotion, and provides solutions for exploring or testing sustainable development in the region. As development in the area focuses mainly on tourism, the Committee encouraged research into other development options as well as alternative objectives related to the sustainable use of biodiversity.

19. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Mount Huangshan Biosphere Reserve Management Plan has been produced for the period 2017-2026 and that the Joint Management Committee has been established.

20. The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission, commended the Chinese authorities for the very well written and high-quality nomination dossier, and recommended that Mount Huangshan **be approved** as a biosphere reserve. The Committee invites the Chinese authorities to provide a map showing the areas and zonation of the World Heritage juxtaposed with those of the biosphere reserve.

21. **Mt. Kumgang (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).** Geographically located in the middle of the Great Paektu Mountain Range and linked with adjacent marine areas in the east, the proposed biosphere reserve encompasses the areas of Kosong County, Kumgang County and Tongchon County in Kangwon Province. The proposed site covers approximately 262,589 ha in total including a core area of 22,213 ha, a buffer zone of 50,651 ha and a transition area of 189,725 ha.

22. Mt. Kumgang is a forest-oriented ecosystem linked to coastal, agricultural and freshwater ecosystems. The area includes many endemic species and rare species of either global or national significance. The area is home to 1,228 plant species and 258 vertebrate species of which 46 plant species and 42 vertebrate species are threatened. The coastal area and natural lakes include the habitats of migratory birds that use the East Asia-Australasian Migratory Pathway. The wintering area of the Red-crowned Cranes is protected by the state.

23. The core area covers approximately 8.4% of the entire area of the proposed reserve, and has a unique and vulnerable alpine forest ecosystem that hosts threatened and endemic species. The buffer zones cover approximately 19.3% of the entire area and are located on the terrestrial and marine parts of the proposed reserve. The transition area covers approximately 72.3% of the entire area concerned. Tourism in the buffer zones supported by strong infrastructure, and agriculture, fruit farming and fishery in the transition area are the main economic activities in the proposed reserve.

24. The agricultural area of the proposed Mt. Kumgang biosphere reserve covers approximately 10.3% of the entire area of the proposed site. Fishery is also an important economic activity in the transition area after agriculture. Forestry activities in the transition area are concentrated on plantations. In addition to the exploitation of medicinal plants, wild fruits and edible herbs also bring economic benefits to local people.

25. Mt. Kumgang is renowned as one of six famous mountains, eight scenic spots and three sacred mountains in Korea, and is well known throughout the country and across the world.

26. The government has set long-term goals to develop the Wonsan-Kumgangsan International Tourist Zone, which includes Mt. Kumgang area as a central feature. Accordingly, it has prepared a plan to develop this international tourist zone and has made efforts to implement it.

27. A management policy or plan for the area as a biosphere reserve has not yet been established and is currently under consultation with all concerned stakeholders.

28. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that marine areas were included in the proposed biosphere reserve (buffer zone and transition area) and occupy 6.4% of the total area.

29. The Committee commended the national authorities for their major efforts towards conservation over a large area including mountains, wetlands, coasts and marine areas.

30. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination, congratulated the DPR Korean authorities for the very well written and high-quality proposal, and recommended that Mt. Kumgang **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

31. **Khangchendzonga (India).** The proposal for Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve was submitted to the 2012 MAB ICC and deferred. The new submission takes into account all the recommendations from 2012 and provides new and updated information.

32. The proposed site encompasses an area of 293,112 ha and is located in the state of Sikkim, India, bordering Nepal to the west and Tibet (China) to the north-west. The core area covers 178,400 ha, the buffer zones cover 83,592 ha and the approximate size of the transition areas is 31,120 ha. The site is one of 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world.

33. The proposed site is one of the highest ecosystems in the world reaching elevations of 1,220 metres above sea level (masl) to over 8,586 masl. It includes a range of ecoclines varying from subtropical to arctic, as well as vast natural forests in different biomes that support an immensely rich diversity of forest types and habitats resulting in high species diversity and endemism.

34. The core area is a major transboundary Wildlife Protected Area. The southern and central landscape which makes up 86% of the core area is situated in the Greater Himalayas, while the northern part of the area which accounts for 14% is characterized by trans-Himalayan features. Buffer zones are being developed to promote ecotourism activities. Plantation and soil conservation works are also being carried out. Over 118 species of the large number of medicinal plants found in Dzongu Valley are of ethno-medicinal utility. The transition zone is targeted for eco-development activities, afforestation, plantations of medicinal herbs and soil conservation measures. The main economic activities are agricultural and horticultural crops, animal husbandry, pisciculture, dairy, poultry farming and so on. The promotion of ecotourism in the transition zone is being planned and promoted as a priority to ensure local people's livelihoods.

35. Traditions of conserving forest and wildlife already form part of the culture of the Sikkimese people. Accordingly, the relationship between the proposed biosphere reserve and local peoples gradually improved as rights of access to the local resources of the buffer zones and traditional ways of life were secured.

36. The proposed site is a transboundary biodiversity hotspot conservation area bordering China to the North and Nepal to the west. It provides an opportunity for a joint collaboration on transboundary conservation of biodiversity resources.

37. The proposed biosphere reserve area has high religious significance and cultural values. The core zone – Khangchendzonga National Park – was designated a World Heritage Site in 2016 under the 'mixed' category. Many of the mountains and peaks,

lakes, caves, rocks, stupas (shrines) and hot springs function as sacred and pilgrimage sites.

38. The Advisory Committee commends the Indian authorities for its cultural and religious conservation efforts. The Committee noted that the long-term Management Plan for the proposed site is under preparation and encouraged its finalization by national authorities. It also encouraged the continuation of transboundary conservation activities and the strengthening of transboundary cooperation with China and Nepal.

39. The Advisory Committee congratulated the Indian authorities for their well-prepared proposal and recommended that Khangchendzonga **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

40. **Berbak-Sembilang (Indonesia).** The proposed Berbak-Sembilang Biosphere Reserve is located on the southeast coast of Sumatra in South Sumatra and Jambi Provinces, Indonesia. The total contiguous area of the proposed site covers 3,819,837.28 hectares (terrestrial 3,667,336.26 ha, marine 152,501.02 ha), consisting of core area of 502,666.97 ha (terrestrial 458,655.23 ha, marine 44,011.74 ha), buffer zone of 922,965.29 ha (terrestrial 814,476.01 ha, marine buffer 108,489.28 ha) and transition area of 2,394,205.02 ha (terrestrial only).

41. The core area of the proposed site includes Berbak and Sembilang National Park as well as two wildlife reserves. Berbak and Sembilang are two of the seven Ramsar sites in Indonesia which account for 110,000 ha of undisturbed peat swamp forest ecosystems and 60,000 ha of freshwater swamp forests, mangrove forest areas and lowland forest areas commonly found surrounding riverbanks with a swamp depth of up to 10 m.

42. The proposed core area has a high biodiversity making it a suitable habitat for various Sumatran flora and fauna, rare species and the Ramsar site. It thus performs an important function for Indonesia and even the world.

43. The buffer zone of the proposed biosphere reserve is composed of forest production areas, protected areas, industrial forest plantations and local farming (traditional agriculture).

44. The transition area is dominated by the production area, which includes oil palm plantation, traditional rubber plantation, industrial forest plantation, traditional farming (rice fields, dry fields, gardens, etc.), settlements (villages, small city), forest production, rivers and small lakes, and so on.

45. The buffer zone and the transition area are inhabited by the Melayu, a local ethnic group, and Java, Batak, Makassar and Chinese immigrants. There is no evidence of inter-ethnic conflicts in terms of social interaction.

46. The Advisory Committee noted that the proposed biosphere reserve has developed an Integrated Management Plan 2018-2022. In this regard, it encouraged the Indonesian authorities to develop specific policies and actions to promote sustainable development in the area.

47. The Advisory Committee also noted with satisfaction the expansion of mangrove forests. As there are many potential challenges to ensuring protection for biodiversity, such as the conversion of natural ecosystems into oil palm plantations, the Committee

encouraged the governmental authorities to introduce specific measures to reduce existing threats and restore degraded ecosystems.

48. The Advisory Committee welcomed the cooperation between various local, national and international organizations and NGOs.

49. The Advisory Committee congratulated the Indonesian authorities on their well-written and high-quality nomination dossier and recommended that Berbak-Sembilang **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

50. **Rinjani-Lombok (Indonesia).** The proposed Rinjani-Lombok Biosphere Reserve includes Lombok Island (Nusa Tenggara Barat Province) and forms part of the Lesser Sunda region. Its topography consists of relatively flat coastal areas and hilly and mountainous areas of varying elevations. The highest peak is Mount Rinjani, which reaches 3,726 m above sea level and is the second highest volcanic mountain in Indonesia.

51. The total area of the proposed Rinjani-Lombok Biosphere Reserve is 459,086.62 ha consisting of a core area of 41,330.00 ha, a buffer zone of 109,443.30 ha and a transition area of 308,323.32 ha. The core area which is characterized by tropical mountain rainforest forms the conservation area of Gunung Rinjani National Park. The buffer zone includes protected forest, production forest, cultivated areas and settlements. The transition area incorporates rice fields, horticulture areas, agriculture land, plantations, settlements and urban areas.

52. The proposed reserve has a very high level of biodiversity with various types of forest vegetation (i.e. savannah forest vegetation, lowland rainforest and mountain rainforest). About 40% of the forests in the proposed Rinjani-Lombok biosphere reserve area are primary forests. The characteristics of flora and fauna in the region of the proposed reserve are representative of forms of Asian and Australian species with high levels of endemism, linked to the area's location within the Wallacean region.

53. The buffer zone and the transition area have the potential to produce horticultural plants (vegetables and fruits), crops (rice, annual crops) and plantation crops (coffee, cacao), and animal husbandry (milk cows, goats, chickens and others). Tourism activities in this area revolve around the natural scenic beauty of Gunung Rinjani and the culture of the Sasak community. The Sasak community has a unique cultural heritage maintained over centuries up to the present day.

54. The Advisory Committee commended Indonesian authorities for their efforts to restore the degraded forests. It noted that the proposed biosphere reserve is a pilot project for the implementation of REDD (*Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation*) in Lombok Island. Income generated from carbon compensation is envisioned as a sustainable source of financing for the reserve.

55. The proposed site has an initial Integrated Management Plan. In this regard, the Committee encouraged Indonesian authorities to develop specific policies and actions to promote sustainable development in the reserve. The Coordination Forum for the Management of Rinjani-Lombok Biosphere Reserve, established by the Governor of Nusa Tenggara Barat, functions as an umbrella to coordinate the development of the biosphere reserve at every stage from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to strategy development and the implementation of innovations.

56. The Advisory Committee noted that all the areas covered by the proposed biosphere reserve are terrestrial and highlighted the absence of a marine ecosystem. It therefore asked the national authorities to describe the marine environment and fishing and explain the exclusion of marine areas from the biosphere reserve. The Committee encouraged the authorities to consider the inclusion of marine areas including mangrove areas. As there are many challenges to ensuring protection of biodiversity, the Committee encouraged the governmental authorities to provide specific measures to reduce existing threats and restore the degraded ecosystems.

57. The Advisory Committee commended the Indonesian authorities on their well-written and high-quality nomination dossier and recommended that Rinjani-Lombok **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

58. **Kopet Dag (Iran).** The proposed biosphere reserve covers part of the Kopet Dag mountain range and contains exquisite natural and cultural landscapes. The Kopet Dag mountain range is located along the common border between Iran and Turkmenistan and extends in northwest and southeast directions. The Golul and Sarani Protected Area, or the former Sarani National Park, located in the Kopet Dag mountain range, is one of the oldest protected habitats in Iran.

59. The proposed biosphere reserve is located 31 km north of Shirvan, and shares a 30-km border with Turkmenistan. The total area of the proposed site is 34,484 ha. The core area consists of two zones with areas of 1,911 ha and 254 ha covering a total area of 2,165 ha. The buffer zone includes two zones covering 16,432 ha. The transition area covers 15,887 ha.

60. The wild ancestors of many species of animals and plants originated in Kopet Dag, and the area is known today as the endemic centre or origin of several exclusive species. The ecological region of Kopet Dag is an important part of the Irano-Anatolian hotspot, whose primary focus includes conserving many of the endangered species in this area. The proposed site is characterized by high biological diversity and the diversity of its ethnic groups and cultures (i.e. high biocultural diversity). From the perspective of environmental and human linkages, the juniper tree and the leopard are accorded special status among the communities of this region.

61. There are 19 villages as well as nomadic settlements. The main economic activities are agriculture and livestock, which result in land degradation due to enhanced land use, regardless of its potential. In the transition zone, agricultural and livestock activities should aim to reduce pressure on pastures and woodlands, and control and minimize soil erosion.

62. The Advisory Committee commended the Iranian authorities for their efforts to integrate conservation of cultural diversity and biological diversity. It recommended them to develop an integrated Management Plan for the biosphere reserve and encouraged to implement specific measures to reduce existing threats and restore degraded ecosystems.

63. The Advisory Committee noted that Iran has conducted a project entitled ‘Participatory management of the “Golul Sarani” protected Area, with a view to the feasibility of establishing a peace park (TBC) and Biosphere Reserve’. However, due to the restrictive policies of Iran and Turkmenistan, especially along their political borders, the Iranian authorities elected to begin the process by creating a biosphere reserve and promoting the region. This may lead to cross-border talks on transboundary

conservation.

64. The Advisory Committee congratulated the Iranian authorities on their well-written proposal and recommended that Kopet Dag **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

65. **Quirimbas (Mozambique).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on the well-prepared nomination of the first biosphere reserve for Mozambique. The Quirimbas area is located in the Cabo Delgado province and encompasses one of the largest protected areas in the country, the Quirimbas National Park. The park has been designated as a Ramsar site and is recorded in the tentative list of the World Heritage site. It consists of a collection of 11 islands, a combination of marine parks and a freshwater system including the Montepuez River, as well as Lake Bilibiza, a bird sanctuary.

66. With a total area of 1,481,234 ha divided into a core area of 416,113 ha, a buffer zone of 426,098 ha and a transition area of 639,023 ha, the proposed biosphere reserve combines marine and terrestrial ecosystems. These support 3,000 floral species of which 1,000 are endemic, 23 species of reptiles including five species of marine turtles inscribed on the IUCN Red List, 140 species of mollusks, 10 species of amphibians, 447 species of birds, 375 species of fish, 750 species of insects, 46 species of terrestrial mammals including four of the 'big five' (elephant, lion, buffalo and leopard) and eight species of marine mammals including whales and dolphins.

67. The area has a population of 166,885 inhabitants whose main economic activities are fishing, animal husbandry, tourism, arts and crafts, and water transport. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for preserving local cultural diversity including the artistic traditions of the Makonde tribe.

68. The Advisory Committee appreciated the wide participatory process undertaken during development of the nomination dossier and the collaborative platform established to enhance stakeholder participation. The Committee encouraged the authorities to collaborate and pursue consultations with the 700 inhabitants of the villages of Pedreira, Mussemuco and Namitil located in the core area – a situation inherited from National Park status – and to monitor their activities to ensure compatibility with the conservation function of the core area.

69. The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for the presence of seven meteorological stations in the area that support climate change impact monitoring.

70. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved** and encouraged the authorities to:

- Integrate conflict management into the proposed management plan and submit a copy to UNESCO after completion.
- Work to ensure the functionality of three non-functional meteorological stations to generate information on climate change.
- Develop a monitoring system for deforestation and fires.

71. **Maasheggen (The Netherlands).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal by the Netherlands. The proposed site is a small agricultural river landscape in the Meuse valley, located in the south-eastern part of the Netherlands, shaped by continuous interaction between people and nature. The site is used for hay meadows and cattle grazing, and includes the oldest and largest network of natural hedges in the

Netherlands. The landscape comprises a mosaic of small agricultural fields enclosed by hedges, aged pollard trees, sand dunes, forests, lakes (former meanders), wet meadows and reed beds. It also contains xeric sand calcareous grasslands and lowland hay meadows. The main risks to the site are flood risks and agriculture intensification.

72. The total area of the proposed biosphere reserve is 6,700 ha. The core areas cover 665 ha and consist of Natura 2000 sites and nationally protected areas that form part of the Nature Network Netherlands (NNN), which is owned by the state and Brabants landschap. The majority of the buffer zone, which covers 2,735 ha, is included in the NNN and is managed under a management plan that combines farming and nature conservation and focuses on hedge networks. The transition area covers 3,300 ha and consists of 11 villages, roads and a mix of crops. Residential areas cover 825 ha and are home to about 40,000 inhabitants located inside and in the immediate surroundings of the perimeter.

73. The proposed area provides an obvious opportunity to explore and demonstrate collaborative approaches to sustainable development and sustainable tourism on a regional scale. The vision for the site is to become a green catalyst for sustainable development, reconciling economic, social and environmental needs – a 'space for memories in the northern Meuse Valley'. It focuses on four development themes: water systems, urban expansion, recreation and riverine hedges. The Advisory Committee noted the high level and integration of entrepreneurs and citizens participating in energy-reducing initiatives towards becoming an energy-neutral region.

74. The Advisory Committee commended the Netherlands authorities for the quality of the proposal and recommended that the site **be approved.**

75. The Advisory Committee invited the Netherlands authorities to provide more detailed information on how the BASICS programme, tourism activity development and sustainable management of farmlands are funded, implemented and coordinated by the proposed biosphere reserve within the buffer zone and transition area.

76. **Charyn Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan).** The territory of the proposed biosphere reserve is situated in the basin of the Charyn River. This unique biogeosystem is located in the central part of the Ili intermontane basin in the southeast of Kazakhstan. The reserve unites the canyon-like valley of the Charyn River with relict ash forest, adjacent areas of deserts with exotic relief, and steppes of the Central Asian type in the Ulken-Boguty Mountains. A unique geographic feature of the territory is the penetration of extreme arid desert ecosystems into the territory of China and Mongolia.

77. The floristic diversity of the proposed Charyn Biosphere Reserve includes about 1,000 species of higher vascular plants belonging to 426 genera and 90 families. These account for 18% of the flora of Kazakhstan (totalling 5,600 species). The fauna of the proposed biosphere reserve is rich and diverse. There are four species of tailless amphibians, which account for 33% of the batrachians of Kazakhstan. Of these, two species – Danatina toad and Siberian frog – are listed in the Red Data Book of Kazakhstan (1996). A significant number of floral and faunal species are listed in the IUCN Red Data Book.

78. The total area of the proposed biosphere reserve territory amounts to 239,731 ha. The core area occupies 9,427.5 ha, the buffer zone covers 117,622.5 ha and the transition area encompasses about 112,681 ha.

79. People have long inhabited the entire Charyn river valley with its wealth of animals and plant resources. During the twentieth century the population engaged mainly in agriculture. At present, the area covered by the proposed biosphere reserve accounts for the highest proportion of tourists visiting the southeast of Kazakhstan. Effective organization of tourists helps to reduce environmental pressures on the most valuable areas. The region's potential is linked to the development of eco-recreational tourism, as well as cattle breeding and plant growing. The experience of eco-recreational tourism development in the biosphere reserve territory may be successfully replicated in other parts of Kazakhstan at the regional level. The natural conditions of the proposed Charyn Biosphere Reserve and adjacent areas are very varied, lending themselves to the development of diversified agriculture and tourism.

80. The area also contains famous natural monuments – the only one in Eurasia (the second after Canada), the relict Ash Grove covering an area of 5,000 ha and the famous Kazakhstan canyons of the Charyn and Temerlik rivers.

81. The area is managed by the Charyn State National Park administration and the Biosphere Reserve Coordination Council, created in 2017. The present Management Plan of the Charyn State Nature National Park describes the management of the core, buffer and main parts of the transition zones. Some land users also have evolved their own Management Plans in accordance with the Management Plan of the proposed reserve. The Advisory Committee recommends to develop a single integrated Management Plan.

82. The Advisory Committee asked the national authorities to clarify the protection status of the western area of the buffer zone.

83. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the UNDP/GEF project facilitated *inter alia* training and professional development for state nature reserve staff and exchange of experiences at the national and international level.

84. The Advisory Committee congratulated the Kazakhstan authorities on their well-written and high-quality proposal and recommended that Charyn **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

85. **Zhongar Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan).** The proposed Zhongar biosphere reserve is located on the northern macroslope of Zhetysu Alatau ridge and incorporates the entire range of mountain ecosystems characteristic of the mountains of Tien Shan and Central Asia. The total area of the proposed reserve covers 645,548 ha. The core area occupies 142,927 ha, the buffer zone covers 312,721 ha and the transition area amounts to about 189,900 ha. The core area and buffer zone correspond to the territory of Zhongar State National Nature Park. The core area is strictly protected under the *nature reserve regime* of the national park, which encompasses the natural mountain complex of the Zhetysu Mountains.

86. The main economic sectors in the transition zone are agriculture and processing industries. Notable types of industrial production include sunflower oil, flour and natural water. Lands are mainly used for grazing and as hayfields. Small farms use lands for cattle grazing and planting cereals. Road infrastructure in the territory of the proposed biosphere reserve consists mainly of ground tracks between the cordons.

87. At the present time, the territory of the proposed biosphere reserve has acquired global

importance as the location of the wild apple gene bank.

88. The proposed biosphere reserve is managed by the Zhongar State National Park administration and the Biosphere Reserve Coordination Council, created in 2017. The Coordination Council is a collegial public body created to introduce effective management policies and to promote the sustainable use of resources, alternative activities, and resource-conserving and resource-restoring technologies.

89. The Advisory Committee noted that the Centre for GIS and Remote-Sensing 'Terra' elaborated a study on the socio-economic situation and cultural impact of the biosphere reserve on the territory, within the UNDP/GEF project 'In-situ conservation of the mountain agrobiodiversity in Kazakhstan' and governmental projects on establishing a nature park in 2010 and extension of the territory of the reserve in 2015.

90. The Advisory Committee commended the Kazakhstan authorities for their effort to conserve the biodiversity and landscape of the National Park.

91. As combining the separate management plans of the National Park and other areas may not be sufficient to ensure effective coordination and management of the entire biosphere reserve, the Advisory Committee has encouraged the national authorities to prepare one inclusive management plan covering the whole area of the biosphere reserve in the near future.

92. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the submission of additional information regarding measures to cope with threats and encouraged the Kazakhstan authorities to enforce these measures in an effective manner.

93. The Advisory Committee congratulated the national authorities on the well-prepared proposal and recommended that Zhongar **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

94. **Suncheon Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea).** The proposed Suncheon Biosphere Reserve is situated on the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula in East Asia. It includes the two tallest mountains in Suncheon City, Mt. Mohusan (919 m) and Mt. Jogyesan (887 m), which together form a small mountain range with diverse ridges and hills that stretch towards the coastline in the southeast. In addition, Mt. Jogyesan is home to traditional Buddhist temples renowned in the Republic of Korea that have been designated as a National Scenic Site and a Provincial Park.

95. The eco-axis of the proposed site is divided into two areas – terrestrial ecosystems which centre on Mt. Jogyesan and coastal tidal flat wetland ecosystems in Suncheonman Bay. River ecosystems function as corridors between the terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, forming healthy ecological networks.

96. The proposed Suncheon biosphere reserve covers an area of 93,840 ha (terrestrial: 91,040 ha, marine: 2,800 ha), consisting of core areas (9,368 ha), buffer zones (20,985 ha) and a transition area (63,487 ha).

97. There are two core areas – a wetland ecosystem composed of Suncheonman Bay and Dongcheon Estuary (both designated Ramsar Wetlands), and a mountain ecosystem consisting of Jogyesan Provincial Park. Two buffer zones surround the core areas and include two reservoirs close to Jogyesan Provincial Park. The transition area is composed mainly of agricultural and residential areas, and private forests.

98. Each ecosystem of the proposed site brims with rich biological and landscape resources including various crustaceans and fish and shellfish, medicinal herbs, temple landscapes, communities of Reed (*Phragmites communis*) and East Asian Seepweed (*Suaeda japonica*), and aquatic ecosystem-based landscape resources such as the Sangsaho Lake and Juamho Lake reservoirs.

99. The proposed site is a biodiversity hotspot with diverse habitats and species adapted to the unique natural environment of Suncheon including the ecosystems of the southern coast, inland wetlands and mountains.

100. The buffer zones and transition area are home to rural, fishing and mountain-dwelling villagers who utilize ecosystem services to maintain their economic activities, such as cultivating rice, medicinal herbs and special products including plums and persimmons, and collecting forestry products. They are supported and guided by the Suncheon City Government and the Jeollanamdo Provincial Government.

101. The entire administrative area of Suncheon City is proposed as a biosphere reserve, with a single local government responsible for management of the proposed site. Suncheon City has a population of 281,389 with 104,507 households, and a population density of about 304.6/km².

102. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their proactive approach in demonstrating conservation and sustainable development. The Committee noted with satisfaction the involvement of the local government in the entire process. It further commended the national authorities for their successful efforts to restore the Suncheonman Bay tidal flats within the core areas and buffer zones.

103. The Advisory Committee congratulated the national authorities for the high-quality of the nomination dossier and recommended that Suncheon **be approved** as a biosphere reserve.

104. **Mountainous Urals (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation for the Mountainous Urals Biosphere Reserve. The proposed area covers 173,578 ha and is located in the Southern Urals at the boundary of Europe and Asia, in the West Eurasian Taiga. The dominant ecosystems are mixed coniferous broad-leaved forests which occupy one-third of the proposed area, secondary mixed coniferous small-leaved forests and mountain taiga spruce-fir forests.

105. The central part of the proposed site covers the northern section of middle-altitude mountain ridges of the Southern Urals. Mountain ranges with summits of 800 m to 1,178 m and mountain valleys are interconnected via a variety of ‘boulder streams’. A sub- and low-mountain steep-sloping relief with summits of 500-830 m characterize the western part of the site. The eastern part consists of quite steep ridges and steep, sloping mountain ridge elevations (with summits up to 500-900 m), which alternate frequently with tectonic depressions covered with lakes and deeply incised swampy valleys. There is a well-developed river network of which the largest lake is Lake Turgoyak. There are two reservoirs on the proposed territory with high water storage capacity. About 12,000 people inhabit the site.

106. The main objective of the site is to transition from extractive industries and mining to a sustainable development model based on sustainable biological natural resource management, tourism and secondary use of mining fields. This includes rehabilitation

of damaged landscapes after mining field depletion, as well as conservation of the mountain Taiga natural complexes of the Southern Urals, while ensuring the welfare of the population.

107. The Advisory Committee commended the Russian authorities for the high-quality of the nomination and recommended that the designation of the site **be approved**. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to create a biosphere reserve Coordination Council as indicated in the nomination form, where various stakeholders, including communities, businesses and NGOs, will be equally represented. The Advisory Committee requested an update on the creation of the stakeholder-based biosphere reserve management structure, as well as the progress of the overall biosphere reserve management plan by 30 September 2018.

New nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information

108. **Betung Kerihun Danau Sentarum Kapuas Hulu (Indonesia).** The proposed Betung Kerihun Danau Sentarum Kapuas Hulu Biosphere Reserve is located at the eastern tip of Kalimantan Barat province. The northern edge of the site borders Sarawak (East Malaysia), and the west and south edges border the Sintang and Melawi Regencies, respectively; the eastern edge of the site borders the Provinces of East Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan. The total area of the proposed biosphere reserve is 3,115,200.50 ha, comprising a core area of 944,090.96 ha, a buffer zone of 919,993.36 ha and a transition area of 1,251,116.18 ha.

109. The proposed reserve incorporates the entire territory of the Kapuas Hulu Regency area. The core area consists of two national parks, namely Betung Kerihun National Park and Danau Sentarum National Park, and functions as a habitat for several endemic flora and fauna species. The buffer zone and transition area have a potential to be used as a productive area including agriculture, plantation, horticulture, fishery, animal husbandry, as well as other productive activities such as tourism, industry, creative industries and so on.

110. The buffer zone includes protected and production forests, agricultural areas and human settlements. The transition area consists of settlements, agricultural areas (rice fields, dry fields, agroforestry, plantations, etc.). This area is a focus for sustainable development and a centre for productive activities.

111. Currently, forest areas in Kapuas Hulu are under threat of deforestation due to fire, logging and mining activities. Local stakeholders (the local community and policy-makers) are concerned about the impact of loss of forest cover on watershed hydrological functions, particularly water level and water quality.

112. The Advisory Committee noticed that non-conservation areas in the buffer zone and transition area contain gold mineral deposits that have recently been mined by local people. Other mineral resources with mining potential also exist but have not been exploited. The Committee has therefore asked the Indonesian authorities to provide documentation demonstrating that these activities will have no adverse impacts on the environmental conditions and biodiversity of the proposed biosphere reserve.

113. The Advisory Committee also highlighted an unclear section in the file which states that ‘core area development of the proposed biosphere reserve adopt several

concepts'. The Advisory Committee asked the national authorities to clarify the submitted information and to provide relevant legal documents guaranteeing that only activities compatible with the conservation function of the biosphere reserve are implemented in the core area.

114. The Advisory Committee welcomed the elaboration of the Integrated Management Plan 2018-2023 by the biosphere reserve. It also encouraged the Indonesian authorities to develop specific policies and actions to promote sustainable development in the proposed reserve.

115. The Committee congratulated the Indonesian authorities for the well-written and high-quality nomination dossier and recommended that Betung Kerihun Danau Sentarum Kapuas Hulu **be approved pending** submission of the following information by the authorities by 30 June 2018:

- documentation demonstrating that mining activities do not have any adverse impacts on the proposed biosphere reserve,
- legal document(s) and measures guaranteeing that only activities compatible with the conservation function of the biosphere reserve are undertaken in the core area.

116. **Monte Peglia (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Italy. The Monte Peglia site is located in the centre of Italy and is surrounded by the confluences of two river systems, the Tiber on the east and the Paglia on the west. To the north, the hills stretch beyond the area of the Municipality of San Venanzo and join up with the plain of Lake Trasimeno.

117. The site consists of an extensive forested area and constitutes an important natural pool of fauna, flora and fungi species that have emerged in the area of this ancient extinct volcano. These natural resources allow for activities compatible with sustainable development that aim to preserve and enhance the future social-economic evolution of the area. This approach is based on an underlying vision wherein everything forms part of a single unit: *unicum*. This is illustrated by Orvieto, the capital of a 'slow lifestyle' (*cittàslow*) together with Parrano and the thriving village of Ficulle. The permanent resident population amounts to around 25,660 inhabitants. The proposed biosphere reserve covers 42,342 ha and consists of three core areas, surrounded by a buffer zone forming two clusters embedded in a transition area. The core areas are protected as state-owned forests.

118. Coordination of the proposed reserve will be ensured by a diversity of institutions including the regional authority and the San Venanzo, Parrano and Ficulle municipalities, as well as the 'Association Monte Peglia Project per UNESCO'. The Advisory Committee noted that the Association Monte Peglia was established to implement a participatory approach during the nomination process and future management of the biosphere reserve, implemented in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Agency.

119. The future challenges of the biosphere reserve relate to the reconstruction of farmhouses and the introduction of sustainable tourism and the socio-economic development of the area.

120. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of the legal status of Sistema Territoriale di Interesse Naturalistico Ambientale (STINA) areas, as well as a detailed Management Plan for the proposed biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018.

121. **Valle Camonica – Alto Sebino (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Italy. The proposed site is located in the eastern part of Lombardy and covers a total surface area of 135,565 ha. The area is characterized by typical alpine and pre-alpine valleys, ranging from valley bottom landscapes to the highest peaks of Europe and the Adamello glacier, and ends in the Iseo Lake, one of the largest basins of Italy. The core area consists of six separate areas which have been integrated into the Natura 2000 European Ecological Network. The majority of the core areas have been designated natural protected areas under regional law.

122. The main habitats are inland water bodies, rivers and lakes, woods and forests, glaciers, meadows and prairies. The current resident population amounts to 121,022 inhabitants. In addition to the wild flora and fauna, many species are related to the agricultural traditions of the valley. The Camonica Valley in particular has longstanding traditions linked to agriculture and farming. The main objective of the proposed site is to implement sustainable development policies for the conservation of the mountain areas, their ecosystems and biodiversity, and to ensure the welfare of the local populations by preserving the landscape and traditional agricultural/farming activities.

123. The 'Comitato Permanente per la gestione della Riserva MAB di Valle Camonica – Alto Sebino' (or Permanent Committee) will be responsible of overall coordination of the biosphere reserve. The Committee will consist of representatives from the different management authorities, the municipalities and the main stakeholders representing natural and social issues in the area.

124. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the detailed information on the participatory approach employed during preparation of nomination file. It also noted that an action and cooperation plan has been prepared covering a 10-year period.

125. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that public awareness activities were undertaken during the nomination process. It also noted that conservation of biodiversity in the biosphere reserve is linked to traditional local knowledge and thus provides an opportunity to foster the local economy.

126. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities on their well-prepared nomination file and recommended that the site **be approved** pending the submission of the following information by the authority no later than 30 June 2018:

- rationale on the northern and eastern parts of the biosphere reserve not surrounded by the transition area;

127. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the authorities analyse the impact of tourism and undertake socio-economic studies in the proposed biosphere reserve, and involve energy companies in biosphere reserve activities.

128. **Tsimanampesotse – Nosy Ve Androka (Madagascar).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Madagascar authorities for Tsimanampesotse – Nosy Ve Androka, which includes two Ramsar sites located in the south-west of the country.

129. The area is a mosaic of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems and is considered a biodiversity hotspot because it includes a range of sensitive, fragile and priority ecosystems, such as coral reefs, beaches, dunes, sea marshes, mangroves, gallery forest, littoral forest, xerophytic thickets and relicts of dry deciduous forest. The

proposed biosphere reserve covers a total area of 1,777,019 ha comprising 1,475,069 ha of terrestrial area and 30,950 ha of marine area (core area: 394,452 ha; buffer zone: 221,142 ha; transition area: 1,161,425 ha).

130. The terrestrial part of the proposed site has only a small number of floristic and faunistic species, but a high rate of endemism reaching up to 90%. The flora include one critically endangered species (*Aloe suzannae),* and five endangered species (*Acacia menabeensis, Ehretia decaryi, Erythrophysa aesculina, Euphorbia decorsei* and *Lemuropisum edule*). The marine protected area is home to 13 mammal species including five that are endangered (*Mirza coquereli, Lepilemur leucopus, Lemur catta, Propithecus verreauxii* and *Galidictis grandidieri)* and four vulnerable species (*Eidolon dupreanum, Lepilemur petteri, Cryptoprocta ferox* and *Physeter macrocephalus).*

131. The Advisory Committee took note of the proposed core area, which consists of the national parks of Tsimanampesotse and Nosy Ve-Androka, and the Amoron'i Onilahy New Protected Area. The latter is an IUCN category V protected area located in the northern part of the site. This is managed through a specific spatial zonation scheme that establishes areas known as 'noyaux durs' (conservation), 'zone tampon' (activities including economic activities compatible with conservation) and 'zone de protection' (settlements, access rights and production areas). These zones can be compared to the core area (conservation), buffer zone (economic activities compatible with conservation) and transition area (cooperation area) of biosphere reserves. The same designations are applied to the two national parks.

132. The population in the transition area amounts to just over 100,000 people. The main economic activities are agriculture, livestock farming and fishing. Other activities such as trade, transport, catering and hospitality are conducted at the level of large agglomerations. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the transfer of management rights on natural resources on public lands in the buffer zone to the local communities in accordance with national laws.

133. The Advisory Committee also took note of areas that have been granted mining or oil permits, some of which are located in the buffer zones of the proposed reserve. The Malagasy authorities indicated that only one of the mining contractors in the buffer zones has provided an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

134. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt and approval of the following information by 30 June 2018, to be considered by the next MAB Council:

- Revised zonation compatible with the land use management of the two national parks and the IUCN category V Protected Area, as described in their decree of creation, which is in line with the biosphere reserve land use and activities requirements for the core area, buffer zone and transition area
- EIA reports for all mining contractors operating in buffer zones or an explanation as to why these EIA are not yet available.

135. **Lower Prut (Moldova).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first proposal from Moldova for a biosphere reserve located in the south of the country encompassing the Prut River and floodplain lakes. The surface area of the proposed reserve covers 14,771 ha and is home to 70,000 inhabitants. Two-thirds of the surface area of the site is occupied by Lake Beleu. A Ramsar wetland area stretches from the left side of the Prut River, covering around 8,500 ha of water, meadow, forest and wetland ecosystems. The aquatic vegetation includes 14 species of vascular plants.

136. The main economic activity in the proposed reserve is agriculture, which provides 90% of the local population's income. The sustainable development of the reserve will include the development of organic farming as well as the production of medicinal plants. Around 7,000 ha of wetlands in the lower Prut region will be restored creating new habitats for flora and fauna. Regarding education, the proposed area will serve as a site for open-air lessons for local schools and the university. A museum will also be created. Regarding energy, 6,000 ha could be used for the cultivation of trees of native species to heat houses. Further development of the drinking water supply system will involve drilling new boreholes, while respecting the regime of protected zones near drinking water sources. In terms of ecological projects, the restoration of habitats in the lower part of the River Prut through the recovery of reed belts is under consideration to facilitate improvement in water quality.

137. The Advisory Committee noticed the presence of an oil exploitation field adjacent to the proposed biosphere reserve. While the nomination form stated that the level of oil products in the water is below officially allowed levels, and that the authorities responsible for management of the field will provide funding (e.g. for education and cultural activities), it is unclear whether and how the authorities responsible for the field will be involved in the management or monitoring of the biosphere reserve.

138. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** submission of the following information by the authorities by 30 June 2018:

- a comprehensive draft Management Plan for the biosphere reserve including details of how the authorities responsible for management of the oil exploitation field will be involved in the management of the biosphere reserve.

139. **The Mura River (Slovenia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Slovenia. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the eastern part of Slovenia and covers the area of the Mura River (28,652 ha). The proposed site includes the largest preserved complex of floodplains in Slovenia, where the interweaving of natural factors and human presence has created an exceptional cultural riverine landscape.

140. Numerous historical and cultural landscapes are found along the Mura River. Thousands of years of human presence have contributed to a great number of native domestic animal breeds and cultivated plant varieties, which enrich the biodiversity in the proposed reserve.

141. The human population amounts to 37,800 inhabitants. Their main sources of income are agriculture, industry, forestry and tourism. Tourism is one of the priority economic activities for the majority of regional and local development programmes. Projects such as certification and branding of tourism services and agricultural products originating from the biosphere reserve will be considered. One major objective of the proposed biosphere reserve is the revival and modernization of floodplain management.

142. The Advisory Committee applauded the detailed submission and appreciated the many initiatives already taking place in the area of the proposed biosphere reserve. While many of the buffer zones are either official protected areas or serve as de facto buffer zones (as agreements have been reached with land owners about restrictions on land use), in some cases there appears to be confusion about the distinction between buffer zones and transition areas.

143. The Advisory Committee noted that industrial development is taking place in or near

the proposed biosphere reserve, and urges the responsible authorities to engage with the private sector actors involved to explore ways of reducing the negative impacts from industrial developments.

144. After examination of the nomination form, the Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** submission of the following information by 30 June 2018:
- a comprehensive draft Management Plan for the biosphere reserve including details of how actors in the industrial sector may be involved in the biosphere reserve with a view to reducing negative impacts;
- provide more detailed information on the participatory management structure for the overall governance of the proposed area;
- further clarification of the distinction between buffer zones and transition areas, and an explanation of the lack of buffering around some parts of core areas.

145. **Marico (South Africa)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination of this unique freshwater ecosystem by the national authorities. The proposed reserve consists of the Molemane, Molopo and Marico river systems.

146. The proposed biosphere reserve covers a total area of 447,268.49 ha (core area of 21,499 ha, buffer zone of 64,350 ha and transition area of 361,419 ha) and lies in two administrative districts. It has a permanent population of 34,000 and attracts a large number of tourists. The main economic activities are subsistence agriculture, livestock production, game ranching, minor irrigation and tourism (fishing, scuba diving).

147. The ecosystem is characterized by wetlands and a dolomitic system, which constitute a valuable part of South Africa's natural heritage and form the main watershed of the Limpopo river system. The savannah and grassland biomes support vulnerable plant species such as *Searsia maricoana* and *Searsia ciliate*. Among the endemic fauna are 73 species of mammal such as the African elephant *Loxodonta africana*, black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis minor* and lion *Panthera leo*, 31 species of fish including *Enteromius motebensis* (Marico Barb) and *Chetia flaventris* (Canary kurper), 77 aquatic macro-invertebrates including nine species of dung beetles, 29 species of butterfly, 46 species of reptile including the black mamba and Nile crocodile, 315 species of bird including the near-threatened Melodious Lark *Mirafra cheniana* and Cape Weaver *Ploceus capensis*, and 15 species of amphibian.

148. The Advisory Committee noted the challenges of invasive fish species and seepage from mines through dolomite ground water, the practice of conservation-friendly agriculture and the presence of 920 residents in the core area. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to address these issues through an integrated Management Plan and to minimize resource-use conflicts related to mineral deposits in the transition area.

149. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the participatory approach employed in the development of the biosphere reserve application and the proposed management structure in view of the high proportion of private ownership.

150. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of the following information by 30 June 2018:
- either a satisfactory explanation of the activities involved in conservation-friendly agriculture and how they are compatible with the conservation function of the core area, or a revision of the zonation of the core areas with conservation-friendly agriculture

added to the buffer zone,
- information on how tourism impacts are to be addressed in the core area.

151. **Ponga (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Spanish authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in southern Asturias in the eastern area of the Cantabrian Mountains, and encompasses the administrative territory corresponding to the municipality of Ponga. The proposed biosphere reserve is located between the Spanish biosphere reserves of Redes and Pico de Europa. The reserve covers an area of 20,506 ha with a core area of 10,827 ha, a buffer zone of 9,173 ha and a transition area of 506 ha.

152. The proposed biosphere reserve is a remote area of sparsely populated mountains and forests that coincides with the Ponga municipality and the Ponga Natural Park, and is located on the northern slopes of the Cordillera Cantabrica in the Asturias. The chain of mountains is known as the 'Cordal de Ponga'. The area is renowned for its steep terrain with altitudes ranging from 213 m to 2.142 masl. Deep green valleys climb to vertiginous peaks, passing through extensive beech forests. The majority of the vegetation consists of mixed deciduous woodlands, composed of species such as sycamore, alder, ash, chestnut, oak and hazel.

153. The region contains many animal species, a large number of which are protected. Among these are the endangered brown bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*) and the western capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), both of which are emblematic of the Cantabrian Mountain range. Other faunal species include the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and European tree frog (*Hyla arborea*).

154. The proposed biosphere reserve has only 655 inhabitants distributed over 20 centres, including the main village, San Juan de Beleño. An ageing population characterizes the demography. The inhabitants' way of life centres on the use of natural resources, notably livestock and rural tourism.

155. The area is home to a rich cultural heritage. Several archaeological remains provide evidence of Bronze Age habitation. During the period of Roman colonization, Ponga belonged to the territory of Cantabria. The first documented reference to Ponga is found in the time of Alfonso IX of León.

156. Traditional constructions in the area consist largely of native materials such as stone, wood and tile that retain their original uses. The unique granaries of Beyusco are a particular highlight. The area also hosts a unique traditional folklore, language and cuisine, which have been passed down from generation to generation and remain alive today.

157. The Regional Hunting Reserve of Ponga which occupies almost the entire proposed area is managed through a Technical Hunting Plan that is prepared annually by the technical services of the Department of the Environment.

158. The Advisory Committee recommended the establishment of integrated management with the Redes and Pico de Europa biosphere reserves.

159. Although the proposal is well prepared, the Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of information by 30 June 2018 demonstrating that hunting activities have no impact on conservation of the core area.

160. **Gombe Masito Ugalla (Tanzania**) The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities of Tanzania on the submission of this nomination for one of the key tourism areas in Western Tanzania and an iconic site for chimpanzee research. The area includes the Gombe National Park, which forms the core area, village forest land reserves in Mtanga, Mwamgongo, Mgaraganza, Bubango and Chankele, and local authority forest reserves in Masito, Tongwe East and Tongwe West, which function as buffer zones. The proposed site has a total area of 1,658,466 ha including part of Lake Tanganyika, with a core area of 5,640 ha, a buffer zone of 889,026 ha and a transition zone of 763,800 ha.

161. The total population of the proposed biosphere reserve amounts to about 455,000. The area is a source of medicinal plants such as *Aspillia pluriseta* and *Annona senegalensis.* It also provides fuel wood, food, fibre and construction materials that support the livelihoods of over 311,000 people. The main economic activities are fishing, agriculture, livestock production and tourism.

162. Faunal species present in the area include African elephants, ornate frogs and eight primate species including an endangered subspecies of blue monkey *(Cercopithecus mitis doggetti*), a vulnerable subspecies of red colobus monkeys (*Procolobus badius tephrosceles)* and a viable population of blue-red-tailed hybrids (guenons). Plants species include a species discovered in and named for Gombe (*Pleiotaxis gombensis).* The natural vegetation of Gombe also protects important water catchments, reducing silting into the lake.

163. The aquatic ecosystem is part of Lake Tanganyika, the longest and deepest lake in Africa and the world's second largest and second oldest lake, having existed for about 12 million years. Biodiversity includes over 300 species of fish of which 250 are cichlids, 250 species of birds, reptiles such as the water cobra and the Tanganyika water snake.

164. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their numerous initiatives to address the logistical functions of the reserve through a strong network of research institutions and donor partners, and for the implementation of the existing plan for Gombe National Park. The Advisory Committee noted with concern the absence of a clear management framework and coordinating structure for the entire proposed biosphere reserve. They also noted the presence of refugee settlements in the Mishamo area.

165. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of the following information by 30 June 2018:
- a proposed management structure for the area,
- descriptions of refugee camps and conflicts between refugees, the local environment and local communities.

166. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to ensure proper and permanent representation of all stakeholders in management decisions and to integrate conflict-management measures into the proposed Management Plan.

167. **Wadi Wurayah (United Arab Emirates).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination file for the Wadi Wurayah Biosphere Reserve, which was received digitally. The original paper file is however compulsory as the Emirati authorities were informed by the MAB Secretariat in September 2017.

168. Wadi Wurayah is situated in the Emirate of Fujairah and consists of a water catchment area in an arid climate, designated under the Ramsar Convention, and part of the Haiar mountain range. The site hosts a rich fauna and flora endemic to the Arabian Peninsula. It is one of the last Emirati places to feature traditional farming practices and includes a monument of cultural and historical importance, the Al Bidiyah Mosque, the oldest extant mosque in the Emirates, which dates back to the fifteenth century.

169. The Advisory Committee acknowledges the substantial efforts of the proposed reserve in training, research and public awareness-raising, which has targeted rangers, schools and youth associations, and involves the Fujairah municipality, the private sector and local communities, as well as international conservation tools such as the SMART (spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) programme.

170. While promoting the protection of native habitats and their biodiversity, the proposed Biosphere Reserve further targets improvements in communication and the stronger involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process.

171. The proposed core area (12,000 ha) and buffer zone (9,950 ha) belong to Wadi Wurayah National Park and the transition zone includes the town of Al Bidiyah. The buffer zone hosts parts of key infrastructure related to water harvesting as well as three dams established before the National Park, which are used mainly to recharge the underground aquifer and reduce flood risks in nearby settlements. The transition zone (5,779 ha) does not fully surround the buffer zone because of the border with the Emirate of Sharjah, where an express highway along the borders of both Emirates is under construction.

172. The Wadi Wurayah site will develop a Management Plan based on the master plan of the Emirate of Fujairah, applicable by the end of 2018. Under this plan, ecotourism should be developed, declining traditional practices revitalized, and research and outreach further strengthened, notably with religious and tribal leaders. Further emphasis should be placed on the protection of wildlife corridors, the rehabilitation of affected areas and waste management. A ‘majlis’ (community hall) should be established to enhance collaboration within the surrounding community, along with a local advisory board coordinated by the park director.

173. The social structure of Wadi Wurayah is described as relying on male leadership and decision-making. While the nomination file reports changes in women’s access to better education and employment, and more opportunities for women in community organization and decision-making, there is a lack of tangible information in this regard. The future Management Plan for Wadi Wurayah foresees a series of initiatives targeting adequate representation of women in all consultative bodies, as well as in the park’s planning and management processes.

174. In the endorsement section of the submission file, signatures are missing for the representatives of local communities in the municipalities of Fujairah and Bidda Fujairah, which jointly manage the transition zone.

175. The Advisory Committee recommends the nomination of Wadi Wurayah as a biosphere reserve **be approved pending** receipt of the following by 30 June 2018:

- the missing endorsement signatures for the representatives of local communities in the municipalities of Fujairah and Bidda Fujairah,
- indicators regarding women’s involvement in the future Management Plan for the

biosphere reserve, in order to comply with UNESCO's priority on gender equality,
- further information regarding planned sustainable development projects in economic sectors, in addition to ecotourism,
- clarification of actions (monitoring, policies, etc.) to be taken to address threats to migratory birds posed by high-voltage power lines, and the number of goat herds in the core zone.

176. The Advisory Committee also encourages the Wadi Wurayah site to extend the transition zone to other surrounding municipalities in the near future, and to explore the inclusion of marine areas.

177. Finally, the United Arab Emirates are invited to establish a National Committee for MAB in accordance with the increase in the number of biosphere reserves in the country.

Extension, re-zoning or renaming of existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval

178. **Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve – extension and renaming, former Vessertal-Thuringian Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** This extension and renaming of the Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve is in line with the MAB Council 2011 recommendation to enlarge the area to meet the criteria of the statutory framework.

179. Following an intensive participatory process which involved a large number of stakeholders, including external support, the transition area has been extended from 14,570 ha to 24,697 ha, and is accompanied by an increase in the size of the buffer zone. With the proposed extension the site now covers 34,000 ha encompassing a diversity of ecosystems, fauna and flora, and providing support for local communities with a view to becoming a model region for sustainable development. Increased cooperation with sectors such as tourism and mobility were enhanced during the extension process. The tourism and forestry sector dominate the area. Over the next few years, the main areas of focus of the biosphere reserve will be forest conversion, climate change, and demographic change, cooperation with the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, sustainable mobility and sustainable development. The total population now numbers 99,522 spread over 22 municipalities.

180. The new name, 'Thuringian Forest', is the result of consultation processes with strong support from the municipalities. It takes into account the doubling of the area, strengthens the identification of municipalities and citizens with the biosphere reserve, and will be important for tourism.

181. The Advisory Committee noted that some of the core areas in the proposed zonation lack buffering. However, the authorities explained the buffering functions are provided by the geomorphologic characteristics of the terrain.

182. The Advisory Committee commended the German authorities for the high quality of the nomination and participatory process and recommended that the extension and name change of the site **be approved.** The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to create a permanent consultation mechanism through a change in status of the dialogue Committee of municipal representatives used in the discussion process for the expansion of the biosphere reserve.

183. **Ticino, Val Grande Verbano Biosphere Reserve – extension and renaming of the former Valle del Ticino Biosphere Reserve (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Italy which consists of the extension and renaming of the 'Valle del Ticino' Biosphere Reserve. The reserve was recognized in 2002 and submitted its periodic review in 2014. Wooded and semi-natural areas covering 154,887 ha of the extended new biosphere reserve now constitute 46.6% of the entire site compared to 36,497 ha (24.3%) prior to the extension. The extension also increases the surface of wetlands and water bodies (0.16% and 6.6%, respectively) with the presence of large sub-alpine Insubrian lakes including Lake Maggiore and Lake Varese.

184. The site also includes World Heritage sites (the Sacri Monti and Pile dwelling areas) and UNESCO Global Geoparks (the Sesia Val Grande Geopark). The site was extended to include the Novarese Hills as well as the Natural Park of Monte Fenera and the Baragge Natural Reserve. Several protected areas will be added to the territory of the Ticino catchment basin, highlighting the importance of the Ticino corridor and including new key ecosystems in Piedmont territory and Lombardy, extending to the valley of Valcuvia and the Val Veddasca, the northernmost part of Varesotto. The total resident population amounts to approximately 1 million in 217 municipalities covering a surface area of 262,626 ha.

185. The Advisory Committee noted that some of the core areas in the proposed zonation scheme are not entirely protected by a buffer zone and converge, in part, with transition areas. The authorities explained that the transition areas directly adjacent to the core areas are under regulatory constraints provided for in the Territorial Management Plans and can therefore maintain their natural values and characteristics as well as buffering functions.

186. The Advisory Committee commended the Italian authorities for the high quality of the nomination and recommended that the extension and name change of the site **be approved.** The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to use the biosphere reserve as a tool to solve increasing problems with urban sprawl, excessive concentration of visitors and water pollution.

Extension, re-zoning or renaming of existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information

187. **Land of the Leopard Biosphere Reserve – renaming of former Kedrovaya Pad Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation which consists of the renaming of Kedrovaya Pad, designated in 2004. The 'Land of the Leopard' stretches from the coast of Amur Bay near the Russia-China border to the southern borders of Poltavsky Refuge in the Ussuri taiga, to the state border of the Russian Federation with the streambed of River Tumannaya. Forests cover 87% of the total area. The main objective of the site is to protect and restore the core area and buffer zone from the impacts of human activities with the participation of local communities. The main scientific research in the reserve is long-term monitoring and study of populations of Amur leopard (*Panthera pardus orientalis*) and Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*), with a view to preserving and restoring their populations. The site is also home to species of global conservation significance, endangered environments and 44 rare and endangered species of vertebrate animals, as well as 150 species of plants.

188. One of the key objectives of the site is tourism development through the involvement of local community members, with the aim of creating new jobs and offering training in environmentally and economically sound activities. An ecological education programme is available for local and regional schools in association with the Centre for Ecological Education. A number of cooperation, coordination and social partnership agreements have been made for the protection, breeding, rehabilitation and sustainable use of wildlife resources, ecosystems and objects, with the aim of creating conditions for harmonious co-existence between people and nature. A strategy for development (2017-2022) was also developed with the aim of achieving the principal functions of the biosphere reserve. A Coordinating Council will consist of representatives of various governmental and private organizations, various economic sectors and population groups, whose lives and activities are directly linked to this unique region.

189. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of the following information by 30 June 2018:

- Explanation as to why there is no buffer zone adjacent to the southern core area or a rationale for the lack of buffering.

New nominations recommended for deferral

190. **Chocó Andino de Pichincha (Ecuador).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Ecuadoran authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in northwestern Ecuador in the Pichincha province, northwest of the capital city of Quito. The reserve covers an area of 286,805.53 ha with a core area of 73,897.16 ha, a buffer zone of 94,039.80 ha and a transition area of 118,868.57 ha.

191. The Chocó Andino de Pichincha covers a wide altitudinal range between 360 m and 4,480 m above sea level. The region encompasses the humid moist forest of the Chocó-Darien, which extends from Panama to the Ecuadorian West and the Northern Andean Mountain Forests. Natural fragmentation of the western moist forests has resulted in the rapid evolution of new endemic species. Around 10,000 species of plants have been reported of which about 2,500 are endemic.

192. The region is considered a biodiversity hotspot hosting some 270 species of mammals, 210 species of reptiles, 200 species of birds and 130 species of amphibians. These include the spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), Ecuadorian mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata aequatorialis*), pacarana (*Dinomys branickii*) and olinguito (*Bassaricyon neblina*), as well as endemic species such as the Choco toucan (*Ramphastos brevis*), Pichincha rocket frog (*Hyloxalus toachi*) and speckle-faced parrot (*Pionus tumultuosus*).

193. The proposed area has a population of approximately 880,000 inhabitants of which 157,958 live in the core area, 347,879 in the buffer zone and 374,856 in the transition area. The main economic activities are retail trade and industrial manufacturing. The population also engages in agriculture with a focus on planting fruit and vegetables, as well as the cultivation of sugar cane in Pacto and Nanegal, fish farming including the breeding of trout and tilapia, and livestock rearing.

194. Numerous archaeological sites are present in the area linked to the Yumbo culture, which flourished on the rich, volcanic mountainsides of the Pichincha Volcano. The

Yumbo used their skills as farmers and merchants to become indispensable to neighbouring tribes, but like many South American tribes, fell victim to diseases such as smallpox, resulting in their decimation in the first two decades following European colonization. Nevertheless, the culture survived until the eruption of the Pichincha Volcano in 1660, which left a thick layer of ash across Tulipe and the surrounding area and resulted in the disappearance of the Yumbo people.

195. Once the biosphere reserve is approved, a management Committee will be established. A budget plan for the biosphere reserve is missing but projects supported by the municipalities in the biosphere reserve are mentioned.

196. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site **be deferred.** The Committee encourages a resubmission by Ecuador that includes a clear revision of the zonation, mainly with reference to the 18% (or 158,000 people) living in the core area. Clarification of the economic activities taking place in the core area is requested as well.

Annex 3: Extract on decision on the "Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', from the 29th MAB Council report

The MAB Council decides to complete the « Exit Strategy » in 2020 and to institute a 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', to ensure that they serve as models for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MAB Council decides the following with regard to the sites concerned by the "Exit Strategy":

1. **For sites which have provided information and meet the criteria**, the MAB Council warmly congratulates the Member States concerned and expresses its thanks to all stakeholders who have engaged in this important process.

2. Furthermore, the MAB Council encourages the MAB Secretariat, national commissions for UNESCO, National MAB Committees and concerned biosphere reserves to convey positive messages that inform about and celebrate this success.

3. The Council further acknowledges that certain Member States have decided to withdraw sites under their jurisdiction from the World Network and congratulates them on showing their commitment in this way.

4. **For biosphere reserves in conflict zones**, the MAB Council decides that these sites remain in the WNBR as long as these conflicts continue. These sites should not be obliged to send a report. The Secretariat and the WNBR will support the biosphere reserve concerned to the extent possible. When the conflict ceases, the biosphere reserve should be supported by the MAB National Committee and the Secretariat, the Regional networks and the WNBR including an evaluation of the conditions to advise the biosphere reserve and the national Committee on how the biosphere reserve can fulfil its obligations under the Statutory framework.

5. **For transboundary biosphere reserves**, the MAB Council adopts the following process,

a. The Member States must submit the national periodic report by 30th September 2017;
b. This report will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2018;
c. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information after evaluation by the IACBR;
d. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 whether the site meets the criteria;
e. The MAB Secretariat and the World Network will support the transboundary biosphere reserves in their specific challenges.

6. **For biosphere reserves which have provided comprehensive information, which has been evaluated by the IACBR and the MAB Council, but the site does not meet the criteria,** the Council adopts the following process:

a. The Member States must submit additional information/answers to the MAB Secretariat by 30th September 2017 or 2018;
b. This information will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2018 and/or 2019;
c. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information after the evaluation by the IACBR;

d. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 and 2019 whether the site meets the criteria;
e. In the case the Biosphere reserve meets the criteria, the Council will formally recognise this;
f. Member States will have the option to submit a new nomination by 30th September 2018 or 2019;
g. Member States will have the option to request an extension in area, by 30th September 2018 or 2019, as appropriate;
h. The decision that the site does not meet the criteria and will therefore no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network will be effective as of the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020.

7. **For biosphere reserves which have provided a Periodic review report or other appropriate information that has not yet been evaluated by the IACBR and the MAB Council**, the Council adopts the following process :

a. The Periodic review report/information received will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB ICC in 2018.;
b. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information either before 30 September 2017 or after the evaluation by the IACBR;
c. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 whether the site meets the criteria;
d. In the case the Biosphere reserve meets the criteria the Council will formally recognise this;
e. The decision that the site does not meet the criteria and therefore will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network will be effective as of the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020;
f. In case that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria, its further consideration will be as described in paragraph 6.

8. **For biosphere reserves which have not provided any Periodic review report which allows evaluation as to whether the biosphere reserve meets criteria, the MAB Council decides** that the site will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network at the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020, and adopts the following process: The Member State may submit:

a. a periodic review report by 30th September 2017 which will allow the site to follow the process described in paragraph 7; or
b. a formal working commitment with an explanation of issues and needs and a detailed workplan and timeline, submitted by 30th of September 2017, in order to submit the Periodic Review report at the latest by 30 September 2018 or 2019; or
c. a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

9. In cases biosphere reserves cannot meet the criteria, the MAB Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the site under the provisions of paragraph 8 article 9 of the Statutory Framework.

10. With regard to all of these decisions of the Council, the MAB Secretariat will communicate the decision to the appropriate levels of the Member State concerned, with copy to the permanent delegation and national UNESCO Commission, within four weeks of the Council decision, specifying the requirements for each concerned biosphere reserve. Recipients will be asked to confirm the receipt of the communication.

11. The MAB Council asks the MAB Secretariat to be precise in all communications, when transmitting recommendations, decisions etc.

12. Furthermore, the MAB Council encourages all Member States, National MAB Committees and biosphere reserves as well as the Regional Networks to share their experience with periodic review reporting within the WNBR and offer, as appropriate, support to biosphere reserve in order to meet the criteria.

13. Support to the sites that are not meeting the criteria or have difficulties in reporting the results of their periodic review process are suggested below:

a. Organizing specific technical workshops targeting the difficulties such as zonation and governance. Host countries should cover the costs of such workshops. Such workshops could also be systematically be organized and facilitated at the regional networks meetings (such as the EuroMAB Network with a support desk workshop being organized for new biosphere reserve proposals and periodic review reports);
b. Encouraging eligible UNESCO National Commissions and MAB national Committees to apply for financial support through the UNESCO Participation Programme;
c. Requesting existing UNESCO Chairs and Centers (such as ERAIFT, the MAB Chair in France, UNESCO Centre in Spain) to provide courses and training facilities to requesting sites and countries;
d. Mobilizing the existing expertise and human resources for technical and support missions, including inviting experts of the International Advisory Committee (active and from previous mandate), other biosphere reserves staff, the UNESCO Secretariat and UNESCO field Offices; whenever possible the costs of travel and lodging should be supported by the host countries, with support from UNESCO, and no fees should be provided as per common practice in the MAB Programme;
e. Using the operational guidelines (in process) to share typical issues faced by biosphere reserves and solutions, using the diversity of the WNBR;
f. Using peer periodic review support. A biosphere reserve that meets the criteria can support and guide a site that is having difficulties to undertake the periodic review report and meeting the criteria. This peer process should be done on a voluntary basis;
g. Member States could be invited to contribute to donate to the MAB Fund to support some of the activities mentioned above, in order for the World Network to be used as a powerful tool for enhancing the credibility and quality of its sites and for demonstrating cooperation and solidarity in action.

Annex 4: Document SC-18/CONF.230/10

Periodic Review Reports and Follow-Up Information Received since the Last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC) Meeting

1. Since the last MAB Council, the Secretariat received 82 reports and 57 follow-up information from 49 countries, including 67 reports and follow-up from 31 countries as implementation of the Excellence Process.

2. The Secretariat also received a letter from the San Dimas Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve from USA and for five Australian Biosphere Reserves of Barkindji, Hattah-Kulkyne & Murray Kulkyne, Wilson's Promontory, Prince Regent and Yathong for voluntarily withdrawal.

3. During its meeting held from 5 to 8 February 2018 in Paris, the Members of the Advisory Committee reviewed these periodic review reports and follow-up to the previous MAB Council recommendations. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on each of these sites are included in the Annexes I and II of this document. These recommendations have been transmitted to the concerned Member States for follow-up and any additional information provided by 30 May 2018 will be examined by the MAB Council and its Bureau.

4. The MAB ICC Bureau at its meeting last June 2017 adopted the Excellence Process (see document SC-18/CONF.230/9, item 11 of the provisional agenda). The Advisory Committee indicated clearly in the recommendations the deadline for submission of additional information to align with this strategy specific timeline for sites concerned, and to inform the countries accordingly.

5. The Secretariat will prepare a colour table, which will summarize the results of these recommendations, so the Council can take its decision (green colour for sites that meet the criteria; red colour for sites that do not meet the criteria; pink colour for sites that are recommended for withdrawal; blue colour for sites for which more information is requested).

6. The MAB Council is invited to consider and endorse the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, including the suggested changes to be proposed by the MAB Bureau during its meeting during the Council session.

ANNEX 1: EXAMINATION OF NEW PERIODIC REPORTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Country	Name of the site
ARGENTINA	Andino Norpatagonica
	Laguna de Pozuelos
	San Guillermo
BENIN	W
BOLIVIA	Beni
	Pilon-Lajas
	Ulla Ulla
CAMEROON	Dja
CANADA	Frontenac Arch
	Fundy
	Manicouagan Uapishka
CHILE	Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes
CHINA	Dingushan
	Foping
	Wuyishan
	Xilingol
CUBA	Baconao
	Cuchillas del Toa
	Peninsula de Guanahacabibes
	Sierra del Rosario
DPR KOREA	Mt.Kuwol
ECUADOR	Podocarpus - El Condor
FRANCE	Mont Ventoux
GERMANY	Elbe River Landscape
GUATEMALA	Maya
LEBANON	Shouf
MONTENEGRO	Tara River Basin
MEXICO	Arrecife Alacranes
	Calakmul

	Chamela Cuixamala
	Cuatrociénagas
	Cumbres de Monterrey
	El Vizcaino
	La Michilia
	La Primavera
	La Sepultura
	Maderas del Carmen
	Mariposa Monarca
	Pantanos de Centla
	Selva el Ocote
	Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano
MOROCCO	RB intercontinentale de la méditerranée
NICARAGUA	Bosawas
	Rio San Juan
POLAND	Eastern Carpathians (TBR)
	Tatra (TBR)
PORTUGAL	Corvo
	Graciosa
QATAR	Al Reem
ROMANIA	Pietrosul Mare (Rodna)
	Retezat
RUSSIA	Chernye Zemli
	Sayano-Shusenskiy
	Smolensk Lakeland
RWANDA	Volcanoes
SENEGAL	Niokolo Koba
SLOVAKIA	Tatra (TBR)
	East Carpathians (TBR)
SPAIN	Intercontinental del Mediterraneo
	Lanzarote
	Rio Eo - Oscos y Terras de Buron
SOUTH AFRICA	Cape Winelands

TURKEY	Camili
UGANDA	Mount Elgon
UKRAINE	Black Sea (Chernomorskiy)
	East Carpathians (TBR)
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	Marawah Marine
USA USA	Central Gulf Coastal Plain
	Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island
	Guanica Forest
	Virginia Coast
	University of Michigan Biological Station
	Yellowstone-Grand Teton
VIETNAM	Western Nghe An

Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The area is located in the Andes Mountains in the Valdivian Eco-region, an area characterized by high mountains, temperate forests, grasslands and sub-Andean steppes. The reserve encompasses one of the most important remnants of well-conserved temperate forest on the planet.

A Strategic Plan for the management of the biosphere reserve was developed and approved by the Executive Board, which represents the Management Committee, in 2010. It sets out a series of scenarios that include short and medium-term actions as well as axes of work and long-term strategies. The plan functions as a planning tool for the articulated management of the area and has helped strengthen the management vision for the Valdivian eco-regional corridor.

New territories have been added to the buffer zone and the transition area of the biosphere reserve, which have been incorporated into the new zonation map. This brings the current total area of the biosphere reserve to 2,321,786 ha (2,266,942 ha in 2007) representing an increase of almost 55,000 ha.

The biosphere reserve includes Los Alerces National Park, which was declared a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site in 2017.

Over the last 10 years, the Andino Norpatagónica Biosphere Reserve has maintained a continuous dialogue with the Chilean Biosphere Reserve of Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes to exchange information and promote cooperation between the reserves. The two reserves are exploring ways to continue and develop these exchanges in the future.

Over the same period, several extraordinary large-scale natural events were recorded, including the eruption of three volcanoes – Chaitén, Calbuco and Puyehue – and the destruction of *Chusquea culeou* (a species of bamboo) over a vast area (281,193 ha). These events affected the populations of the biosphere reserve and their economy. Likewise, in recent years there have been instances of forest decay affecting in particular araucaria forest, while forest fires have troubled the region. More positively, the local economy of the biosphere reserve has experienced an increase of tourism.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). It recommends maintaining and reinforcing the joint activities with the Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve in Chile and keeping exploring the possibility of a transboundary biosphere reserve with this area.

Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1990. The area forms part of the highlands of the Southern Central Andes. Laguna de Pozuelos is a typical highland lagoon with shallow brackish waters and scant vegetation.

In light of previous recommendations made by the ICC, an extension of the core area is proposed, including the so-called ‘perilaguna’ and ‘lagoon’ zones. This will increase the core area from 19,000 ha to 57,131.6 ha. The buffer zone has decreased from 160,000 ha to 109,394.3 ha and the transition area has increased from 200,000 ha to 210,916.4 ha. A recommendation to improve zonation is still under discussion.

Since the last periodic review, a lack of job opportunities has resulted in human migration in the Puna area, mainly from rural areas to urban centres, generating cultural loss in many villages of the Laguna de los Pozuelos biosphere reserve. However, the reserve is making efforts to counteract this trend by offering training in the field of agricultural products and management, with financial support from different national programmes, such as those offered by the Ministerio de Agroindustria, de Trabajo y Desarrollo Social.

In recent years, agreements and inter-institutional coordination activities have been generated to implement projects between the Corporation for the Development of the Pozuelos Basin (CODEPO) and various institutions, with a view to promoting the development of agricultural activities.

The biosphere reserve does not yet have a management plan, nor a management committee, which hinders the governability of the area.

Based on the submitted information, the Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested the national authorities to prepare and submit by 30 June 2018:

a Management Plan for the whole area that includes lines of action to work closer with the local population in order to respond to social issues;
a Management Committee for the biosphere reserve that incorporates all the various decision-makers;
an updated map including the extension of the core area based on the current proposal under discussion.

San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1980. The area is located in the northwest part of the San Juan province and includes mixed mountain and highland systems in the foothills and mountains of the Andes occupying the west sector of Catamarca, La Rioja, San Juan and Mendoza Provinces.

The biosphere reserve is characterized by numerous natural and cultural values. Large deposits of metalliferous minerals are also present and are being mined: capital investment for mining within the influence of the reserve totals US$3,000 million. However, there are concerns regarding the cumulative impact of these mining projects on the water resources of the reserve and the ecological integrity of the area.

The multiple jurisdictional authorities (provincial and national) and the important natural and economic attributes of the biosphere reserve combine to create an area of enormous ecosystem value. However, tensions between mining exploitation and biodiversity conservation pose risks and remain unresolved.

The main achievements in governance terms are the approval of the Management Plan for the San Guillermo National Park in 2008, which corresponds to the core area of the reserve, and the Management Plan of the Provincial Reserve and the Management Plan of the Biosphere Reserve in 2013. The development of these plans involved the formation of a Management Committee with the participation of the National Parks Administration, the Ministry of Mining, local actors and an NGO, as well as the Secretary of Environment, Sustainable Development (SAyDS), which acts as the implementation authority for the reserve.

Governance of the biosphere reserve is achieved through a framework agreement between SAyDS and the National Parks Administration, whereby the two parties agree to carry out

activities together including monitoring, research and controls. Certain activities are also coordinated with the Ministry of Mining, which has responsibility for mining exploitation including within the reserve.

The Advisory Committee recognises the important threats posed by large-scale mining and a large number of mining projects, livestock rearing without regulation and illegal hunting.

The biosphere reserve has promoted research related to camelids and has implemented the Monitoring Plan for biological variables and water quality.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Advisory Committee requests that documents be submitted demonstrating that measures have been taken to ensure there are no negative impacts from mining activities on the conservation of local ecosystems. The Committee further:

recommends reinforcing dialogue with the Ministry of Mining to coordinate actions and control mining projects in the reserve;

recommends encouraging the participation of representatives from the local population, associations and NGOs in the Management Committee in order to be able to contribute social aspects.

W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Benin). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Benin authority for the W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. The landscape is a mosaic of savannah, forest and wetlands that is highly rich in African fauna and flora. The area designated a biosphere reserve in 2002 falls within the perimeter of a set of national parks located in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, and covers a total area of 2,048,313 ha. The core area covers 563,280 ha and consists of protected areas. The buffer zone surrounds the core area and comprises a mix of protected areas and hunting units. The transition area covers c. 1,160,000 ha. The main challenges affecting the reserve relate to poaching and grazing management involving local herders, as well as also tourism and farmland development, which lead to conflicts with livestock breeders.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of efficient management and governance for the biosphere reserve, with its focus on integrating local stakeholders and promoting culture and traditional knowledge as means to achieve sustainable development. The Committee encouraged the authority to clarify the social impacts of the decentralization process in a context of high demographic growth and related farming development (especially cotton and cash crops), as well as to clarify the sustainable management of the tourism industry and the efforts made to develop both scientific studies and collaborative sustainable activities especially on climate change issues.

The Advisory Committee considers that the WTBR Benin meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the authority pursue their efforts towards integrated conservation and development actions.

Beni Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of Beni Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1986. The biosphere reserve is located in the Department of Beni. Due not only to its rich biota but also to the presence of important indigenous Amazonian groups, it was designated a biosphere reserve with the purpose of promoting conservation in the context of attaining a balance between people and nature.

As of 2006, the creation of strategic areas and associated lines of actions to achieve the objectives of the biosphere reserve have contributed to the greater empowerment of local inhabitants in the area. Work is currently being conducted on a proposed law to conserve the watershed of the Maniquí River in collaboration with the Tsimanes original communities and the government, with the aim of preventing illegal settlements in the area.

During its 2006 session, the ICC recommended that the Beni Biosphere Reserve 'consider adding buffer zones on the northern and southern tips of the core areas and adding also a transition zone in the southern part of the Biosphere Reserve'. According to the attached zonation map, this recommendation has not been followed. Data on zonation (size of the zones) are also missing from the Periodic Review.

The review does not include a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve. In this regard, the management of the reserve point to the National Action Plan of the state of Bolivia on the environment and climate change, entitled 'Vivir Bien en Armonía y Equilibrio con la Madre Tierra', which focuses on the relationship between humans and their environment.

With regard to the implementation of previous ICC recommendations, the Beni Biosphere Reserve noted that delays affecting communication and sending documents are a consequence of long bureaucratic processes at the ministry level.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. It has requested a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve. The Committee has also recommended that the Authority submit a Management Plan and a clear budget.

Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. Pilón-Lajas is located on the far eastern spur of the Andes. It comprises mixed mountain and highland systems, low hills and Amazonian plains, and is covered with tropical humid forests, sub-tropical and tropical forest, forests in ancient alluvial terraces, and mountain and valley forests.

A 10-year management plan (2007-2017) has been established. Through this, measures have been developed for the sustainable management of the biosphere reserve. The Management Plan considers that local authorities and local people, in general, respect and enforce the integrity of the reserve and have the necessary capacities to assume commitments and undertake concrete actions contributing to the long-term viability and sustainability of the area.

The following changes were made in the zonation of the Biosphere reserves: core area – 143,382.89 ha (2006 – 68,561 ha), buffer zone – 179,966.32 ha (2006 – 134,340 ha), transition area – 62,501.38 ha (2006 – 198,691 ha). Total: 385,850.59 ha (2006 – 401,592 ha). The names specified on the zonation map do not match those cited in the Periodic Review. The core areas are not well protected.

The recommendations made during the last Periodic Review included clarification regarding zonation. This request has now been addressed: according to current Bolivian regulations, the denomination of zones in protected areas differs from that of reserves.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere reserves. It requests a revised zonation map with

the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve.

Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. The biosphere reserve is located 160 km northwest of La Paz, where its western boundary borders Peru. Located in the higher parts of Bolivia, the area contains a combination of ecological formations including high plateau, tundra, high cordillera, mountains, lakes, the headwaters of the River Euichi and River Turiopa, and a permanent snow zone.

A request has been made to change the name of this biosphere reserve from the Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve to the 'Area Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba'.

No changes have been made to the zonation of the present biosphere reserve (483,743.80 ha). This is problematic as the reserve in its current form has no core area, buffer zone or transition area, only a total surface area. However, the attached zonation map distinguishes three different zones: Proteccion Estricta, Zona de Amortiguacion and Zona de Aprovechamiento de Recursos Naturales.

A management plan has been established that updates an earlier 2006 management plan. The plan considers measures directed towards the sustainable management of the reserve and the creation of strategic areas for the management of the Apolobamba Anmin, which is considered a biosphere reserve. These are the same measures that have been implemented since 2006.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere reserves. It requests a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and an explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve (see core areas at the border). The numbers given with regard to the human population are out of date (the last population count dates from 2001). Finally, an official request to change the name of the biosphere reserve has been made.

Dja Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon). The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review of Dja Biosphere Reserve (526,004 ha), established in 1981. The site encompasses the Dja Faunal Reserve, which is inscribed on the World Heritage List (1987). The Dja Biosphere Reserve is an integral part of the dense rainforests that form part of the Congo Basin. It is renowned for its biodiversity which includes many animal and plant species, several of which are globally threatened.

The Dja Biosphere Reserve is home to over 100 species of mammals of which at least 14 primates, such as the western lowland gorilla, chimpanzee, white-collared mangabey, mandrill and drill, are endangered. In addition, the reserve contains several flagship species, such as the endangered forest elephant and the almost extinct African grey parrot, bongo and leopard. It has a rich and varied ecosystem that reflects an ongoing process of ecological evolution found in this type of environment. The reserve also belongs to the largest forest block in Africa to maintain biological diversity.

The Advisory Committee took note of the report which presents the state of conservation of the Dja Game Reserve in relation to its status as a World Heritage site. The Advisory Committee noted that the report does not refer to the area as a biosphere reserve or mention its fulfilment of specific criteria or include a description of zonation. As such, the report cannot be considered as a Periodic Review report since its format and content do not permit evaluation

of whether the area meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', taken by the 29th MAB Council requests the Member State to submit:

the Periodic Review in the accepted format by 30 September 2018; or

a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR followed by the MAB Council.

Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Canada). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002. The Frontenac Arch is a North/South corridor situated between the Canadian Shield and Adirondack and Appalachian forests. The site also covers the area where the St Lawrence valley meets the Great Lakes basin. In 2007, the reserve was extended and renamed with the encouragement of the community.

The area approximately doubled to reach 284 km². A social network for sustainable development has been established and promoted in the reserve. This network interacts with rich and complex webs consisting of various organisations in charge of nature protection, water management, planning and so on. The core area (mostly provincial and national parks) has now increased from 34 km² to 44 km² and the buffer zone from 50 km² to 52 km². The transition zone decreased from 200 km² to 187 km².

The Advisory Committee noted the progress made regarding the implementation of education activities and the development of tourism strategy. It recommended that the authority pursue efforts towards more coordination for integrated conservation and development actions.

The Advisory Committee considers that the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR on zonation. It requested greater clarification regarding the zonation of the biosphere reserve and its rationale, as well as more evidence on the coordination of biosphere reserve activities versus other activities not initiated by the biosphere reserve.

Fundy Biosphere Reserve (Canada). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review provided by the Fundy Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Rich Acadian forest, rivers, streams and wetlands, intertidal wetlands and tidal flats dominate this site. The designated area encompasses c. 4,300 km² of the upper bay of Fundy in New Brunswick. The reserve is a community-based initiative consisting of individuals and representatives of various stakeholder groups, organizations and local communities. Fundy National Park (20,600 ha) constitutes the core area of the reserve. The buffer zone (c. 26,100 ha) consists of several non-continuous zones that are protected by contracts, stewardship projects or land ownerships. The transition area covers 365,670 ha (plus 9,940 ha of marine transition area) and consists of a mosaic of villages, farmlands and industries.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of efficient management and governance structure that integrates local stakeholders, despite a difficult economic context. The Committee recommended that the authority pursue their efforts towards integrated conservation and development actions.

The Advisory Committee considered that the Fundy Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR regarding zonation and the underlying rationale for its operation, especially in terms of the lack of buffer around the core area. It also requested more detail about the impacts of wind farms and mining on the local biodiversity and landscape, as well as information about interactions between the ongoing development of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and their surroundings.

Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve – Extension (Canada). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review provided by the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. It covers an area of c. 54,800 km² of forest and rivers in Quebec. The biosphere reserve is a community-based initiative consisting of individuals and representatives of various stakeholder groups, organizations and local communities. In the context of new protection laws that focus on improving the situation of the forest caribou, the review proposes to expand the core area from 302,270 ha to 431,264 ha, and the buffer zone from 846,266 ha to 1,296,880 ha, at the expense of the transition area, which will thereafter account for about 68% of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee appreciated the rationale for the zonation including the explanation for the lack of buffer zone in certain core areas.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the progress made regarding the development and implementation of an efficient public-private partnership, the impressive participatory governance process which integrates local stakeholders, and the reserve's contribution to international networks such as NORDMAB, especially regarding indigenous issues. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the work achieved, the mobilization of funding and creation of partnerships, the support and involvement of local communities and the quality of the participative management process, and also recognized its achievements in communication. It recommended that the report be shared as a model in the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee considered that the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Bosques Templados Lluviosos de los Andes Australes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The area contains an extraordinary wealth of biodiversity of global importance. The territory is situated within the eco-region of the Temperate Forests of Valdivia, which has been catalogued as one of the largest ecologically intact remnants on the planet.

The biosphere reserve works closely with the Andino Norpatagonica Biosphere Reserve in Argentina, and both sites are exploring the possibility of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve.

Although the area has implemented several interesting activities, for example involving young people in caring for their national parks, these are only carried out in the core zone, and not in the rest of the biosphere reserve.

The zonation and cartography of the biosphere reserve is adequate and each of the protected areas that form part of the core zone has a management plan. However, governance of the reserve is non-existent in the absence of a Management Plan, Management Committee or a budget for the reserve.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requests the following:

the formation of an appropriate Management Committee,
a Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve.

Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities on the submission of the second Period Review report for the Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve, which included a response to the ICC 1998 recommendations and commended China for taking action to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review in 1998. The Committee noted that although the report was submitted in 2017, the MAB Council was unable to make a decision at that time, as the Periodic Review had not yet been examined by the Advisory Committee. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Guangdong Province in southern China, an area characterized by the low mountains and hills of the Dayunwu Mountain Range. Dinghushan was China's first nature reserve (established in 1979) and has played a significant role in the conservation of ecosystems over the last 40 years. The total area covers 1,100 ha, and the core area, buffer zone and transition area occupy 750 ha, 220 ha and 130 ha, respectively.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their protection and conservation efforts, noting that vegetation coverage had been maintained above 98% of the total area. The area of monsoon evergreen broad-leaf forest has increased annually reaching 220 ha. The Committee also noted that monitoring processes were operational and functioning well.

The Committee noted with satisfaction that communication mechanisms have been established and are operational. These include a WeChat public platform and a biannual electronic newsletter entitled "Window of Dinghushan".

The Committee commended the Chinese authorities for its strong performance regarding conservation and logistics. However, the Committee noted that progress in the area of development is still lacking. A transition area forms part of the state reserve and there are no villages. About 25 householders live in Dinghushan with only 100 registered permanent residents in the transition area.

The Advisory Committee also noted that local authorities and communities are not sufficiently involved in biosphere reserve management. It further noted that the submitted Management Plan is just a summary of objectives.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to expand the biosphere reserve area and include villages and local people accordingly. It recommended the development of a long-term Management Plan and the involvement of local authorities and all relevant stakeholders in consultation processes and biosphere reserve management.

As the site is included in the Process of excellence and enhancement, the Committee has requested that the Chinese authorities submit the following information by 30 June 2018:

revision of the zonation scheme in order to expand the biosphere reserve area and include villages and local people accordingly;
actions taken to involve local authorities and communities, as well as other stakeholders, in biosphere reserve management, and detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement;

interventions to enhance sustainable development.

Foping Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities on the submission of the first Periodic Review for the Foping Biosphere Reserve.

Foping Biosphere Reserve is located in Shanxi Province on the southern side of the Qinling Mountains. It is one of the three major habitats of the giant panda in China. The site is characterized by typical mountain forest ecosystems and landscapes where the northern subtropical and warm temperate zones meet, with a rich biodiversity and natural heritage represented by the giant panda. It also abounds with important medicinal plant species, and has significant potential for ecotourism and scientific research.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their protection and conservation efforts. It noted that in terms of changes in landscape or habitat use, the forest coverage rate increased to 98.5% from 87% when the reserve was established. Plants have increased from 1,765 species to 1,802 species belonging to 235 families and 755 genera. Wild vertebrates have increased from 399 species to 400 species belonging to 30 orders, 83 families and 229 genera.

In terms of local economic development, the reserve has developed a partnership with neighbouring communities to resolve conflicts between resource conservation and the economic and social development of communities, following the principle of 'intellectual development, technical support, and appropriate funding'. The Committee noted with satisfaction that new constructions include five small hydro-power stations, three stone arch bridges, more than 30 km of roads connecting villages, 15 chain bridges providing conveniences for local residents, and public water systems supplying more than 100 households with water and costing over RMB 7 million.

The Committee acknowledged the existence of public awareness actions and an overall communication strategy for the site.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities for the submission of the second Periodic Review for the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve. The Committee commended China for taking actions to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review in 1999. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

This biosphere reserve is located in the northwestern part of Fujian Province in southeast China. The designated area includes a range of vegetation types, varying according to elevation (200 m to 2,158 m above sea level). Probably the most extensive and important vegetation type is the evergreen broad-leaved forest, which includes some of the largest tracts of humid sub-tropical forests in the world. Habitats of special interest for conservation are *Taxus chinensis* communities and the middle mountain dwarf forest.

Mount Wuyi is a landscape of great beauty and has been protected for more than 12 centuries. It contains several exceptional archaeological sites and is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the national authorities have improved the existing joint conservation mechanism. Since 2002, the reserve has implemented a delimitation and compensation mechanism for non-commercial ecological forest. Since 1998,

the reserve has ceased logging of Chinese Fir and *Pinus massoniana* for village use within the fixed production area of the experimental zone. It has also implemented logging quota management for scattered Moso bamboo.

With regard to Moso bamboo and black tea plantations in the transition area, the Committee encouraged the national authorities to set up policies for these plantations to ensure that there is no negative impact on forest biodiversity.

The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for their actions to promote more sustainable eco-tourism rather than mass tourism, and encouraged them to continue these efforts.

The Committee, however, noticed that certain parts of the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones or transition areas.

Following review of the materials submitted by the Chinese authorities, the Advisory Committee could not conclude whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to provide a rationale as to why the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones and transition areas to ensure their effective protection. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018.

Xilingol Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities for submitting a second Periodic Review for the Xilingol biosphere reserve and for taking actions to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Xilingol Biosphere Reserve is situated in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, about 600 km north of Beijing. It was established as China's first grassland biosphere reserve in 1987 to protect the biodiversity of a typical steppe ecosystem and to develop models of sustainable grassland resource use, with a view to improving the well-being of the local people. Xilingol Grassland comprises the main body of Inner Mongolia's natural grasslands. Accordingly, it is the most representative temperate true steppe composed of bunch and rhizome grasses, and the most intact part of the eastern Asia sub-region of the Eurasia steppe region, which is much valued in terms of conservation and scientific research.

The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for their efforts to promote sustainable development. For example, the construction of community infrastructure helped to increase the disposable income per capita of herdsmen 5.2 times over a period of 10 years.

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their success with projects to conserve and restore grasslands and to promote sustainable development in the national nature reserve. It encouraged the application of these projects to the transition areas and their dissemination to other grasslands in China. The Committee further encouraged the expansion of the core area and buffer zone to harmonize the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that a higher resolution zonation map for the whole biosphere reserve was submitted. However, the Advisory Committee has asked the national authorities to provide a zonation map with the English names of localities as the present names are in Chinese. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to establish a new Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve in the near future and to submit it to the MAB Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Baconao Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Baconao Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. The biosphere reserve is situated in the Neotropics Province of Greater Antilles at the southeastern region of Cuba, between Santiago de Cuba and the province of Guantanamo. It includes three well-defined biogeographic zones: the 'Meseta de Santiago', the 'Sierra de la Gran Piedra' and the 'Meseta Santa Maria de Loreto'.

Over the last 10 years, the Cuban economic model has been updated leading to a number of significant changes for the biosphere reserve. These include the disbursement of land to individuals under the right of usufruct and the establishment of small private businesses. Work is being carried out to locate financing to evaluate and mitigate the negative impacts of these new activities and to link these new actors to the sustainable use of resources in the biosphere reserve.

In 2012, the territory was struck by Hurricane Sandy, resulting in considerable damage to the biosphere reserve, its natural elements, and to economic activities and the local population.

The biosphere reserve has also been incorporated into the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC), a pan-governmental initiative involving Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. It provides a framework for cooperation among these countries for the protection of biological diversity in the Caribbean Region and the American Neotropics.

Further clarification is needed with regard to zonation: the numbers cited on page 5 of the Periodic Review amount to a total area of 94,416 ha; however, page 81 gives a total area of 82,330 ha.

The Baconao Biosphere Reserve has a Management Plan which is updated every five years. In addition, each of the core areas has an independent management plan. These documents were developed according to the methodology for Management Plans of the National System of Protected Areas, and define the conservation priorities of each area (including priorities at the biosphere reserve scale and at the local scale for each core zone).

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. The biosphere reserve is located in the Greater Antilles in the northeastern region of Cuba, and covers the mountain region of Sagua-Garacoa in Alexander de Humboldt National Park.

As recommended by the MAB Council following the first Periodic Review, a Management Plan has been established for the period 2014-2020. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers.

It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve remains the same, but there are changes in the zonation. The inclusion of 'Salto Fino' has increased the core area and the buffer zone, while slightly decreasing the transition area. These adjustments were made during the development of the new Management Plan.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1987. Guanahacabibes Peninsula is the westernmost point of Cuba. It is located in Pinar del Río Province in the municipality of Sandino and is sparsely populated.

As recommended by the MAB Council following the first Periodic Review, a Management Plan has been established for the period 2007-2011 and 2012-2016. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers. It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve will increase by 36,000 ha with the increase covering mainly the core area and buffer zone. The core area increased following the declaration of Guanahacabibes National Park as a protected area in 2001 and the creation of the 'Refugio de Fauna Cienaga de Lugones' and the 'Banco de San Antonio' in 2012. The buffer zone increased due to adjustments made during the development of the Management Plan for the period 2012-2016. The transition area decreased for the same reason.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requests that the following information be sent before 30 June 2018.

a revised zonation including a continuous marine buffer zone;
the Management Plan for the current period.

Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve (Cuba). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1984. The biosphere reserve is located at the eastern part of the mountain range of Guaniguanico between the Cuban provinces of Pinar del Rio and Havana, within view of the northern and southern coasts.

As recommended by the ICC following the first periodic review, a management plan has been established for the period 2006-2010 and 2011-2015. Representatives from the local population participated during all phases of its preparation through meetings and workshops, including the leaders of local communities, environmental organizations and representatives of local governments.

International support to increase resources was provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This enabled the training of farmers, specialists, biosphere reserve managers and decision-makers. It also supported the execution of research and monitoring programmes on key species and priority ecosystems, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

The total area of the reserve remains the same, but there are changes in the zonation. The core area increased with the declaration of 'El Mulo' as a natural reserve and 'El Salon' ecological reserve. The buffer zone increased due to adjustments made during the development of the Management Plan for the period 2011-2015. The transition area decreased for the same reason.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requests that the Management Plan for the current period be sent before 30 June 2018.

Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve (DPR Korea). The Advisory Committee congratulated the DPR Korean authorities for the submission of the first Periodic Review report for the Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve.

The Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve, situated on the west coast of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and 100 km south-west of Pyongyang, consists of a 954 m-high mountain, adjacent coastal wetlands, lagoons and river estuaries, and agricultural areas. Both the core area and the buffer zone are part of the Mount Kuwol Nature Reserve, which was designated in 1976.

The biosphere reserve is characterized by various ecosystems including the forest ecosystem in the core area, an agricultural ecosystem widely spread across the transition area, and a wetland ecosystem found along coastline, rivers, streams and reservoirs. The types of habitat and land cover can thus be classified into three types: forest, farmland and wetland.

The Advisory Committee noted the absence of a designated marine ecosystem and therefore asked the national authorities to describe the adjacent marine environment, as well as the sustainable use of marine resources including fishing. The Committee encouraged the authorities to consider the inclusion of adjacent coastal and marine areas. It also commended efforts to monitor migratory birds.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the communication strategy for the biosphere reserve and its implementation through Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) is under examination. Several significant achievements have already taken place. In 2007, Biodiversity CHM was established to provide an environment for the exchange of information on scientific management between reserves, with the creation of biodiversity homepages linked to national networks. In 2007, the *Atlas of Biosphere Reserve of DPRK* was published and distributed. In 2011, a database was launched on the animals and plants of reserves, covering the Mt. Kuwol, Mt. Paektu and Mt. Myohyang biosphere reserves.

The Advisory Committee also noted that two research works received the MAB Young Scientist Award: 'Study on the possibility of extending the core area of the coastal wetland in Mt. Kuwol Biosphere Reserve' (2007) and 'Application of 3S in monitoring Mt. Kuwol Biosphere Reserve' (2009-2010).

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Podocarpus – El Condor Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Podocarpus – El Condor Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The biosphere reserve is located in southern Ecuador, and includes Podocarpus National Park, considered to be one of the most important sites for biodiversity in the world. It contains 3,500 plant species over 40% of which are endemic or restricted to the area, including an abundance of orchids, bromeliads, ferns and tree species.

Over the past 10 years, significant progress on conservation has been achieved through the recognition (under a Ministerial Agreement) of a management category that guarantees better conservation of the core areas. Furthermore, the biosphere reserve has invested in the branding of local products and the implementation and start-up of several clean energy projects for local communities.

Management of the biosphere reserve has been linked to national territorial planning tools such as the National Plan 'Buen Vivir' and the National Territorial Strategy, as well as the Regional Environmental Strategic Plan. However, in 2016-2017, the national planning tools and zonal areas initiated a process to strengthen the management of the biosphere reserve. A plan, established and developed and validated by local actors, defines a vision, mission, objectives and activities to be fulfilled over the long term.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and congratulates the authorities on the quality of this Periodic Review.

Mont Ventoux Biosphere Reserve (France). The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Periodic Review of the Mont Ventoux Biosphere Reserve. It commended the authorities on the high quality of the periodic review, which was the product of extensive stakeholder participation.

The Advisory Committee was pleased to notice that the recommendations following the last Periodic Review (2006) concerning the extension of the core area have been put into effect. The core area has been extended significantly, while the biosphere reserve still contains a sizeable buffer zone and transition area.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the initiatives taken to use the biosphere reserve as a forum to discuss possible ways to manage the impacts of the growing population in the transition area. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee commended initiatives launched to address climate change through forestry (including the mobilization of private forest owners), as well as the many cultural festivals organized to promote public participation.

The Advisory Committee took notice of plans to adapt the governance of the biosphere reserve to the changing social and institutional context, and to discover new ways of stimulating public participation. The Advisory Committee requested additional information on the impact of the creation of the natural regional park on the governance, coordination and management of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the biosphere reserve on the detailed Periodic Review and concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Ipassa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve (Gabon). In response to the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council on Periodic Reviews, the Advisory

Committee took note of the formal commitment of the national authorities to submit the Periodic Review of the Ipassa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve no later than 30 September 2019 to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and the MAB Council.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', taken by the 29th MAB Council, wish to recall that the Member State may submit a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience, before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and the MAB Council.

Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany). The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on the detailed Periodic Review of the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, which was based on an impressive number of meetings with various stakeholders as well as surveys among various stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the extension of the core areas to enhance the conservation function of the biosphere reserve, while maintaining extensive buffer and transition areas.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the establishment of the Network of Partners of the Elbe River to promote the sustainable development of the biosphere reserve. It noted the conflicts resulting from increased flooding and appreciated the efforts to balance conservation and the protection of inhabitants and their livelihoods.

The Advisory Committee commended the biosphere reserve for its contributions to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves through its contacts and exchanges with biosphere reserves in Austria, Ethiopia, Romania and the Russian Federation, among others.

The Advisory Committee expressed the hope that the biosphere reserve will be able to address staff shortages in order to safeguard vital logistical functions. The Advisory Committee welcomed ongoing attempts to increase cooperation between the regional authorities, especially in relation to infrastructural projects and flood risk management.

The Advisory Committee requested additional information to clarify why some of the core areas have no buffer zone. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018.

Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1990. The Maya Biosphere Reserve is located in the Petén region of northern Guatemala. Along with the Maya Forest of Belize and Mexico, it represents one of the largest areas of tropical forest north of the Amazon, and the northernmost tropical forest in the Western Hemisphere. The reserve includes a mixed World Heritage Site and two wetlands included on the Ramsar List. The biosphere reserve covers about 20% (2,090,000 ha) of the territory of Guatemala and contains more than 60% of all declared protected areas in the country.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Guatemalan authorities use the official Periodic Review forms found on the UNESCO MAB website, as well as the official terminology and zonation. No reference could be found in the review to previous recommendations made by the ICC or to activities that have taken place in the biosphere reserve since the last Periodic Review (2001).

Shouf Biosphere Reserve (Lebanon). The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of Shouf Biosphere Reserve which is a green scenic mountain landscape situated in the arid Middle East, and hosts several exceptional sites. The area covers a homogeneous mountain ridge that rises to an elevation of 2000 m in southeast Lebanon. Designated in 2005, Shouf is a relatively small biosphere reserve, covering a total of 44,800 ha of which the core area represents 16,100 ha (36% of the total area), the buffer zone 5,400 ha (12%) and the transition area 23,360 ha (52%). The Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve constitutes the core area of the biosphere reserve and its emblematic species, the Cedar of Lebanon or Lebanese cedar (*Cedrus libani*), is the symbol of the country. With 620 ha of Cedar forest, the biosphere reserve hosts 25% of the remaining Cedar forests in the country. Average precipitation is more than 1,000 mm per year.

The reserve is home to 520 plant species and more than 250 bird species. About 70,000 inhabitants live in the biosphere reserve. These local communities use traditional methods and recipes to produce 70 different products, which are sold in the visitor centre. The reserve practises ecotourism and has implemented well-developed environmental education programmes. Biosphere reserve activities are carried out effectively in collaboration with government/public institutions and civil society, including in the context of international cooperation projects.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. This said, while the site represents a category of biosphere reserve where sustainability is guaranteed in the long run, there could be questions regarding the extent to which it contributes more actively to the development process.

Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of Mediterranea (Morocco, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of Mediterranea, designated in 2006. The terrestrial part of the reserve includes exceptional ecosystems characteristic of the biogeographical zone of the Mediterraneana, with a core area of 64,600 ha, a buffer zone of 282,500 ha and a transition area of 123,500 ha. The marine area contains habitats sheltering a rich and varied flora and fauna, and is covered by a transition area of 18,854 ha. The reserve includes 45 municipalities, all of which are involved in the participatory process of the Periodic Review.

The Advisory Committee took note of the establishment and operation of a joint official coordinating and monitoring Committee between the two countries (Morocco and Spain).

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities strengthen the involvement of local communities in the management of the reserve.

General recommendation to Mexico. The MAB Committee welcomed the 14 periodic reviews submitted by the Mexican authorities and recognized the important effort made by the country.

All biosphere reserves have a Management Plan and a Management Committee, but the Advisory Committee noted the lack of a transition area for the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that the 14 sites meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, however:

it requests that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve, including the transition area;
It recommends that the Mexican authorities replace the Mexican 'biosphere reserve' denomination with an alternative term in order to avoid confusion with the UNESCO denomination.

Arrecife Alacranes Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Arrecife Alacranes Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. Arrecife Alacranes is the largest coral structure in the Gulf of Mexico, and the only known observed coral reef in the state of Yucatan.

In 2008, the Arrecife Alacranes Protected Natural Area was designated a RAMSAR wetland of international importance. Since 2007, the reserve has carried out programmes to monitor flag species, such as the white turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

Over the last 10 years, the biosphere reserve has promoted the development of sustainable micro-enterprises through projects subsidized by the federal government. The majority of these micro-enterprises are led by housewives. The reserve also implemented a coordination agreement with federal agencies to carry out maritime surveillance and inspections of vessels. With regard to tourism, the reserve undertook a study to determine tourist cargo capacity and concluded that Pérez Island has a visitor capacity of 111 people per day.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve; however, this does not include the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006.

The Region de Calakmul Biosphere Reserve is located in the southern portion of the Yucatan Peninsula. It includes the largest area of tropical forest in Mexico, characterized by a unique climate, soil and vegetation. The mixture of high and medium forests with low, temporarily flooded rainforests and aquatic vegetation hosts almost 90% of the flora species observed in Campeche. With regard to fauna, the reserve is home to six of the seven species of marsupials registered in the country, two of the three primates, and five of the six felines. Although there are no endemic vertebrates, it contains species considered rare, threatened or in danger of extinction.

The reserve also contains one of the most outstanding archaeological zones of Mayan culture, including the sites of Calakmul, El Ramonal, X'pujil, Becan, Chicanna, Hormiguero, Carrizal, Balam Kú and Naadzkan, among more than 6,250 archaeological structures, many of which not been registered. As such, it is considered one of the most valuable pre-Hispanic archives.

In 2014, Calakmul was declared a UNESCO Mixed World Heritage site.

Through the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas, the reserve implements a variety of programmes to promote conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The following programmes aim to mitigate impacts generated by human activities or natural disasters, and are subsidized by the federal government: the Conservation Programme for Sustainable Development (PROCODES), the Temporary Employment Programme (PET), the

Criollo Corn Conservation Programme (PROMAC) and the Community Vigilance Programme (PROVICOM).

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve hosts a wide variety of ecosystems that make up one of the most diverse and heterogeneous landscapes on the Pacific coast of the Americas.

Over the last 10 years, the region has been subjected to various processes that have transformed its economic and environmental dynamics, with the emergence and development of tourism activity becoming an important factor.

During this period, the Chamela Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve has consolidated its management and guided its actions to fulfil its main objectives. The Technical Advisory Committee has developed an Annual Operating Programme (AOP) that includes an evaluation of actions contained in the previous AOP, while aligning proposed actions for the following year with the Management Programme.

An additional marine transition area has been added to the biosphere reserve, increasing the total area by 2,600 ha.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Cuatrociénagas Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Cuatrociénagas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna de Cuatrociénegas is an arid zone, with around 500 water bodies of varied shapes and shades of blue, surrounded by mountains where unique species have developed.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006.

The Cumbres de Monterrey National Park is located in the province of the Sierra Madre Oriental and the sub-provinces of the Grand Sierra Plegada.

Over the last 10 years, the urban sprawl of the city of Monterrey has grown significantly, affecting parts of the Cumbres de Monterrey Biosphere Reserve. In addition, irregular human settlements and several houses have been constructed inside the protected area. The threat of fires and forest diseases has increased, as has the number of visitors, affecting parts of the protected natural area. To face these new challenges, the Directorate of the Reserve increased both personnel and the allocated budget.

In 2014, the Management Programme was updated and is in the process of being published. The new edition provides valuable information on planning and potential activities. Meanwhile, the 'Estrategia Regional Noreste y Sierra Madre Oriental', an instrument that defines priorities for community conservation and development projects and actions, has been implemented and is currently in operation. A Climate Change Action Programme and an Annual Operational Programme (AOP) are aligned with the aforementioned documents.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. El Vizcaino is located in the central part of the Baja California peninsula in the Sebastian Volcano region, between the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean.

The Mexican authorities took into account the recommendations made by the MAB Council. In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, they established a transition area (both marine and terrestrial) in cooperation with local communities. This will increase the total surface by 1,640,000 ha.

In recent years, a number of events related to climate change have affected local fisheries, which function as the main source of economic support in the region. One such case is the mass mortality of abalone (*Haliotis* spp.).

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

La Michilia Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the La Michilia Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. Michilía is located 75 km to the south of Durango in the Sierra de Michis, a branch of the Sierra Madre Occidental. The Sierra de Michis consists of igneous rock from the Tertiary Period. The topography of the reserve is characterized by a high degree of relief.

Following the recommendations made by the MAB Council in relation to the first Periodic Review, the authorities worked to strengthen development. Achievements have been made in terms of equipment and trained personnel for the management of the reserve. The authorities have also defined a clear zonation for the biosphere reserve, and local communities have participated in the development of the Management Plan.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

La Primavera Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the La Primavera Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The diversity of ecosystems in La Primavera Biosphere Reserve is influenced by the geographical location of its forest area, which covers two floristic provinces: the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierras Meridionales or Volcanic Axis (the so-called belt of fire).

Over the last 10 years, the landscape has been affected by several construction developments, which have threatened ecological processes both inside and outside the biosphere reserve. These include the building of a highway (Macrolibramiento) that puts at risk three of the four biological corridors of Ahuisculco.

The Management Programme is the guiding document of the biosphere reserve that establishes conservation strategies for the protected natural areas. This document is currently in the process of being updated. Another key document is the Institutional Plan, which anticipates expected changes.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the La Sepultura Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. La Sepultura comprises a range of different ecosystem types and natural habitats that represent major biogeographic regions, coupled with traditional forms of local land ownership that determine the different forms of management and conservation of the site.

In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, the biosphere reserve management has established a transition area in cooperation with local communities. This will increase the total surface by 100,960 ha.

Over the last 10 years, the authorities have developed a series of actions aimed at improving the sustainable use of natural resources. One such process is the use of pinewood in the municipality of Villaflores, where a low-impact exploitation scheme has been generated through forest management, improving extraction schemes, avoiding impacts on the natural environment and improving the income of local families.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila. Maderas del Carmen encompasses part of the Sierra del Carmen, a northern part of the Sierra Madre Oriental range.

The buffer zone and transition areas that surround the reserve have been strengthened, as part of an institutional process based on promoting connectivity at the landscape level. In total, the transition area was extended by 1 million ha. In addition, several working meetings were held from 2011 to 2013 between SEMARNAT and the Interior Department of the United States due to the reserve's proximity to the neighbouring Big Bend Biosphere Reserve in the United States. The meetings resulted in the opening of an official border crossing between both countries through the two respective biosphere reserves.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area. The Committee has also requested a more detailed explanation of the two protected areas situated in the transition area.

Mariposa Monarca Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Mariposa Monarca Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in a region where conservation of natural heritage is a challenge because of its unique physical, geomorphological, climatic, hydrological and biogeographic features, but more particularly because each year millions of Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) complete their migratory cycle here, after migrating from Canada and the United States.

Concerning the recommendations made by the MAB ICC regarding designation as a biosphere reserve, the authorities have increased cooperation with Canadian and US authorities on the key sites in the countries along the migratory routes of the Monarch butterfly. A 'Plan for the Conservation of the Monarch butterfly in North America' has been developed to contribute to the conservation of the habitats of the Monarch butterfly at a tri-national level. This was followed by the organization of a 'Trinational Monarch Butterfly Monitoring Workshop' to exchange information and improve knowledge.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The

reserve is located in the physiographic province 'Llanura Costera del Golfo Sur' and the subprovince 'Llanuras y Pantanos Tabasqueños'. The landscape is characterized by topographic formations of barrier plain (beaches) towards the coast and across the coastal floodplain.

In order to fully comply with the Statutes of the Seville Strategy, the biosphere reserve management have established a transition area in cooperation with the local communities. This will increase the total surface by 44,000 ha.

Over the last 10 years, the expansion of agricultural areas has contributed to the deforestation of timber species and mangroves. The population has also increased significantly from 16,000 to 24,500 inhabitants.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Selva El Ocote Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Selva El Ocote Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. It is one of two regions in the country with a considerably large stretch of highland and medium altitude forest, characteristic of the Mexican humid tropics.

The transition area will be extended by almost 100,000 ha to maintain close social, economic and ecological interactions.

Over the last 10 years, the biosphere reserve has suffered from several forest fires that affected around 22,000 ha. Thanks to the coordination of the 'Dirección de la Reserva a través del Centro Regional de Control de Incendios Forestales' (CRIF), the impact of forest fires has decreased recently. The biosphere reserve works directly with more than 50 communities on fire management, community surveillance, community monitoring, management of cattle and sheep, low-impact tourism, conservation coffee and agrobiodiversity. These advances have generated positive changes in natural conditions, notably the ecological restoration of the area, as well as greater awareness and participation of society and social organizations, and improvement of the local economy.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Sistema Arrecifal de Veracruzano Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The Veracruz Coral Reef System comprises flats, islands and reefs located on the inner part of the continental shelf rising from a depth of almost 40 m. The area regulates the climate and operates as a barrier against waves and storms. The biosphere reserve harbours resident, transitory and migrant fish.

Significant changes are proposed with regards to zonation. Due to changing environmental conditions, the terrestrial core area has been included in the transition area. The marine core area has been reduced from 5,000 ha to 1,000 ha due to boundary confusion and conflicts with the local fishing industry. The buffer zone, on the other hand, will increase by almost 20,000 ha. Furthermore, the transition area has been extended from the urban to the traditional-use area southwards following the ICC recommendation. This extension increases the transition area from 28,700 ha to 895,750 ha.

A Management Plan and a Management Committee have been established for the national biosphere reserve, however this does not incorporate the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee considers that this site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; however, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (Montenegro). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976.

The Tara River Basin is located in the south-eastern part of the Dinaric Alps and consists of carbonate plateaus, canyons and the deepest gorge in Europe. The Tara canyon is 80 km long and ranges in altitude from 433 m to 2,522 m above sea level. The area is distinguished by high species diversity and rich habitats that include alpine forest, rivers and lakes, alpine and subalpine heath, transition mires, bogs and screes. The biosphere reserve incorporates Durmitor National Park, which was designated a World Heritage Site in 1980, Biogradska Gora National Park and Piva Regional Park. There were two sites with Medieval Tombstones located in Žabjak and Plužine which were inscribed in the tentative list of the World Heritage in 2016.

The core areas cover 19,300 ha, the buffer zones 24,938 ha and the transition area 138,651 ha. The reserve is inhabited by 18,202 people, who mainly engage in agriculture, cattle breeding and grazing. The Periodic Review was prepared through a participatory process with the assistance of the UNESCO Office in Venice and UNDP Montenegro.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the information about the process used to establish an appropriate managing structure in the form of a permanent Coordination Body, which will consist of representatives of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Culture and the National Commission of Montenegro for UNESCO, as well as municipalities and the National Parks of Montenegro. It noted that the coordination body will also implement the Action Plan prepared over a two-year period and due to be finalised in October 2017.

Conservation is implemented according to national legislation and through several newly established protected areas. Research and monitoring programmes are in place for forests and species such as brown bear, wild goat, large grouse, chamois, birds, and other endemic and protected species. The Advisory Committee noted that socio-economic forums were established in national parks to introduce participative planning and management processes. Sustainable development is oriented towards agriculture and sustainable tourism.

The Advisory Committee noted that the core areas in the northern, western and central parts of the biosphere reserve, along with the southern core areas, are not surrounded by buffer

zones. It was also noted that zonation would be discussed in the future in relation to the new Action Plan of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to provide research in the fields of hydrology, speleology and socio-economy, to monitor the impact of tourism, promote the sustainable use of natural resources, foster education, and pursue the active involvement of local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes.

The Advisory Committee requested that the national authorities submit by 30 June 2018 the following information in order to assess if the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves the criteria:

Endorsements of all members participating in the Coordination Body and a copy of the protocol of cooperation;
To provide rationale on why some core areas are not surrounded by buffer zone in the northern part and southern part;
Submit a new zonation map showing the reduction in size of National Park Durmitor and the newly established protected areas;
The action plan of the biosphere reserve.

Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1997. The Bosawas Biosphere Reserve is located in the north of the country on the border with Honduras. Together with three neighbouring protected areas of Honduras, it constitutes the so-called 'Heart of the Mesoamerican Biocorridor', the largest protected area complex of tropical mountain moist forest north of the Amazon basin.

Since the official UNESCO periodic review form is not used, crucial information is missing.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Nicaraguan authorities:

revise the zonation map to include a transition area;
establish a management plan for the biosphere reserve;
establish a management committee;
use the official Periodic Review forms found on the MAB website.

Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2003. The Río San Juan Biosphere Reserve is composed of seven protected areas and other adjacent territories. It covers a large variety of ecosystems representative of tropical humid forests and wetlands, tidal marsh, coastal lagoons and estuaries, which function as important shelters for rare or threatened animals and plant genetic resources of the meso-American tropics.

Since the official UNESCO periodic review form was not used, crucial information is missing.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. It requests that the Nicaraguan authorities:

revise the zonation map to include a transition area
establish a management plan for the biosphere reserve
establish a management committee
use the official Periodic Review forms found on the MAB website.

Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland). The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Polish national report for the Eastern Carpathians

Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992. The national report allows the Advisory Committee to assess whether the national site meets or does not meet the set criteria, and complements the report on transboundary cooperation. The Advisory Committee noted that the criteria of the statutory framework apply only to the biosphere reserve, while the Pamplona recommendation covers transboundary cooperation.

The site is located on the western edge of the Eastern Carpathians on the border of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. The Polish part of the reserve incorporates Bieszczady National Park, Ciśniańsko-Wetliński Landscape Park and San Valley Landscape Park. Conservation efforts and logistical support are strong in this sparsely populated area, while development could be improved.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the change in the size of core areas, due to the increase of the strictly protected Bieszczady National Park central area. However, the zonation layout presented by the authorities is not compatible with the Statutory Framework requirements as, according to the map provided, some large core areas lack buffering zones and are in direct contact with some of the transition areas.

The Advisory Committee noticed that despite attempts on the part of the authorities to involve stakeholders, no evidence or practical examples were provided of their participation in biosphere reserve management. It therefore asked the authorities to provide evidence supplied by the representatives of local communities and businesses of their direct participation in the design and implementation of the biosphere reserve management.

The Advisory Committee stated that the national management plan/policy should be established in accordance with the statutory framework and complemented with a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere reserve. It also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the Polish part of the East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to submit by 30 June 2018 the following:

> information on why some of the core areas are not properly buffered as per the Statutory Framework or provide further explanation for the absence of buffer zones; detailed information on development in the reserve and the involvement of the local communities in this regard, as well as on the management of the Polish part of the reserve, including through possible extension to communities living beyond the protected areas in order to strengthen development.

Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland). The Advisory Committee welcomed this Polish national report for the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The site is located on the boundary between Poland and Slovakia. The Polish part of the biosphere reserve covers a national park and exists to protect the alpine character of the highest mountain region in the Carpathian range.

The biosphere reserve is managed by the Tatra National Park Administration. The Advisory Committee took note that all functions of the biosphere reserve are integrated into ‘Operation of the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve – the Joint Action Plan’ and that the new Management Plan of the Tatra National Park had not yet been approved by the Ministry of Environment.

The Advisory Committee also noted that the management authorities focus strongly on nature conservation issues. The authorities have taken some steps to study means to improve the benefits of sustainable tourism for local populations and have conducted increased research on biological resources and biodiversity.

The Advisory Committee noted that the review process only included participants representing nature conservation authorities. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of distinguishing the identity of the National Park from that of the biosphere reserve and emphasized that benefits from the biosphere reserve to local communities and partners should be in greater evidence.

The Advisory Committee welcomed information on establishing the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Steering Committee, as well as the structure of the Scientific Council of Tatra National Park, which could serve as a model for the multi-stakeholder overall biosphere reserve governance body.

The Advisory Committee stated that the national management plan/policy should be established in accordance with the statutory framework and complemented with a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere. It also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the biosphere reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requested the authorities to undertake the following by 30 June 2018:

submit a draft of a comprehensive management plan/policy for the biosphere reserve;
establish a biosphere reserve coordinating body that includes the authorities, local communities representatives and other stakeholders, and business representatives;
consider a revised zonation scheme enlarging the transition area towards inhabited areas currently adjacent to the border of the biosphere reserve to facilitate development.

Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve (Portugal). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Corvo is the smallest of the Azorean islands, located to the extreme northwest of the Azores Archipelago. The biosphere reserve encompasses the entire surface land area of the island and the surrounding marine zone.

The Periodic Review concerns the two Azores Biosphere Reserves under review (Corvo and Graciosa) and its production involved the participation of all local stakeholders that form part of the management bodies or advisory bodies, or are associated in some manner with either biosphere reserve.
With regard to tourism, growth in the range of tourist accommodation between 2013 and 2015 accompanied an increase in demand. The last two years have been marked by the stabilization of supply and moderate increases in overnight stays, along with a continuous rise in occupancy rates.

According to the 2011 census, the island of Corvo has experienced a slight population increase of 1.2 per cent compared to the previous decade.

The biosphere reserve has an autonomous Management Board, which is responsible for providing advice on the management plan and its implementation, monitoring management, promoting and authorizing the use of the reserve's brand and associated logos in products and

services, and suggesting actions and projects to boost and promote the objectives of the biosphere reserve.

The Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve is updating its action plan through the adoption of a participatory model that involves the principal local stakeholders and includes a public discussion phase. Accordingly, the future action plan will incorporate the principles and proposals foreseen in the new MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan. The Corvo Island Biosphere Reserve Management Board has agreed on the vision and mission for the period 2018-2024.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve (Portugal). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Graciosa is the most northerly of the Central Group of islands in the Azores Archipelago and constitutes the second smallest island in the region.

The Periodic Review concerns the two Azores Biosphere Reserves under review (Corvo and Graciosa) and its production involved the participation of all local stakeholders that form part of the management bodies or advisory bodies, or are associated in some manner with either biosphere reserve.

Knowledge and awareness of the importance of endemic and native species, habitats, landscapes and natural resources has increased, attracting more research and supporting ecotourism and other socio-economic activities based on natural resources.

The Graciosa Island Biosphere Reserve is updating its action plan through the adoption of a participatory model that involves the principal local stakeholders and includes a public discussion phase. Accordingly, the future action plan will incorporate the principles and proposals foreseen in the new MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan. The biosphere reserve has an autonomous management structure, the Management Board, which is led by the Director of the Graciosa Nature Park. The Management Board has agreed on the vision and mission for the period 2018-2024.

The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Al Reem Biosphere Reserve (Qatar). The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of Al Reem Biosphere Reserve which is located along the northwestern shore of the Qatar Peninsula in an arid landscape with significant populations of gazelle and Arabian Oryx.

It is generally difficult to differentiate between a core area, buffer and transition zones in a desert. In the case of Al Reem, the core areas centre mainly on vegetation hot spots called *Rawda* (garden). In view of the scarcity of green areas and water resources, rather strict conservation measures are required: game hunting is controlled and hunting linked to animal breeding is only allowed using traditional falconry. In 2011, the Supreme Council issued a legal decree prohibiting camel and goat grazing in the core and buffer areas.

The biosphere reserve was designated in 2007 on the basis of the National Park, which was established in 2005. The transition zone was established 10 years later in 2017. The reserve covers an area of 125,480 ha and hosts a total population of about 2,530 inhabitants. Between 2007 and 2017, the budget allocated to the biosphere reserves increased from US$500,000

to US$3.2 million. Al Reem is also home to Qatar's only World Heritage site, Al Zubarah, the most important archaeological site in the country.

In accordance with the reserve's Management Plan infrastructure services have been improved to serve existing settlements. In 2016, the Al Reem Advisory Committee was established as a means to involve stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Committee embodies a move towards the decentralized management of protected areas in Qatar and implementation of national environmental policy. The Advisory Committee appreciates the inclusion of women in the in the process, as indicated in relation to the management plan chapter on economic development. Overall, the Advisory Committee welcomes the conservation and sustainable development efforts undertaken by the authorities and concludes that the site has embarked on a process committed to meeting the criteria.

Overall, the Advisory Committee welcomes the conservation and the sustainable development efforts and the improved zonation, and it considers therefore that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee invites Qatar to submit the complete management plan of the biosphere reserve with the endorsement of the relevant authorities to the MAB Secretariat. In order to further strengthen the sustainable development functions of the site, the Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to consider a further extension of the transition zone in the future, including the possibility of incorporating additional human settlements.

Pietrosul Mare (Rodna) and Retezat Biosphere Reserves (Romania). The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the President of the National Agency for Natural Areas Protection (ANANP) and the Director of the ANANP, related to the status of the Pietrosul Mare (Rodna) and Retezat Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee shared the conclusion highlighted in the letter regarding the current assessment on the non-functioning of the two sites. The Advisory Committee noted the suggested schedule for the review process and recommended the inclusion of local stakeholders earlier in the review process to help build a more widely recognized and shared biosphere reserve.

Both sites are included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserves and the Romanian authorities to complete and submit the two Periodic Reviews by 30 September 2019 at the latest, and/or two new nomination forms by 30 September 2019, as indicated in paragraph 8 b) and c) of the process. The IACBR and the MAB Council will evaluate these Periodic Reviews and/or nomination forms in 2020 before reaching a final decision. The Advisory Committee also invited the authorities to request support from the MAB Secretariat during the review process.

Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for the Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The site is located in the Pre-Caspian lowland and includes temperate grasslands, cold winter deserts and semi-deserts. The area also encompasses Manych Gudilo Lake, which has been designated a Ramsar wetland. An important objective of the reserve is the conservation of the Saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) in the grassland area.

The Advisory Committee highlighted the high level of conservation in the reserve, as well as the successful implementation of certain logistical functions. However, development remains

limited despite successful negotiations with a number of major business stakeholders. The Management Plan is currently under development.

The Advisory Committee noted that the Periodic Review contains contradictory and/or confusing information, with data in the electronic report differing from that in the hard copy. It also noted that the zones and total area had increased dramatically, but no rationale was provided for the increase, while the size of total area varies throughout the report. The number of inhabitants is indicated as zero, however the authorities mention activities undertaken with local municipalities located in the biosphere reserve.

Regarding stakeholder participation, the Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made to involve municipality councils in the biosphere reserve. It also noted that the role of these councils is mainly advisory. Although each zone has an appointed management body, an overall governance structure with equal representation of the various stakeholders is lacking. Finally, the Advisory Committee raised great concern regarding the current zonation as, according to the provided map, large parts of the core areas lack buffer zones.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. As the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Committee has requested that the management authority submit the following information by 30 June 2018:

a draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the entire biosphere reserve;
actions taken to establish an overall biosphere reserve coordinating body that will involve the authorities, local communities and other stakeholders, with detailed information on the mechanisms implemented for their involvement;
revision of the zonation scheme with a proper buffer for the core areas or a rationale for its absence, and a clear zonation map showing the borders of the reserve.

Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the third Periodic Review by Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1984. The first Periodic Review took place in 1999 and the second in 2017. The site is located in the Krasnoyarsk Territory of Siberia. The core area covers 390,368 ha, the buffer zone encompasses 106,000 ha and an extended transition area now covers 650,000 ha. The area includes large coniferous and mixed forests, subalpine and alpine meadows, mountain tundra, mountain steppe, taiga, streams and marshlands. There are 23,731 people in the biosphere reserve of which 1,962 live in the Verhneusinskoe settlement. The main occupations of the inhabitants are agriculture and hunting.

The Periodic Review was prepared in cooperation with the administrative authorities and nature protection organizations through seminars, consultations and round table discussions.

Management of the biosphere reserve is implemented by a body consisting of representatives of the reserve, stakeholders and the local community. Two public councils in the Verhneusinskoe settlement and Sut-Kholsky District have been created to coordinate the work.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the involvement of the local population in the work of biosphere reserve is reflected in education programmes, environmental conservation and seasonal work. Compromises were adopted to meet the conservation requirements and the needs of local people, such as the establishment of a special area for hunting in order to reduce poaching. An agreement was also reached regarding the use of water from Arzhaan-Uru spring, which has balneological properties. The biosphere reserve supports improvements in the quality of life of local people through building, reconstruction, infrastructure maintenance and electrification. The regional authorities have also established

loan programmes for agricultural purposes, and support local small and medium-sized businesses. Tourism has increased in recent years and development for rural tourism is planned. Ongoing protection of the snow leopard population has resulted in a proposal to establish a single biosphere reserve encompassing Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Republic of Khakassia and Tuva Republic.

The Advisory Committee noted that the buffer zone is narrow and does not surround the southern part of the core area. There is also no transition area on the northwestern part of the reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess if the biosphere reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutatory Framework. It therefore requested to the authorities to sumbit by 30 June 2018 the following:

Confirmation on the extention of the transition area,
Rationale on current zonation,
Inclusion of local communities since last report of 2017.

Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for Smolensk Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002.

The biosphere reserve is situated in the northwest of the Smolensk region in the district of Casblanca-Zapadnodvinskogo sandrovo-morenoa. The area includes 35 lakes, which are confined to the marginal deposits of the glacier, and is covered by swamps, rivers and forests. The reserve hosts 345 species of vertebrates and 2,000 species of invertebrates. The site is also listed as a key ornithological territory of international importance, due to the 243 species of observed birds, with 187 species nesting in the area. The total area of the biosphere reserve amounts to 146,237 ha. The core area covers 26,261 ha, the buffer zone covers 85,537 ha and the transition area covers 34,438.2 ha. About 3,800 people live in the reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the participatory approach to management of the biosphere reserve through the Coordination Council. This body consists of representatives of the local and regional authorities, the local community and businesses, and the Smolensk Lakeland National Park. A non-profit partnership, the Club of Friends of the Smolensk Lakeland National Park, is also involved in decision-making, mainly concerning cooperation with external partners. The Smolensk region is involved in funding and tourism development, and cooperation with business through the Coordinating Council, under the Regional Governor.

Conservation measures are well established. Main projects include repopulation of *Bison bonasui* and recovery of coniferous and broad-leaved forest. Monitoring programmes have been implemented to assess flora and fauna, water quality and climate. Cooperation with other biosphere reserves from the Russian Federation, as well as Belarus, France, Germany and Poland, is underway with the aim of research and obtaining information on background environmental contamination. Ongoing collaboration with the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve in Belarus consists of activities in the fields of scientific research, conservation and the sustainable use of protected areas.

Development function is implemented mainly through sustainable tourism with supporting agricultural, timber and woodworking industry. Biosphere reserve activities contribute to rise in the quality of life by infrastructure construction, restoration of cultural heritage and job creation, which is estimated to 250 jobs.

The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to implement socio-economic research studies and tourism impact assessment in the future, to continue international cooperation and pursue efforts for establishment of transboundary biosphere reserve with Belarus.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide rationale on zonation and revision of zonation with map in English clearly delineating zones of biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018 in order to assess if the site meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Volcanoes Biosphere Reserve (Rwanda). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Volcanoes Biosphere Reserve in Rwanda, designated in 1983. The site is Rwanda's only biosphere reserve and is situated in part in the Albertine Rift, which traverses eastern and central Africa. The biosphere reserve is globally recognized for initiatives to conserve the Mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), and is home to over 115 mammal species including the golden monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis kandti),* the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), buffaloes (*Syncerus caffer*), elephants (*Laxodonta africana*), the black-fronted duiker (*Cephalophus nigrifons*)*,* the bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and the hyrax (*Dendrohyrax arboreus*).

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the high level of stakeholder participation in management, their efforts to promote local culture through the annual national Kwita Izina (gorilla naming) ceremony, and the creation of the 'Conversation on Conservation Forum', organized in collaboration with local communities and relevant stakeholders. The authorities have also introduced a benefit-sharing mechanism to accelerate the development of communities in the transition area. Local communities use the transition zone for agriculture, which constitutes the main livelihood-based activity in the reserve. The main crops are Irish potatoes, maize, bean and pyrethrum. The Advisory Committee noted that the area forms part of the Virunga transboundary ecosystem with Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo and conforms to a joint treaty signed by the three countries.

The Advisory Committee commended efforts to enhance the status of communities through various community and youth associations. Their activities include the distribution of 250 cows to poor families, the construction of 34 houses to families living near the core area, the construction of 30 houses for genocide survivors, support for poultry projects for genocide survivors, support for biodiversity businesses such as agriculture projects (e.g. mushroom, passion fruits, bamboo planting, Irish potatoes seeds, avocados), handicraft projects, infrastructure construction (e.g. classrooms, roads, sector offices, cell offices, health centres), extensive recruitment of community members as wildlife wardens and tour guides, and the construction of buffer walls to prevent conflict between wild animals in the core area and people.

The Advisory Committee noted that the Volcanoes National Park comprises the core area (15,065 ha) and is separated from the transition area (16,000 ha) by a narrow buffer of 6-12 m demarcated by a tree fence and a stone wall. The Committee also noted that the tourism development policy and Management Plan had been devised for the national park. There are plans, however, to extend the buffer zone to 1 km. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the flagship importance of the gorilla conservation programme in terms of its contribution to Rwanda's national economy, the high level of political interest and support for the site.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR and encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer area to 1 km and send the

revised zonation clearly demarcating the new buffer area and indicating the area covered by each of the three zones by 30 September 2019.

The Advisory Committee noted that the data for core, buffer and transition areas are not consistent in the main parts and in the annex of the periodic review report. The authorities are requested to clarify the surface of each zone of the biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018 at the latest.

Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve (Senegal). The Advisory Committee welcomed this second Periodic Review of Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1981. Located in the Sudano-Guinean zone, the reserve combines the unique ecosystems of the Sudanese bioclimatic zone including major waterways (the Gambia, Sereko, Niokolo, Koulountou), gallery forests, herbaceous savannah floodplains, ponds, dry forests – dense or with clearings – rocky slopes and hills and barren Bowés. This diversity gives rise to the presence of a rich fauna including the Derby Eland (the largest of the African antelopes), chimpanzees, lions, leopards and elephants, as well as many species of birds, reptiles and amphibians. However, the site is subject to many pressures including poaching, bush fires, premature drying up of ponds, invasion by plants and the degradation of habitats. For these reasons, the site has been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2007.

The Niokolo-Koba Biosphere Reserve has a core area of 913,000 ha, a buffer zone of 365,725 ha and a transition area of 765,196 ha.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the improvement in conservation of the site including the addition of logistical and financial resources, as well as the establishment of an ecological monitoring system, which has resulted in an increase in the wildlife population.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the effective and functional zoning and the preparation and implementation of a Management Plan with the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders. Research studies have been carried out in collaboration with universities and the results have been applied to the management of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review national report for the East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992. The area is characterized by a diversity of forest types that reflect differences in mesoclimatic conditions of more than 1,000 m in altitude. A great range of non-forest plant communities have been observed in flushes, soaks, mires, meadows, pasturelands and mountain grasslands at timberline Polonina meadows.

The core area of the biosphere reserve covers 2,628.09 ha, the buffer zone covers 14,481.37 ha and the transition area covers 23,580.47 ha. In 2007, a part of the core area was designated a World Heritage site. Initially named the ‘Beech Primeval Forest of the Carpathians’, the site was extended in 2011 and 2017 and renamed the ‘Ancient and Primeval Beech Forest of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe’. The biosphere reserve also contains several Natura 2000 sites. The site also incorporates significant elements of cultural heritage including the wooden church of Ruská Bystrá, one of the Wooden Churches of the Slovak Part of the Carpathian Mountain Area, which was designated a World Heritage site in 2008. Since 1998, the site has been part of a transboundary reserve established with Poland and Ukraine.

At present, 2,299 people live in the biosphere reserve and undertake economic activities linked with forestry and agriculture.

The biosphere reserve is managed by the Administration of Poloniny National Park, which performs the role of a Coordination Office. The Coordination Council was established to enable the biosphere reserve to actively participate in transboundary cooperation. The Council consists of representatives of the local population, municipalities and land managers, and management activities are implemented according to the Poloniny National Management Plan for 2017–2026 and the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Management Plan, adopted by the Transboundary Coordination Council.

A special arrangement is in place to protect the Starina Water Reservoir, one of the largest freshwater reservoirs in Central Europe. Several conservation projects have also been successfully implemented, including 'Realisation of the Rescue Programme for European Bison'.

Development activities are linked to conservation measures and involve the local population. Examples include conservation management of meadows, sustainable forest management and local tourism initiatives, and green initiatives to promote the sustainable management of municipalities. A programme for environmental and sustainability education is in place, while efforts to preserve the cultural values of the area are reflected in various events that target youth and a wider audience. Scientific and research work is being conducted with the support of universities and scientific institutions along with partners from the transboundary reserve. Various research programmes are also in place for forestry, flora and fauna, and agriculture. Extensive ethnographic studies have been completed and further data collection is planned to enable an assessment of the socio-economic situation. An established monitoring programme covers the state of species, habitats, climate, water, and human population dynamics and structure. The zonation system is in place although some core areas are not properly embedded in the buffer zone.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess if the biosphere reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutatory Framework. It therefore requested to the authorities to sumbit by 30 June 2018 the following:

rationale explaining why the core area in the central and southern part of the biosphere reserve is not surrounded by a buffer zone

Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1992.

The biosphere reserve includes Tatra National Park, 28 national nature reserves, 24 nature reserves and one natural monument. Several Natura 2000 sites are also included in the area. The Nature and Landscape Conservation Act of Slovakia recognizes the biosphere reserve as an area of international importance.

The total area of the Tatra Biosphere Reserve covers 113,251 ha with a core area of 49,663 ha, a buffer zone of 23,744 ha and a transition area of 39,844 ha. The Administration of the Tatra National Park also functions as the Coordination Office for the biosphere reserve. The human population amounts to 128,570 inhabitants, the majority of which live on the southern border of the biosphere. There are also approximately 3.4 million to 4 million seasonal visitors.

The Advisory Committee noted that the new zonation was proposed following the restitution of land rights to the original owners. It also noted that planned changes to all three zones would result in a decrease in total surface area of 113,251 ha to 101,818.55 ha. The Ministry of Environment has not yet approved the proposed zonation. The Advisory Committee further noted that the Management Plan of the National Park is in the process of being approved along with the Action Plan for the biosphere reserve.

Conservation programmes are in place and have recently adopted the National Management Plan for brown bear, lynx and wolf. Logistical functions relate mainly to conservation. Education programmes are focused on environmental education.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of information on development. Municipalities in the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve have been involved in a programme to improve infrastructure as well as measures for climate change adaptation. The main activities relate to recreation and tourism, the construction industry, forest management and agriculture.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit the following information by 30 June 2018:

a rationale as to why the western part of the core area is not buffered;
an English summary of the Action Plan;
more information on the involvement of local stakeholders in biosphere reserve governance.

Lanzarote Biosphere Reserve (Spain). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Lanzarote Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The reserve consists of the northernmost island of the Canary Archipelago. The island is relatively flat and of volcanic origin, with vast lava fields known as malpais and a profusion of craters in Timanfaya National Park.

The population of Lanzarote has doubled since the reserve was designated in 1993, and now amounts to approximately 145,000 inhabitants. Annually, the island receives over a million tourists, which has resulted in an economic boom. The Management Plan has not been updated during this time, although the biosphere is currently working to produce an update. The biosphere project ‘Colegios de biosfera’ informs schoolchildren about the reserve and its functions.

The Periodic Review includes a well-developed Action Plan for the period 2014–2020, entitled *Estrategia Lanzarote 2020*, as well as an evaluation of environmental services.

The Advisory Committee congratulates the management Committee on the excellent quality of this Periodic Review and therefore considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean (Spain, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed and congratulates Spain on the first national Periodic Review from Spain of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean, designated in 2006. This reserve is the first of its type to be designated by the MAB Programme. It combines the Tingitane Peninsula in Morocco and the southern Iberian Peninsula of Andalusia.

The Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean has a great diversity of habitats and ecosystems. The different meso and microclimatic types, the richness of the topography, and its location between Africa and Europe have resulted in high levels of biodiversity. A large

number of Mediterranean ecosystems converge in this territory, while the Strait of Gibraltar acts as an ecological corridor between both shores.

Both countries are located in a biogeographic region of deciduous forests and evergreen sclerophyllous scrub within the Mediterranean bioclimatic zone.

The biosphere reserve has been the focus of botanical, forestry, ornithological, entomological and speleological studies conducted by various national institutions (ministries of education, science and environment, the Junta de Andalucia, universities of Cádiz, Granada, Seville, Madrid and Almería, the Natural Sciences Museum, the Doñana Biological Station and botanical institutes), as well as international research institutions from Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

The two countries whose territories constitute the reserve have participated in sustainable development projects in the fields of tourism, handicrafts and biodiversity (Bioeconomy, Transhabitat, Poctefex). The reserve has also launched activities to establish eco-tourism products, as well as centres and fairs for the promotion of handicrafts. There has been a significant rise in tourism, notably in activities related to trekking, ornithological and cetacean sightings, mountaineering, observation of flora and geomorphology, and speleological and cultural activities.

Information and campaigns to raise awareness of the reserve are being implemented alongside environmental education programmes.

The biosphere reserve has established the Joint Coordination Committee of the Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean, which consists of eight members (four representatives each from the Spanish side and the Moroccan side of the reserve). The Committee is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of actions implemented in the territory. It also promotes the development of cooperation mechanisms and agreements between both countries for the realization of common activities.

The Advisory Committee congratulates the authorities for the excellent report and for the extensive activities carried out in the biosphere reserve, and concludes that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

Rio Eo – Oscos y Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve (Spain). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Rio Eo – Oscos y Terras de Burón Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The reserve is located on the border of Asturias and Galicia in the northwest region of Spain. The River Eo is the most extensive river in the reserve, although many other rivers such as the Navia, Porcía and Miño flow through the area.

There are some minor changes concerning the zonation, especially to the buffer zone (which increased from 21,478 ha to 30,406 ha) and the transition area (which decreased from 122,113 ha to 113,455 ha). The human population has reduced in size, especially in the transition area, but has increased marginally in the buffer zone. The Management Plan has been established with a set of different objectives.

The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve (South Africa). The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this first Periodic Review of the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The review was compiled by the CWBR with the assistance of the

Department of Environmental Affairs and the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning through several board meetings and nine stakeholder consultative meetings held with a variety of stakeholders within the reserve.

The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve encompasses an area of 322,030 ha and is characterized by a unique mosaic of diverse ecosystems and land-use patterns. It includes a diversity of physiographic environments such as river systems, forestry areas, mountains and indigenous shrub land vegetation. This mosaic integrates a variety of habitats with unique animal populations as well as endemic vegetation types adapted to the prevailing Mediterranean climate of the area.

The core area covers 99,459 ha and comprises entire ecosystems and sites of immense scientific importance. The buffer zone covers 133,844 ha and also comprises entire ecosystems and sites of scientific importance. The transition area covers 88,727 ha and consists of human (cultural) environments where consumptive land-uses are practised and where the highest settlement densities occur. The land uses comprise associated human settlement patterns, ranging from non-consumptive land uses (e.g. ecotourism) to consumptive industrial activities. Although the consumptive industrial activities pose potential threats to biodiversity, habitat fragmentation and/or environmental degradation, efforts have been made to streamline sustainable development in various activities, especially tourism, agriculture and environmental education. It was noted that several conservation activities taking place within the biosphere reserve are linked to or integrated with development issues.

It was also noted that the Periodic Review detailed significant changes in the biosphere reserve during the past 10 years affecting government structure, population, projects and so on. The biosphere reserve has an approved spatial framework plan in place that aligns with Act No. 6 of 2011, which guides the application process for biosphere reserves in the province, and addresses the management and drafting of spatial framework plans. Following the designation of the biosphere reserve, a Steering Committee was established in 2008 as the management entity to provide guidance to the biosphere reserve. There has been no change with respect to the administrative authorities of the various zones.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made over the last 10 years to improve the governance and environmental health and lifestyle of the population. The Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve has elaborated a business plan and a Strategic Plan towards achieving the SDGs. It also supports various environmental and sustainability initiatives and projects.

The reserve has been involved in many projects developed to promote community development through self-sustainable initiatives and has supported existing projects.

Scientific research has increased throughout the years with an increasing number of students and researchers focusing on the Cape Winelands Biosphere Reserve. The reserve cooperates with universities, colleges and research institutions to study the structural functions and succession processes of ecological ecosystems on the site through a variety of projects. The reserve is also facilitating a foreign student exchange programme with schools in Europe, sponsored by foreign governments.

Based on the information in the report, the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the national authorities encourage organic farming with lower use of fertilizers and pesticides and greater control of industrial activities to lessen their potential threats.

Camili Biosphere Reserve (Turkey). The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated Periodic Review of the Camili Biosphere Reserve, which was submitted in 2017.

The Advisory Committee noted that one of the core areas in the provided zonation map is not entirely surrounded by the buffer zone, and therefore requested that the authorities provide a rationale for the present zonation by 30 June 2018.

The Advisory Committee was still not able to assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Committee encouraged the creation of a formal biosphere reserve governance structure that would include authorities responsible for the core area and buffer zones as well as other local stakeholders (e.g. Union of Villages) participating directly in overall management and decision-making processes.

Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve (Uganda). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2005. It comprises a core area (Mount Elgon National Park) of 79,375 ha, a buffer zone of 32,742 ha and a transition area of 103,030 ha.

The biosphere reserve shares an international boundary with Kenya and contributes to the conservation of over 296 species of birds, 171 species of butterflies, 71 species of moths and 30 species of small mammals including the African elephant, buffaloes, leopard, hyena and primates. The unique vegetation includes tree species such as the Elgon Teak (*Olea welwechii*), caldera heath and moorlands, the lobelias and everlasting flowers.

The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the steps taken to ensure participatory management through collaborative forest restoration agreements with Bududa district. These have allowed communities to participate in the restoration of degraded areas by planting natural tree seedlings while growing seasonal crops (Taungya farming system). Through this initiative 776 ha of degraded areas have been restored.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged efforts to improve the welfare of local communities through the establishment of a livelihood forest plantation in the buffer zone and transition area with support from the Lake Victoria Basin Commission programme; the payment of 20% of tourist entrance fees to communities for the implementation of agro-forestry; the installation of energy-saving stoves; the establishment of dairy farming, apiaries, soil and water conservation; the construction of classroom blocks through signed MOUs and the provision of school education for 2,500 students; the promotion of cultural festivals; the employment of community members as tour guides and the support for 10 community organizations to manage revolving funds.

The Advisory Committee appreciated that the authorities has implemented the Management Plan for the national park alongside other national strategies, and recognized the general improvement in infrastructure and tourism since the area became a biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with concern the replacement of tree cover in the transition area with *Eucalyptus* sp., and the increasing changes in land use management in the transition area, possibly leading to the intensification of landslides and mudfalls that had resulted in loss of lives and infrastructure.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the area meets the criteria for the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the authorities to:

ensure the use of native species in all afforestation programmes;
implement long-term programmes that address human wildlife conflicts;
intensify community education through community associations on proper land use management to control farming along slopes.

Chernomorskiy (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). The Advisory Committee welcomed the Periodic Review of the Chernomorskiy (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983. The reserve is situated in the south of Ukraine and incorporates five land and water areas of the Tendra and Yagorlitsky bays and islands. The reserve is a unique combination of steppe, islands, forest steppe components and wetlands of international importance.

The terrestrial core area remains the same size covering 14,820 ha, while the marine core area has decreased from 75,681 ha to 64,013 ha. The terrestrial buffer zone has increased from 8,014 ha to 22,000 and the marine buffer zone has grown from 18,620 ha to 30,288 ha. The terrestrial transition area has increased from 500 ha to 5,000 ha, while a newly created marine transition area covers 15,000 ha.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that conservation activities are being actively implemented in the biosphere reserve. Environmental education programmes are available in the Ecological Information Centre and information is provided on the adverse impact of pollution on nearby areas. Plans have also been made to establish wind and solar power plants. The Advisory Committee appreciated the submitted information on the involvement of local communities in the Coordination Council. At present, there are 119 people living in the area, and their representatives are reported to be members of the Scientific and Technical Council where they have a consultative role.

The Advisory Committee noted that development is still weak in the biosphere reserve. Furthermore, the zonation of the reserve is not clear – neither of the two versions provided are in line with Statutory Framework.

The Advisory Committee concluded that this site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a clear zonation map and rationale for the changes in size of the different zones, as well as an analysis on how to strengthen development in the context of a small population.

East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine, national report). The Advisory Committee welcomed this first Ukrainian national report for the Eastern Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1998. The site is located in the western part of Ukraine on the border with Slovakia, and consists of Uzhansky National Park and Nadsiansky Regional Landscape Park.

The national report allows the Advisory Committee to assess whether the national site meets or does not meet the criteria. It complements the report on transboundary cooperation. The Advisory Committee noted that the criteria of the statutory framework of the WNBR apply only to the biosphere reserve, while the Pamplona recommendation applies to transboundary cooperation.

The Advisory Committee stated that a national Management Plan/Policy should be established in accordance with the Statutory Framework and be complemented by a cooperation plan for the transboundary biosphere. They also stated that a national governance structure should be established.

The reserve's conservation and logistical support functions are well established within the framework of the National Park and Regional Landscape Park, while its development efforts focus mainly on tourism and could be broadened and improved. The Advisory Committee notes that a comprehensive zonation map was missing and only a zonation scheme for Uzhansky National Park was provided.

The Advisory Committee regretted that despite efforts on the part of the authorities to involve stakeholders, no evidence or practical examples were provided of their participation in management of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to create an overall biosphere reserve management body. The Coordinating Council of Uzhansky National Nature Park, which consists of representatives of all major land users in the National Nature Park, local authorities, producers and tourist enterprises of the district, could serve as a model in this regard.

The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Therefore, it requested the authorities to undertake by 30 June 2018 to:

provide a comprehensive zonation map of the biosphere reserve as per the Statutory Framework;

provide detailed information on the involvement of local communities in development efforts and the management of the biosphere reserve;

provide a draft of a comprehensive Management Plan/Policy for the biosphere reserve;

consider the establishment of an overall coordinating body for the biosphere reserve part of the transboundary reserve that involves the authorities, as well as local communities and other stakeholders, including business representatives, based on the model used by the Coordinating Council of Uzhansky National Nature Park.

Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve - United Arab Emirates. The Advisory Committee welcomed the high-quality and insightful report of the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. Situated on the western shoreline of the United Arab Emirates, Marawah is the first marine site in the Arab Gulf region to be designated as a biosphere reserve. The reserve focuses on endangered species such as dugongs, marine turtles and small cetaceans, including dolphins, as well as birds. The biosphere reserves also provides foraging and reproduction opportunities contributing to stable fauna populations. The marine reserve contains important and healthy coral reefs that represent 40% of the total coral reef habitats in the country. The reefs have coped well in the face of bleaching phenomena that have impacted coral reefs negatively around the world. According to the report, only 1% of the coral reefs in the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve have suffered bleaching. The seagrass meadows in the site are also in good health, and account for 40% all seagrass ecosystems in the country.

The biosphere reserve has a total area of 425,500 ha with a marine area 24 times larger than the terrestrial coastal shore area, which is only used for logistics and scientific monitoring and resource exploitation. The biosphere reserve administration and the scientific community are actively monitoring and protecting the site at a high scientific and technological level. The local management team has privileged science and technological cooperation with the Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

The management programme is very complex and covers a wide spectrum of activities ranging from traditional pearl harvesting and ecotourism based on experience from the Galapagos to sea front development and offshore oil and gas exploitation. Several decades prior to its designation as a biosphere reserve the site was explored for its oil and gas potential. Petroleum

companies active in the area have embraced the biosphere reserve concept and are pursuing the highest environmental standards in their operations. Development programmes also include desalination plants and fish and seafood factories operated according to high international standards. Administrative and scientific teams, including highly competent women, are performing monitoring programmes to help ensure that the economic development initiatives are environmentally sustainable and compatible with the biosphere reserve concept. Marawah is therefore a rather unique example of a biosphere reserve that seeks to combine more substantive economic development with conservation in pursuit of cleaner production.
The Advisory Committee considers that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to keep the MAB Secretariat duly informed about any major changes in the present and planned future oil and gas exploration schemes that could have an impact on the biosphere reserve, notably its core zones. The Advisory Committee also invites the authorities to reinforce its collaboration with regional MAB networks.

Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983. Located along the curve of the Florida Panhandle, the reserve covers the area of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve. The total are of the reserve encompasses 828,701 ha, and has a core area of 94,983 ha, a buffer zone of 445,441 ha and a transition area of 288,277 ha. A variety of marine and terrestrial habitats provide essential feeding and nesting grounds for a diverse assemblage of upland, coastal and estuarine wildlife, including more than 300 species of birds, 1,300 species of plants, 40 species of amphibians and 80 species of reptiles, 50 species of mammals and 180 species of fish. The highly productive estuary supports a historic fish and shellfish industry that employs approximately 5,000 individuals.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manage the biosphere reserve with the cooperation of several local, state and federal agencies. In addition, the Reserve Advisory Committee (RAC) involves local government leaders, representatives from fish and wildlife agencies, local seafood harvesters, members of the tourist development council and private industry, representatives from local universities, non-governmental organizations and the National Sea Grant College Program, educators and the public. Stakeholders are also involved in the management of the biosphere reserve through several structures.

The biosphere reserve fulfills its conservation function well. Research and monitoring programmes are oriented towards the sustainable management of natural resources. Education programmes are in place with a special Coastal Training Programme focused on conservation, sustainable development, green infrastructure, living shorelines vs. shoreline hardening, ecosystem services, blue carbon, best management practices in fisheries and increasing overall community resilience.

The Advisory Committee noted the willingness of the authorities to design a biosphere reserve according to the Statutory Framework and acknowledged the efforts made to prepare the Periodic Review in a participatory manner.

The Advisory Committee requested that the national authorities provide clarification regarding the absence of a buffer zone surrounding the core area in part of the east and along the western and northern terrestrial part of the biosphere reserve by 30 June 2018.

Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the Superintendent and District Ranger. The

Committee understood the concerns raised by the biosphere reserve manager concerning the zonation issues. The Advisory Committee then confirmed that there is some flexibility in the zonation of biosphere reserve if rationales are clearly provided to argue for a specific geographic configuration that does not limit the implementation of the three functions of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted that the Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve is obviously an important site in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and the MAB Secretariat is available to provide support for the zonation issues. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserve and the US authorities to submit additional information and complete the Periodic Review and the zonation by 30 September 2018. The IACBR and the MAB Council will then evaluate this report in 2019.

Guanica Forest Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Guanica Forest Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1981. This site is located on the Island of Puerto Rico, within the Greater Antilles island chain. It is one of the best-preserved subtropical dry forests in the world. The biosphere reserve covers 4,400 ha of terrestrial lands and 13 miles of coastal protected areas.

The Advisory Committee commended the progress made in participatory management, especially the co-management agreement with the local community, which has been a key component of site management since 2015. The site has developed the three functions of a biosphere reserve (conservation, development and logistic support).

Based on this review, the Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it invited the authority to provide by 30 June 2018:

clarification regarding the surface area of each zone, as this information is unclear at present in the Periodic Review;

more detailed information on the management of the 700,000 annual tourists that visit the core area and their impacts on the biosphere reserve;

the Management Plan/Policy of the biosphere reserve or at least the basics of its framing and a schedule for its elaboration.

Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of the first Periodic Review for the Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1979. The area of the site totals 13,500 ha. The Virginia Coast is one of the last coastal wildernesses on the East Coast and one of the most important migratory bird stopover sites in North America. The total population exceeds 45,000 residents.

The logistic function of the biosphere reserve is carried out in cooperation with various partners including universities, research institutions and government agencies. Since 1987, the biosphere reserve has operated as a Long-Term Ecological Research site, whose activities are led by University of Virginia and focus on biotic inventories, species at risk and other research concerns. The Outreach and Education programme promotes stewardship of the coastal system through education, volunteer opportunities and outreach with the community, which has been well received.

Conservation efforts are focused on successful eelgrass restoration, which is beginning to support bay scallop restoration, as well as improvement of water quality in the coastal lagoons through sustainable clam and oyster aquaculture.

Sustainable development activities are linked to large-scale clam aquaculture, and the Nature Conservancy and its partners work closely with local watermen to encourage best

management practices, as well as to make appropriate sites available for their activities. Low-impact tourism activities are also accommodated and are among the fastest growing businesses in the biosphere reserve. In addition, small grain farming has made steady progress through the adoption of Best Management Practices, in particular field buffers that improve water quality.

The site's management body, the Nature Conservancy, is a private, non-governmental organization, and functions as the landowner and manager within the core area. Partners (federal, state and local entities) include owners and managers of the buffer zone and transition area. New strategies are being introduced to help work more closely with the community on management and coordination and overall community engagement, as well as a revised Conservation Action Plan.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information provided related to zonation. However, it noted that many of the core areas lack any buffering and are directly adjacent to the transition area.

On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess whether the Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve meets or does not meet the criteria, as the zonation is not in line with the criteria. The Advisory Committee requested clarification as to why some of the core areas are not properly buffered or a further explanation for the absence of the buffer zones by 30 June 2018.

University of Michigan Biological Station (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review for the University of Michigan Biological Station, designated in 1979. The reserve is located at the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan on the southern shore of Douglas Lake.

The biosphere reserve is located in the northern hardwood forest ecosystem and consists of forests of beech-maple and successional stages of aspen, oak and pine on the better-drained soils. Moister habitats have spruce, fir and cedar forests. Wetlands include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes and numerous lakes. The region has a rural character and a generally low population, with tourism as its major industry.

The biosphere reserve has a long research history as it was initially established as a biological station in 1909.

The total area of the biosphere reserve comprises 4,199 ha, with a core area of 1,876 ha, a buffer zone of 1,501 ha and a transition area of 831 ha. The biosphere reserve also encompasses land privately owned by the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan also acts as the managing authority. Cooperation has been established with local organizations including the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, the Douglas Lake Improvement Association, and the Burt Lake Preservation Association, which collaborate with the University of Michigan Biological Station on the management of lakes and shorelines within the biosphere reserve.

The local population is small including seasonal variation, ranging from four people during the winter to 275 during summer. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the high quality of research and education taking place in the biosphere reserve. However, it also noted that development efforts were weak. Local communities are involved in research projects in the area, but there is no participatory process to involve them in management of the biosphere reserve or to foster sustainable development and support the local economy.

The northern, western, eastern and some of the southern part of the core area are not fully embedded in the buffer zone. In addition, the central part of the buffer zone is not surrounded by the transition area.

The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities consider withdrawing the site from the WNBR.

Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area (extension and renaming, formerly the Yellowstone National Park Biosphere Reserve) (United States of America). The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area, designated in 1979. This report is a resubmission of the 2013 review form, with additional requested information using the official Periodic Review form. It also includes an expansion of the biosphere area (formerly Yellowstone National Park) to include Grand Teton National Park; the National Elk Refuge; the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway; and the communities of Colter Pass-Cooke City-Silver Gate, Gardiner, and West Yellowstone, Montana; and Jackson, Wyoming. The core area consists of the protected areas and covers 889,368 ha, the buffer zone covers 171,927 ha and the transition areas focus on two small areas to the north and south of the core area and cover 4,663 ha.

The Advisory Committee commended the progress made in clarifying the mapping and zoning rationales and developing a Management Plan that takes into consideration the Seville Strategy and biosphere area land management agency strategies. Based on this report, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Yellowstone-Grand Teton Biosphere Area biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended to accept the change of name.

Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve (Viet Nam). The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities of Viet Nam on the submission of the first Periodic Review of the Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The biosphere reserve is located in central Viet Nam in a mountainous and remote area that is difficult to access. The reserve is the largest in the country, and is located in a region that hosts some of the most diverse and rich flora and fauna in Viet Nam.

The biosphere reserve has three core areas including one national park and two nature reserves. Together, they encompass various types of tropical forests and diverse habitats including mountains, wetlands and rivers among others.

An area of primary forest is located along the border with Laos. Recently, around 2,500 species of vegetation have been reported with around 2,000 species (74%) belonging to Phanerophytes.

There are, at present, 130 species of large and small mammals, 295 bird species, 54 species of amphibians and reptiles, 84 species of fish and 39 species of bats. In addition, there are 14 species of tortoises, 305 species of butterflies and thousands of species of other insects. There are 295 species of birds including local and migratory birds and 22 species considered to be globally threatened and endangered.

The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for their efforts in helping to conserve traditional cultural and historical values including traditional cultural characteristics of the six ethnic groups (Kinh, Thai, Tho, Kho Mu, O Du and Mong) expressed through language, costume, cuisine, customs, beliefs and festivals.

The Committee further noted that the Western Nghe An Biosphere Reserve has focused consistently on identifying, recognizing and promoting indigenous practices and knowledge of local communities for the conservation, sustainable development and management of the site. A good example is the mobilization of indigenous knowledge in forest management, illustrated by the use of community-based forest management in Ho Village, Dien Lam Commune, Quy Chau District. The biosphere reserve has collected, documented and disseminated indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants, the use of traditional herbal medicine for disease treatment, and experience in breeding and cultivation.

The Committee recommended that the authorities finalize the overall Management Plan for the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

ANNEX 2: EXAMINATION OF FOLLOW UP INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST ADVISORY Committee MEETING

Country	Name of the site
ARGENTINA	Delta de Parana
	Mar Chiquito
	Pereyra Iraola
	Yaboti
AUSTRALIA	Unnamed
	Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga)
	Kosciusko
	Riverland
	Croajingolong
	Wilson's Promontory
	Hattah-Kulkyne & Murray Kulkyne
	Yathong
	Prince Regent
	Noosa
	Great Sandy
BRAZIL	Cerrado
BULGARIA	Alibotush
	Bistrishko Branishte
	Bayuvi Dupki-Dzhindzhiritsa

	Chuprene
	Mantaritsa
	Parangalitsa
CHILE	Juan Fernandez
	Laguna San Rafael
	Lauca
	Torres del Paine
CHINA	Xishuangbanna
CONGO	Dimonika
	Odzala
CROATIA	Velebit Mountain
DENMARK	Northeast Greenland
ECUADOR	Yasuni
EGYPT	Omayyed
FRANCE	Delta du Rhone
GABON	Ipassa-Makokou
GHANA	Bia
GERMANY	Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape FU
HONDURAS	Rio Platano
HUNGARY	Kiskunsag
	Pilis
KENYA	Mount Kenya
KYRGYZSTAN	Issyk-Kul
MEXICO	Islas del Golfo de California
MONGOLIA	Dornod Mongol
POLAND	Slowinski
RUSSIA	Astrakhanskyi
	Katunskiy
	Kenozersky
	Kronotsky
	Middle Volga Complex
	Oskiy
	Pechoro-Ilychskiy
	Rostovskiy

	Sikhote-Alin
	Sokhondinskiy
	Taimirsky
	Teberdinskiy
	Tsentralnosibirsky
	Tsentral'no-Chernozemny
	Tsentral'nolesnoy
	Ubsurnurskaya Kotlovina
	Valdaiskiy
	Voronezhsky
SLOVAKIA	Slovak Karst
USA	Denali
	Everglades and Dry Tortugas
	San Joaquin
UZBEKISTAN	Chatkal
VENEZUELA	Alto Orinoco Casiquaire

OTHERS

FRANCE	Bassin de la Dordogne

Delta de Parana Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities, which was requested by the MAB Council. The Management Plan sent by the authorities is clear and comprehensive, and contains guidelines to help resolve major challenges facing the area. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the shapefiles which contain with additional information about the zonation of the area.

Mar Chiquito Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities. The authorities have incorporated a marine transition area into the biosphere reserve measuring one nautical mile. While they recognize that this zone should be broader, but they encountered several problems, detailed in the information, when trying to extend the area.

The authorities have sent a complete list and description of the species and landscapes found in the area.

The Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts made by the authorities and encourages them to continue with their work on the extension of their marine transition area.

Pereyra Iraola Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the national authorities in which they requested a deadline extension for submission of the Periodic Review. The authorities explained that the report is in the process of being

developed and that an inter-institutional group has been formed to compile and analyse the existing information in order to complete the Periodic Review.

The Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to provide all information before 30 September 2018.

Yaboti Biosphere Reserve (Argentina). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities which unfortunately does not correspond to the request made by the Advisory Committee and MAB Council in 2017. For this reason, the Advisory Committee again requested the authorities to provide a clear Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, and a zonation that corresponds to the submitted figures, before 30 September 2018.

General recommendations to Australia. The Advisory Committee took note of the official letter from the Australian Government providing updated information on 12 biosphere reserves and informing the Committee about follow-up actions related to the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, as well as an official request to withdraw several sites.

The letter contained a rationale and a current status report regarding continuous work with relevant sub-national governments and key stakeholders to support biosphere reserves across Australia – namely, five sites included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR. The document also incorporated an official request to withdraw five sites from the MAB Programme and its WNBR. Out of these five sites, four are included in the Process of Excellence. In addition, the Australian authorities informed the Committee about plans to submit a Periodic Review for two sites, which are not included in the Process of Excellence.

Unnamed, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) and Croajingolong Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee commended the Australian authorities for their efforts to continue the important discussions between Aboriginal Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders with regard to the future of the following biosphere reserves included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR: Unnamed, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) and Croajingolong Biosphere Reserves. The Committee noted that these sites are of cultural significance and emphasized that careful consultation is required to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are established. The Australian authorities anticipate that these biosphere reserves will complete the Periodic Review process by 30 September 2019, in order to comply with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Riverland and Kosciusko Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee also commended Australia for sending updated information on Riverland and Kosciusko Biosphere Reserves. The Committee noted that discussions are ongoing with these sites and that the Australian authorities will undertake action by 30 September 2019 to address outstanding issues relating to these sites in order to comply with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, Barkindji and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Advisory Committee noted that after consultation with the relevant biosphere reserve managers, the Australian authorities requested the withdrawal of Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, Barkindji, and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves from the MAB Programme and its WNBR, as these sites cannot meet the necessary criteria to function effectively as biosphere reserves. Wilsons Promontory, Hattah Kulkyne/Murray Kulkyne, Yathong, and Prince Regent Biosphere Reserves are included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Noosa and the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserves (Australia). The Committee also took note of the information that the Noosa Biosphere Reserve is in the process of completing a Periodic Review, which will be submitted in September 2018. Similarly, the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve is due to complete a Periodic Review by September 2019 and it is working to meet this timeframe.

Cerrado Biosphere Reserve (Brazil). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the national authorities. As requested by the MAB Council, the national authorities provided a report on the activation of the Management Committee, as well as a revised zonation map, with clear georeferenced borders, including the total area of the core, buffer and transition zones.

The provided information ensured that the five different states that form part of the biosphere reserve are now working in a unified manner. The national authorities also provided details regarding the methods employed to ensure the effective participation of civil society and other stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve.

General recommendation to Bulgaria. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the successful efforts of the Bulgarian authorities to gain the support of local communities for the review process in many of the Bulgarian biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of stakeholder participation in the process of upgrading sites and acknowledged the efforts invested in communication activities.

Alibotouch Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply from the Bulgarian authorities detailing the ongoing review process for this biosphere reserve. The submitted document also contained a letter from the Sandanski municipality affirming their willingness to consider the opportunity to review Alibotouch Biosphere Reserve and a request for a time interval of one year to work on the upgrading process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Bulgarian authorities, which responded to the recommendations of the MAB Council of 2017. The information provided includes a statement by the Municipality of Sofia – Stolichna Municipality describing its willingness to continue the review process for Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve and a request for additional time of one year to work on the upgrading process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Bayuvi Dupki-Dzhindzhiritsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee noted the information on disagreement regarding the inclusion of the Municipality of Bansko in the transition area. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Chuprene Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Bulgarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the shift in the review process for the Chuprene Biosphere Reserve, expressed in the letter by Belogradchik Municipality. The municipality affirmed their readiness to continue upgrading the site and requested additional time of one year to work on the process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Bulgarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the issue of revision of the Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve and the work undertaken with stakeholders to address their concerns related to site upgrading. The document included a statement by the Rakitovo Municipality containing their agreement to participate in upgrading the site and their request for additional time of one year to work on the process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria). The Advisory Committee welcomed the response of the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken to consider the interests of stakeholders in creating a post-Seville site.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made to negotiate with the local communities. The received reply included a letter from representatives of the Blagoevgrad Municipality confirming their willingness to continue upgrading the Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve and their request for additional time of one year to work on the process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities provide the updated additional information and evidence of the support of local communities by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

Juan Fernandez Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities, which includes an appropriate zonation including a sizeable extension of the transition area; however, a Management Committee and Management Plan are still absent. A request has also been made to change the name of the biosphere reserve to ‘Archipiélago de Juan Fernandez’. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to submit an official request for an extension and renaming including the formation of a by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

Laguna San Rafael Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however the reserve still lacks a buffer zone between the core area and the transition area in the east. The terms of reference for a Management Plan have been received, but the

Management Committee has not yet been established. The Advisory Committee therefore requests further information on the zonation, as well as the establishment of a Management Committee and a Management Plan by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

Lauca Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. The requested appropriate zonation has been received, and a Management Plan and Management Committee are in the process of being established. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to send a Management Plan and details regarding the establishment of a Management Committee to the MAB Secretariat by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve (Chile). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however no explanation has been provided as to why there is no buffer zone in the northwestern part of the reserve. Furthermore, evidence of a Management Plan and Management Committee is missing.

The Advisory Committee therefore requests further information on the zonation, as well as the submission of a Management Plan and details regarding the establishment of a Management Committee by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2018.

Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve (China). The Advisory Committee commended China for taking action to implement the recommendations of the first Periodic Review, as well as to address the recommendations of ICC 2016. The site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve is located on the southwest tip of Yunnan province in south-west China. It borders Laos to the east and Myanmar to the west, and is situated in the Mekong region or upper Mekong basin. It comprises the largest and most comprehensive tropical forest in China and the richest biodiversity in the country, as a result of its unique geography and climate. The area is home to 4,000 vascular plant species, 102 mammal species, 400 bird species, 63 reptile species, 38 amphibian species and 100 fish species. More than 90% of China’s wild elephant population also inhabits the region.

Aside from its biodiversity, the Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve is regarded as an ethnically diverse area. The total population of 880,000 includes Dai, Ahka, Lahu, Jinuo, Yi, Yao and Bulan populations, among others, who have lived in the region for generations, retaining their religion, culture and languages, which share similarities with adjacent countries such as Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Most ethnic groups receive cash incomes from paddy rice, tea and rubber plantations, fruits and some non-timber forest products. In order to settle conflicts and promote economic development, the Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve supports pilot villages to practise sustainable development models in search of a strategy to combine sustainable community development and nature resource conservation.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that a higher resolution zonation map for the whole biosphere reserve has been submitted. However, the Advisory Committee asked the

national authorities to provide a version of this zonation map with the English names of localities. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to establish a new Management Plan for the whole biosphere reserve in the near future and to submit it to the MAB Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Republic of Congo General recommendation. At its 28th session, the MAB ICC requested the authorities to provide a revised zonation map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area) for the two Congolese sites (Dimonika and Odzala Biosphere Reserves), since the terminology used does not align with the WNBR Statutory Framework.

The Advisory Committee noted with concern that this issue was not addressed in the follow-up information provided in 2018. The Advisory Committee restated the importance of referring to the Seville strategy and the WNBR Statutory Framework for any matter relating to biosphere reserves, especially the criteria (Chapter IV of the Statutory Framework).

Dimonika Biosphere Reserve (Congo). At its 29th session in 2017, the MAB ICC considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR), but requested the authorities to provide a new map with a revised legend.

The Advisory Committee reviewed the revised zonation map with a core area, two buffer zones and a so-called 'zone of influence'. However, the legend of the new map still contains a typographical error.

The Advisory Committee therefore requested the authorities to provide a zonation map with a clear legend, and a Management Plan or Policy by 30 June 2018.

Odzala Biosphere Reserve (Congo). At its 29th session in 2017, the MAB ICC concluded that the information provided in the periodic review report was not sufficient to enable to determine if this site meets or does not meet the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR). Therefore, the MAB ICC requested the national authorities to send to the MAB Secretariat:

- the full explanation about the change of name of the site including the rationale behind it and if appropriate, the change in the limits of the biosphere reserve since its nomination in 1977;
- a revised zonation map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area);
- Information on how communities are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve and the impacts of conflicts in the area.

Concerning the change of name of the site from Odzala to Kokoua-Odzala, the Advisory Committee took note with satisfaction of the full explanation provided by the authorities and recommended that the renaming be approved.

With respect to the information on how communities are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve and the impacts of conflicts in the area, the Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their response, which was satisfactory.

The Advisory Committee considered that the revised zonation was still not satisfactory and therefore considered that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a zonation map in conformity with the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) with a clear legend, as well as a Management Plan or Policy, by 30 September 2018 to be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2019.

Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Croatia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve. Both the Management Plan and the agreement on the establishment of a Coordinating Council for the biosphere reserve should support the authorities of the Republic of Croatia in revising the zonation of the biosphere reserve and enlarging the transition area in cooperation with local users and inhabitants of the site.

The Advisory Committee invites the Croatian authorities to provide a new zonation map and its rationale by 30 June 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2018.

Northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve (Denmark). The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter from the Ministry of Nature and Environment, which provided updates and information about the ongoing process. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee invited the biosphere reserve and authorities to submit additional information and complete the Periodic Review form by 30 September 2018, so that the IACBR and then the MAB Council can examine the report at its session in 2019.

Yasuni Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided, which addressed all MAB Council requests and recommendations. The MAB Council requested an extension, as well as an appropriate zonation map including the exact locations of the oil extraction in the biosphere reserve. Further information on the impacts of possible oil extraction should be sent by 30 September 2018.

Omayed Biosphere Reserve – Egypt. The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up to its 2017 recommendations provided by the Omayed Biosphere Reserve. The Biosphere Reserve was requested to provide following information:

- Zonation map;
- Detailed information about the main conservation projects having impacts on Omayed ecosystems, the stakeholders involved in them, socio-economic development projects and to what extent they support the local population, research projects and their results.
- In its previous recommendations, the Advisory Committee further encouraged Omayed authorities to involve the local population in the conception and implementation of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee acknowledges the revised zonation proposed for the Omayed Biosphere Reserve, as illustrated on the new map provided. The involvement of local communities is improved in the new management plan. The Advisory Committee considers therefore that the site with its new zonation meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee invites the competent authorities to provide further detailed information concerning the conservation values of the new core areas together with references to the legal provisions being pursued for their long-term protection. The Advisory Committee

would also welcome additional information on the progress in the implementation of the new management plan, especially regarding the outcomes of involving the local population more actively.

Delta du Rhone – Camargue Biosphere Reserve (France). The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities on discussions held by the communes, agreements with private partners, scientific projects implemented in the biosphere reserve, and a list of fauna and flora in the reserve. It noted with satisfaction the agreement between the two management bodies to alternate the position of chair and vice-chair for the Management Committee. It further requested that the authorities send a copy of the convention between the two management bodies once it is signed.

Bassin de la Dordogne Biosphere Reserve (France). The Advisory Committee took note of the project to establish a new infrastructure for a road deviation in the core area of the Bassin de la Dordogne Biosphere Reserve. It noted the compensation scheme in place, the environmental impact assessment survey, and the clearance of the French Conseil National de la Protection de la Nature (French National Council for Nature Protection) (CNPN). It also noted that the association 'Sauvegarde de la vallée de la Dordogne' and the inhabitants have lodged serious complaints about the impact on scenery and quality of life.

Based on the information provided and from a technical perspective, the Advisory Committee considered that all French national laws and procedures were applied, and that the CNPN offered positive opinions on the mitigation process and compensatory measures. The Advisory Committee encouraged the French MAB National Committee to support, if needed, the coordinator of the biosphere reserve, in order to improve the dialogue process with concerned stakeholders and to assess the social, economic and political impacts of this new infrastructure. This dialogue and the additional assessments would feed into the next Periodic Review process and support further reflection on the possible need for a new zonation.

Ipassa-Makokou Biosphere Reserve (Gabon). In response to the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council on Periodic Reviews, the Advisory Committee took note of the formal commitment of the national authorities to submit the Periodic Review no later than 30 September 2019, in order to ensure its evaluation in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

The Advisory Committee, in concordance with the decision on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, taken by the 29th MAB Council, notes that the Member State may wish to submit a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to ensure its evaluation in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

Bia Biosphere Reserve (Ghana). The Advisory Committee noted that the application for extension of the total area has not yet been submitted despite an official request by the national authorities for an extension of the deadline from 30 September to 31 October 2017.

The Advisory Committee recalled a communication indicating that the dossier was near completion and due for submission in February 2018.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the dossier be submitted by 30 June 2018.

Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany). The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities after the first Periodic Review in 2017, which met the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

The authorities provided detailed information about activities being implemented in the core area in the northern part of the biosphere reserve, and confirmed that these are in accordance with existing legislation and have no negative impacts on the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve.

Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Honduran authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however an explanation for the absence of a transition area in the east is still missing. A more detailed Management Plan is also requested. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to provide a detailed Management Plan and more information about the transition area.

Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (Hungary). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the Hungarian authorities. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made with the collection of signatures of local municipalities located in the transition area. The Advisory Committee invited the authorities to pursue the process to implement a functional transition area consistent with the buffer and core areas. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction: (i) the creation of a forum organization designed to strengthen cooperation between the national park directorate and the concerned municipalities; (ii) the launch of a biosphere reserve prize contest to stimulate excellence in various sustainable activities; and (iii) the implementation of the Management Plan based on stakeholder involvement.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the Hungarian Authorities on their efforts to improve the functioning of the biosphere functioning and invited them to provide the final zonation map by 30 June 2018.

Pilis Biosphere Reserve (Hungary). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the Hungarian authorities. The zonation system has been changed and the buffer zone and transition areas have been expanded following a long process of negotiation with local municipalities. A cooperation agreement has been signed with local stakeholders, NGOs, municipalities and the management organization of the biosphere reserve. The new map shows a dramatic reduction in the size of the core area and a corresponding increase in the buffer zone and transition areas.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the integration of local stakeholders and authorities into the activities and decision-making processes of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also appreciated the quality of the revised and updated Management Plan.

The Advisory Committee considers that the Pilis Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

Mount Kenya Biosphere Reserve (Kenya). The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts of the national authorities to submit some of the information requested, including the Management Plan for the Mount Kenya Ecosystem, which has yet to be completed, and evidence of sources of funding and management of traditional knowledge.

The Advisory Committee noted, however, that the nomination form for the extension of the area was not submitted as recommended, while the newly completed Management Plan was dated 2010-2020.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the application for extension be submitted by 30 September 2019, accompanied by an explanation for the discrepancies concerning the validity of the Management Plan.

Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve (Kyrgyzstan). The Issyk-Kul biosphere reserve is located in northeast Kyrgyzstan and was designated in 2001. The total surface area of the site covers 4,311,588 ha. The core area remains strictly protected and is devoid of any activities except 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 first Periodic Review was examined in 2013. As the site partially fulfilled the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves, it is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee commended the Kyrgyzstan authorities for providing a detailed work plan and timeline for the submission of the Periodic Review by 30 September 2018, in compliance with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve (Mexico). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Mexican authorities. The extensive document contains complete information about the site, including maps.

The buffer zone is now well defined but the transition zone is still missing. The transition zone should be established on the coastal area of the biosphere reserve. This biosphere reserve includes two national biosphere reserves, which can cause confusion.

In relation to the second recommendation, the authorities have sent an extensive list of programmes and projects involving the community, as well as areas where participatory management is being implemented.

Although the Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts made by the authorities, the biosphere reserve still needs to implement a transition zone. This site therefore does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to establish a transition zone and send a new zonation map, including a description of the transition area and its management plan, by 30 September 2018, in order to respect the timeline of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, so that the report can be examined by the MAB Council at its session in 2019.

Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia). The Advisory Committee commended Mongolia for its response to the ICC 2017 recommendations concerning the first Periodic Review.

The Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve was designated in 2005. It is located in the Great geomorphologic zone of Central Asia and the sub zone of Nukht Davaa of the Mongolian Eastern zone. The terrain is characterized by medium-sized, low steppe mountains ranging from 890 m to 1,099 m, hummocks, knolls and narrow feather-grass valleys with a few flat plains. The area is rich in biodiversity and is home to diverse species of birds, wolves, the Mongolian gazelle, reptiles and amphibians.

The MAB ICC 2017 commended the approaches used to promote sustainable development in the area, including partnerships with local communities, training on range management, the organization of educational camps, and public awareness for schools, in particular through the Young Naturalists Club. The MAB Council also appreciated the promotion of indigenous values and relationships with local communities through the empowerment of stakeholders to protect local springs, the creation of an information centre employing local people and the formulation of a law concerning negotiated costs for hunting wolves. It also noted the existence of a collaboration with China and the Russian Federation.

The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the national authorities have provided a rationale for the proposed reduction in the area of the biosphere reserve, which is being approved by the central government. It further noted that the relevant zonation map has been submitted. As the Committee noticed a discrepancy in the size of the three zones between the original submission and the first Periodic Review, the Mongolian authorities have been asked to provide a clarification.

The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Slowinski Biosphere Reserve (Poland). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the detailed progress report on the involvement of local stakeholders in the biosphere reserve, including through discussions on the programme and zonation. It noted that local stakeholders have signed an agreement on the enlargement of the Slowinski Biosphere Reserve, which was followed by the establishment of the Steering Committee. The Maritime Office in Slupsk and the Smoldzino Municipality will oversee negotiations.

The Management Plan for the Slowinski Biosphere Reserve covers the period 2018–2020, and was developed to provide integrated management for the area. The Advisory Committee noted that the plan was prepared via a participatory process. It includes information on: educational activities focused on the local community; scientific, economic, cultural and ecological benefits and processes for sharing them; research on biodiversity and climate change; environmental investments and actions for climate change prevention, adaptation and mitigation; local producers, products, culture, folklore and history of the area; ensuring functional zonation; participation in network building and partnering; and effective and long-term protection of valuable natural areas.

The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for submitting details regarding the involvement of stakeholders and local communities, and for providing the Management Plan.

Astrakhanskyi Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities provided updated information on the extension of the site towards Damchilskiy to the east and Obzhorovskiy to the west, with a view to creating a single site by 2020. The authorities indicated that the process will be lengthy and have promised updates as soon as any progress is achieved. The response also included a map of the current zonation.

As no other information was provided, the Advisory Committee has requested the authorities to provide current population figures for the biosphere reserve, as well as updated information on the Management Plan, including measures taken to monitor the impacts of tourism, by 30 September 2018.

Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities provided an adequate and clear explanation of the status of zones of traditional land use and recreation development. They stated that recreation zones are established within the most-visited parts of the territory and aim at creating conditions for the development of sustainable tourism, while zones of traditional land use aim to promote the conservation of traditional land use practices by local communities. Both types of zones have been approved by the Government of the Republic of Altai through regulations governing 'Belukha' Nature Park, while the regime and status correspond to the status of the transition zone of the biosphere reserve.

Kenozersky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information provided by the authorities on the establishment of protected areas in the southeastern part of the core area, and noted that the protected area of Leksmohl should be in place by the end of 2018. The Committee also acknowledged the submission of detailed population information stating that a total of 1,841 people inhabit the three municipalities of the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted that a Management Plan for the Testament of Kenozero Lake, a World Heritage site located within the boundaries of biosphere reserve, is being finalized. Despite the presence of measures in this Management Plan referencing conservation of the landscape, biological diversity, and historical and cultural heritage, an overall Management Plan for the entire biosphere reserve showing the fulfilment of all three functions is still required.

The Advisory Committee also noted that permits issued by the authorities are used to regulate tourist flow, alongside monthly registration of tourists visiting educational and other infrastructures.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit the Management Plan for the biosphere reserve by 30 September 2018.

Kronotsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged with satisfaction the receipt of a Management Plan for the period 2017–2021 along with an Action Plan for community partnership.

Middle Volga Complex (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the first Periodic Review of the Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006.

The authorities provided excerpts from the concept document for the Samara-Tolyatti Agglomeration Development. This document addresses various aspects of regional development, including spatial development, industry and transportation. The Advisory Committee appreciated the additional information on the ecosystem services provided by the Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee also welcomed information on new networks of cooperation. The creation of a large number of community councils was detailed, however no further evidence of the role these councils and/or representatives of local communities and stakeholders played in biosphere reserve management and the review process was provided. The Advisory Committee raised concerns about the representation of local people in the planning and management of the site.

The Advisory Committee considered that, based on the additional information provided, it still could not assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria. Therefore, it requested that the authorities submit the following information by 30 September 2018: a detailed explanation of the overall biosphere reserve management structure and how the different stakeholders, including local communities, are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve.

Okskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities in response to the requests of the MAB Council in 2017. Regarding the lack of a buffer zone bordering or adjacent to a core area, the authorities indicated that economic instability in the country has resulted in continual changes in landowners of territories bordering the core area. As a result, it is currently not possible to sign transfer of land agreements. The authorities indicated that it would work with landowners on land transfers over the next two to three years.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the creation of buffer zones be made through negotiations and consensus with current landowners, as has been done in similar cases, such as in Canada, and encouraged the authorities to seek out examples within the WNBR.

The Advisory Committee noted that it has not yet received a Management Plan or information on scientific activities in the biosphere reserve, with the exception of citizen science. The Committee therefore requested the authorities to submit the Management Plan and evidence of wide-ranging scientific cooperation by 30 June 2018, as the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Pechoro-Ilychskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee appreciated the reply to requests for a Management Plan and detailed information about the fulfilment of the development function made by the MAB Council in 2017. It noted that the Management Plan of the Pechoro-Ilychskyi Biosphere Reserve was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russian Federation for approval. As the approved document was not available, the Advisory Committee was still not able to assess whether the site does not meet or meet the criteria.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit the Management Plan and evidence of development by 30 June 2018, as the site is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Rostovskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The authorities provided details of a number of cooperation networks established using the biosphere reserve platform. The Advisory Committee noted in particular the establishment of cooperation with local authorities, the Cossacks, and educational institutions in the districts of Orlovskiy and Remontnenskiy, undertaken to improve the public image of the reserve. Institutions will provide information about their role in biodiversity conservation and the sustainability of regional ecosystems by improving ecological education and supporting local cultures including that of ethnic groups. The Advisory Committee welcomed the cooperation with local schools and appreciated the description of various projects involving stakeholders (e.g. The Green Ribbon, Let's Save Early Bloomers or the Regional Festival of Ecotourism).

Sikhote Alin Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a copy of the SWOT analysis, mentioned in the Periodic Review, which indicates gaps in the management system. While the authorities provided the 'CATS Site Status Summary Report: Sikhote Alin Nature Reserve, Russia Far East', the Advisory Committee noted that it lacks a SWOT analysis per se. However, the information contained in the document provides a better overview of the site and will enable the biosphere reserve management to pay attention to weaker areas during future work.

Sokhondinskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information relating to the Management Plan, provided by the authorities as a follow up to the Periodic Review examined in 2017, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made to prepare the Management Plan for 2018 to 2021, including assessing activities over the past five years and establishing priority actions for future implementation of the plan. However, it noted that the map included with the text is not consistent with the standard terminology for zones established by the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities submit the Management Plan with a zonation map using the standard terminology of 'core area, buffer zone and transition area' established by the Statutory Framework by 30 September 2018.

Taimyrsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the updated information related to the involvement of local stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve. It noted that an Agreement of Cooperation between managing authorities and the administration of the village of Khatanga has been signed. Occupational support, crafts skills training, joint monitoring activities and projects for the preservation of traditional crafts were implemented. The organization of the first round table meeting with managing and administrative authorities, local stakeholders and industrial enterprises fostered future cooperation.

The Advisory Committee also noted with satisfaction that the established Biosphere Reserve Coordinating Council has started planning joint activities.

Teberda Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities in response to a request (for submission of a Management Plan to the MAB Secretariat) made by the MAB Council in 2017, whose recommendation indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of an official letter signed by the Director of the Teberdinsky Biosphere Reserve announcing the approval of the Management Plan by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russian Federation.

The Advisory Committee noted the progress made in finalizing of the Management Plan and requested the authorities to submit it by 30 September 2018.

Tsentralnosibirsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the requests and recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information on the correction of the maps, which now clearly identify the core area and buffer zone, and welcomed the creation of two new advisory groups to strengthen the role of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve.

Tsentral'no-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee complimented the managing authorities on the successful renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas of the Council of Europe in 2017.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information regarding the change in land use and land cover both in the biosphere reserve and outside. This indicated that 450 ha of the buffer zone had undergone a transformation in usage from agricultural land to construction based on a decision of the local authorities. The Advisory Committee also acknowledged the description of sustainable development activities based on the rational use of natural resources, rural tourism and income provision.

The Advisory Committee noted the information on the ongoing process of approval by stakeholders and the need for translation in English. In addition, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the information on the establishment of a Coordination Council to ensure the successful coordination of the six clusters. The biosphere reserve also established agreements on cooperation and sustainable development with the respective municipalities.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit their Management Plan by 30 September 2018.

Tsentral'nolesnoy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities as a follow up to the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information about 23,000 people living in the area. It also noted that the standard terminology of the Statutory Framework of 'core area, buffer zone and transition area' was adopted in the zonation description and map presentation.

The Advisory Committee noted the progress in finalization of the Management Plan, which has been for approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit the Management Plan by 30 September 2018.

Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the update on the nomination process for the establishment a transboundary biosphere reserve between Uvs Nuur basin, Mongolia, and the Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information on cooperation between the two sites including conservation, research, monitoring and education.

The Advisory Committee complimented the authorities on the new joint plan for neighbouring biosphere reserves in the Uvs Nuur basin for 2018–2022, which was prepared in 2017.

Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities, as a follow up to first Periodic Review of the Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the additional information on the improvement of the biosphere reserve management structure in terms of direct stakeholder participation.

Voronezhsky (Russian Federation). The Advisory Committee welcomed the update on the achievements of the Voronezhsky biosphere reserve, as a follow up to the last Periodic Review in 2017, which indicated that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee noted the development in ecotourism activity, which has resulted in an increase in funds. The process of recognition of protected area status in Voronezh reserve has also been accomplished. In addition, there are plans to establish a new unit of cultural heritage. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their cooperation with educational institutions in organizing the conference 'Usmansky Bor – Is our Forest'.

Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia). The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up report provided by the Slovakian authorities. The zonation system has been clarified, and the Management Plan adopted by the biosphere reserve's Coordination Board addresses the three functions of the biosphere reserve. The requested signed endorsements from the representatives serving on the Coordination Board were provided, in addition to detailed procedures explaining the involvement of these representatives in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the extensive additional information provided. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria.

Denali Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the US authorities. The rationale of the zonation system has been explained and mapped, the functions of the core area, buffer zone and transition area are well explained and the annex provided existing cooperation agreements with local stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee appreciated the quality of the information contained in the report. The Committee therefore considers that the Denali Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Everglades and Dry Tortugas Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the progress report provided by the US authorities and the additional information provided. The Advisory Committee understood the focus of local authorities on providing response and recovery actions to address the damages caused by the passage of Hurricane Irma across South Florida. The Advisory Committee appreciated the quality of the information update, particularly regarding zonation clarification and governance. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve (United States). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the US authorities, and strongly encouraged the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve to produce the additional information requested in the last Periodic Review assessment. As the biosphere reserve is included in the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee invited the site and US authorities to submit the revised follow up report by 30 September 2018. The IACBR and then the MAB Council will evaluate the report in 2019.

Chatkal Biosphere Reserve (Uzbekistan). The Chatkal Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1978, covers the southwestern end of the Chatkal'skiy Range in the western Tien-Shan Mountains. The habitats include mountain steppes and forests, rocks, alpine meadows, river valleys and floodplain forests, as well a high level of species diversity. The site is also renowned archaeologically for its ancient drawings, which date back to 1000-2000 BC.

The second Periodic Review was examined in 2015. However, the site did not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

The Advisory Committee commended the Uzbekistan authorities for submitting a detailed work plan including a timeline and a working commitment to submit the Periodic Review by 30 September 2019 to comply with the MAB ICC 2017 decision on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

Alto Orinoco Casiquaire Biosphere Reserve (Venezuela). The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Venezuelan authorities. A revised zonation has been received as well as an action plan and description of the Management Committee. Therefore, the Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria. However, representation of local communities, the private sector and the scientific community in the Management Committee is recommended.

Annex 5: Palembang Declaration

Palembang Declaration

23 July 2018, Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia

Recalling the role of stakeholders in mainstreaming natural resources related to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of Lima Action Plan;

Emphasizing the need for appropriate modalities and sufficient resources to enhance capacities and technologies, good governance and to include sustainable development in the management of biosphere reserves;

Reaffirming that ecosystems provide a variety of goods and services upon which people depend;

Recognizing the challenges of natural resources utilization and the threats on ecosystems that result from biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution;

Recognizing that pollution – in particular plastic **pollution - not only impacts our waters and marine life, but also the human food chain and our overall health;**

Reaffirming the need for stakeholder collaboration to reduce the impacts of plastics consumption and encourage an eco-friendly lifestyle.

Taking into account the MAB Strategy 2015 -2025, and noting in particular its call for:

- conserving biodiversity, restoring and sustaining ecosystem services, and fostering the sustainable use of natural resources;
- contributing to sustainable, healthy, and equitable societies, economies and thriving human settlements in harmony with the biosphere;
- facilitating biodiversity and sustainability science, education for sustainable development and capacity building; and
- supporting mitigation and adaptation to climate change and other aspects of global environmental change.

Reaffirming the commitments made at the 2016 Lima Congress to effectively communicate and share information to ensure the implementation of the MAB programme at local, regional and global levels through its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

We, the participants of the 2018 International Conference on Biosphere Reserves: Engaging Stakeholders towards Community Empowerment, commit to:

Preparing strategies and action plans framed in national and regional contexts and contributing to the MAB programme through the implementation of the Lima Action Plan, in order to increase financial aid for combating poverty, build capacity and accelerate achievement of the SDGs;

Assigning priority to the engagement of stakeholders and enhancement of community empowerment in implementing the MAB Programme, as well as other global environmental conventions and partnerships;

Accelerating the implementation of the Lima Action Plan as well as to achieve the objectives of the 2030 agenda and SDGs, especially in the following areas:

i. Strengthening national development strategies and associated operational frameworks to support the protection of rare, threatened and endangered wildlife species and of essential and critical ecosystems (such as wetland, mangroves, coral

reefs and karst) that provide important services for livelihoods and well-being, clean water and sanitation, while taking into account the needs of women, local communities and indigenous people as well as the poor and vulnerable.

ii. Improving governance, coordination at multiple levels, collaboration and networking within the MAB programme and its WNBR (including subregional networks).
iii. Harmonising and synergizing the MAB programme with other UNESCO Programmes.
iv. Supporting local community economies and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources
v. Developing effective external partnerships to ensure the long-term viability of the WNBR, gain global support to meet its targets, and implement an effective communication and periodic review process so that all members of the network adhere to its standards for monitoring and evaluation.
vi. Improving and updating the status of biodiversity in UNESCO Member States by conducting periodic database assessment.
vii. Defining measures and standards of performance and accountability for monitoring and evaluation of the MAB programme's implementation in Member States.

Taking concrete and effective action to address key challenges, including:

i. Prioritizing cross cutting issues covering adaptation to and mitigation of climate change for community resilience.
ii. Enhancing institutional capacities to develop and implement result-driven national development strategies.
iii. Strengthening measurable and verifiable monitoring system including standardizing. methodological research (accurate, consistent, comparable, and complete).
iv. Strengthening the sharing of data bases;
v. Enhancing mobility to support the implementation of MAB programme and the Lima Action Plan at global, regional and local level to support SDGs.
vi. Enhancing global support and incentives to strengthen communication and networking to achieve targets and share lessons learnt in managing biosphere reserves.

Annex 6: Document SC-18/CONF.230/13 - Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR), Road map (May 2018 – August 2020)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Man and the Biosphere Programme

SC-18/CONF.230/13
Paris, 25 June 2018
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Thirtieth session

Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia
23–28 July 2018

ITEM 15 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVES – PROGRESS REPORT

1. Since the adoption in 1995 of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), the size of the Network has almost doubled. The increased number of Member States and sites involved in the programme widens the variety of ecological and socio-economic situations, hence the need to provide clear technical guidance for MAB practitioners and those who want to join the network.

2. Therefore, at its 28th session, the MAB-ICC decided to develop a new tool, which will complement the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, notably with regard to the expansion of the WNBR. It will help Member States to implement the BR concept and to foster implementation of the MAB Lima Action Plan (2016-2025).

3. At its 29th session, the MAB-ICC Members and observers examined and discussed a proposal for 'Operational Guidelines for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves' prepared by the MAB Secretariat.[1] Many Member States and observers took the floor to welcome this new tool and to congratulate the Secretariat for the proposal. They further expressed their views on specific points which the MAB Council had been invited to reflect upon.

4. The MAB-ICC revised the title of the proposed tool as follows: 'Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR)'. The Council also approved its format which will be an open access web-based living document compiling contributions and experiences from the MAB community on specific items.

5. The MAB Council agreed to establish working groups by items and approved the proposed ToRs. The MAB-ICC invited Members States to nominate names of experts to one or several working groups in four priority areas: Zonation of biosphere reserve; Governance of biosphere reserves; Policy, management and business plans; and Data management and monitoring. A fifth working group was foreseen to reflect on issues encountered through implementation of the excellence process, which could assist the identification of additional items to be included in the TGBR.

[1] SC-17/CONF/229.13
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/images/SC_17_CONF_229_13_Operational_guidelines_En.pdf.

6. The MAB-ICC entrusted its Bureau to validate the composition of the working groups.

7. Taking the 29th session of MAB-ICC decisions into account,[2] the MAB Secretariat sent a circular to Member States requesting nominations of experts for the working groups. As directed, the MAB Secretariat compiled the 47 nominations received from 23 Member States and prepared a list of experts by theme taking into account regional distribution, expertise, preferred theme (when indicated) and gender balance.

8. A separate working group on issues raised during implementation of the excellence process was not retained due to lack of nominations in this area. Furthermore, being a cross-cutting issue, the MAB Secretariat felt that these issues should be discussed within each working group.

9. As directed by the MAB-ICC, the MAB Secretariat sent the details of working group membership to the MAB Bureau for approval. The composition of the working groups as approved by the Bureau is found in Annex 1 of this document. Some experts did not confirm their availability on 25 June 2018. An updated list of experts will be provided upon receipt of confirmations during the 30th session of the MAB ICC.

10. The working groups will work online from 1 July 2018 for two years. The MAB Secretariat will present the proposed modus operandi and road map for the working groups at the 30th MAB-ICC.

11. The MAB Council is invited to endorse the composition of the working groups and to provide its guidance and recommendations regarding the modus operandi and road map of the working groups.

[2] Report of the 29th session of the MAB ICC http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002535/253591E.pdf

Annex 1

Composition of working group for the development of the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere reserves

PRIORITY AREA/THEME PRIORITAIRE	N°	COUNTRY/PAYS	REGION	NAME/NOM	SURNAME/PRENOM	GENDER/SEXE	CONFIRMATIONS
	1	Senegal	AFR	NGOM	Daouda	M	ok
ZONATION OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES/	2	Cameroon	AFR	TSAKEM	Samuel Christian	M	ok
ZONAGE DES RB	3	Burkina Faso	AFR	DIBLONI	Ollo Théophile	M	ok
	4	Indonesia	ASPAC	DEA	Purwanto	M	ok
12 experts (2 Female experts)	5	France	ENA	CIBIEN	Catherine	F	ok
	6	France	ENA	BIORET	Frédéric	M	ok
3 AFR	7	Germany	ENA	PRUTER	Johannes	M	ok
1 ASPAC	8	Portugal	ENA	CARQUEIJEIRO	Eduardo	M	ok
7 ENA	9	Romania	ENA	ACIMOV	Zoran	M	Not confirmed as of 25 June
1 LAC	10	Slovakia	ENA	GUZIOVA	Zuzana	F	ok
	11	United States of America	ENA	BOBOWSKI	Benny Robert	M	ok
	12	Brazil	LAC	FERREIRA LOURIVAL	Reinaldo Francisco	M	ok
	13	Burkina Faso	AFR	BELEMOUEDRAOGO	Mamounata	F	ok
GOVERNANCE OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES/	14	Kenya	AFR	WANYAMA	Wekesa Boniface	M	ok
GOUVERNANCE DES RBs	15	South Africa	AFR	MARINGA	Vongani Nicolus	M	ok
	16	Japan	ASPAC	SATO	Tetsu	M	ok
12 experts (5 Female experts)	17	Germany	ENA	ENGELS	Barbara	F	ok
	18	Canada	ENA	MCDERMOTT	Larry	M	ok
3 AFR	19	France	ENA	JARDIN	Mireille	F	ok
1 ASPAC	20	Romania	ENA	IRIMIA	Cristina	F	Not confirmed as of 25 June
7 ENA	21	Ukraine	ENA	CHERINKO	Pavlo	M	ok
1 LAC	22	United Kingdom	ENA	PRICE	Martin	M	ok
	23	Slovakia	ENA	FABRICIUSOVA	Vladimíra	F	ok
	24	Brazil	LAC	RUEGGER DE ALBUQUERQUE	João Lucilio	M	Not confirmed as of 25 June
	25	Cameroon	AFR	NJIANG	Antoine	M	ok
	26	Rwanda	AFR	NSABIMANA	Donat	M	ok
POLICY AND MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS PLANS/	27	South Africa	AFR	POOL-STANVLIET	Ruida	F	ok
POLITIQUE,GESTION ET PLAN D'AFFAIRES	28	Burkina Faso	AFR	HEBIE	Lamoussa	M	ok
	29	Morocco	AFR	FASSI	Driss	M	ok
13 experts (2 Female experts)	30	Japan	ASPAC	YOSHIDA	Kentaro	M	ok
	31	Ireland	ENA	GOOD	Jervis	M	ok
5 AFR	32	Germany	ENA	MOLLER	Lutz	M	ok
1 ASPAC	33	Canada	ENA	MESSIER	Jean-Philippe L.	M	ok
6 ENA	34	Russia	ENA	BRYNSKIKH	Mikhail	M	ok
1 LAC	35	Belarus	ENA	RYBIANETS	Natallia	F	Not confirmed as of 25 June
	36	Portugal	ENA	DOMINGOS DE SOUSA ABREU	António	M	ok
	37	Brazil	LAC	BRAGA MORAES VICTOR	Rodrigo Antonio	M	ok
DATA MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING/	38	Rwanda	AFR	KAPLIN	Beth A.	F	Not confirmed as of 25 June
GESTION DES DONNEES ET SUIVI	39	Burkina Faso	AFR	OUEDA	Adama	M	ok
	40	Kenya	AFR	ARERO	Jaro	M	ok
10 experts (4 Female experts)	41	China	ASPAC	LUO	Ze	M	Not confirmed as of 25 June
	42	Russia	ENA	YASHINA	Tatyana	F	ok
3 AFR	43	Ireland	ENA	ROCHE	Jenni	F	ok
1 ASPAC	44	France	ENA	HIRLEMANN	Gabriel	M	ok
5 ENA	45	Portugal	ENA	LEANDRO	Sergio M. F. M.	M	ok
1 LAC	46	United States of America	ENA	GALLO	Kirsten	F	ok
	47	Brazil	LAC	DOMINGUES	Sergio Augusto	M	ok

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربيـة والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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

In reference to document SC-18/CONF 230/13

Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR) Working Group

Terms of Reference

As per decision of the 29th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC), an informal Working Group, established on a voluntary basis, shall assist the MAB ICC to develop Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR) in cooperation with the MAB Secretariat. This document contains the Terms of Reference for the work of this Working Group and its Thematic Sub-Groups.

1. Purpose of the Working Group

The Working Group (WG) is responsible for preparing the structure and content of the TGBR in support of the MAB Secretariat.

The TGBR is a technical tool, which will enable Member States and the MAB ICC to respond more appropriately and in a timely manner to the various practical challenges and technical questions encountered in the implementation of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). Providing critical information and clarification on the WNBR, the TGBR primarily assists Member States to nominate new sites, and manage and monitor biosphere reserves; it also fosters the implementation of the current MAB strategy (2015-2025) and the Lima Action Plan (LAP) (2016-2025) and future Strategies and Action Plans.

The TGBR will be an open access web-based document accessible on the UNESCO/MAB website. It is a living document composed of a set of modules on specific themes, which will be gradually completed as required by decisions of the MAB ICC. Such an evolutive and dynamic structure based on independent modules and appendixes will accommodate future additions and changes of the document required by the MAB ICC.

The TGBR should not replicate work already done but rather build on relevant existing materials as much as possible. The drafting process of the modules of TGBR ensures collective contributions from the MAB community, in particular site practitioners and stakeholders involved with development and biosphere reserve management, in order to capture the real experience of the people on the ground and their best examples. As appropriate, items of the TGBR include relevant examples gathered from the WNBR, displaying the wide variety of situations and approaches in individual biosphere reserves as well as the flexibility, creativity and spirit of cooperation of the MAB programme.

2. Mandate of the WG:

To fulfill its mandate, the working group will be organized as follows:

Working group (WG)

The members of the WG are experts approved by the Bureau. The WG shall prepare the structure and content of the TGBR. The mandate of the Working Group is two years. Members may withdraw from the WG, with 3 months prior notification. Replacements will be nominated in the same way as initial nominations.

Thematic Sub-groups (TSGs)

At its sessions, the MAB ICC defines the themes for the work of the WG. Therefore, to complete the work by theme, the WG shall be divided into Thematic Sub-Groups (TSGs). The number of these will be based on the assignment given by the MAB ICC. TSGs will be dissolved when their specific theme is completed and approved by the MAB ICC. TSG members may be assigned other themes within the time of their mandate (2 years) if the TSG they belonged to has been dissolved.

3. Membership:

The working groups are established as follows:

a. **Expertise and qualification required for the WG Members**: Experienced researchers, site managers, policy makers, conservation specialists who are familiar with MAB and BR theory and practices, especially Seville Strategy, Statutory Framework, MAB Strategy 2015-2025 and LAP 2016-2025. A brief bio-data or summary of resumes will be made available on the MAB Website.

b. **Nomination process of WG**: Member States are invited to nominate names of experts for one or several TSGs.

c. **Composition of TSGs**: The MAB Secretariat shall compile the nominations and prepare the list of the membership of thematic sub-groups, taking into account regional distribution, expertise and gender balance. The size of each TSG should not exceed 15 members.

d. **Approval of WG/TSGs**: The MAB Bureau will review the list prepared by the MAB Secretariat and approve it on behalf of the MAB ICC.

4. **Method of work**: as a matter of principle, the method of work should be kept as flexible as possible within the agreed overall framework of work.

- **Organization of the WG**: the entire group of experts comprises the Working Group (WG). The WG shall have a Bureau (WG Bureau) for the period of two years of the mandate comprised of the following members : a Chair (elected) , a rapporteur (elected) and one member of each active TSG (designated by the members of the TSG).

- **Organization of TSGs**: The members of each TSG shall elect a Chair and a Rapporteur for the period of their mandate (TSG Bureau). They designate their representative to the WG Bureau.

- **Secretariat**: The MAB Secretariat provides the Secretariat of WG / TSGs.

- **Means of communication and meetings**: The WG and each TSG shall conduct their business primarily using e-mail and the online facilities for virtual meetings.

    - The WG and TSGs shall meet virtually as needed based on the relevance vis-a-vis the overall road map.
    - The Chair of the WG (respectively the Chairs of the TSGs), in consultation with the MAB Secretariat, will schedule the meeting and produce and issue a draft agenda to members of the WG/TSG at least 15 working days before each meeting.
    - Members will be invited to contribute items to the agenda if they wish.
    - The quorum for each meeting shall be at least half of the members of the respective WG or TSG.
    - The Rapporteur of the WG/TSG, with support of MAB Secretariat and in consultation with the respective Chair, will circulate minutes of each meeting, including action points and responsibilities, to all members no later than one week after the meeting.
    - The WG bureau shall meet every two months with an agenda that will include monitoring progress against achievement of objectives set by the WG and TSGs, any problems or issues encountered and examples of good practice. These meetings will be scheduled at least 15 working days in advance.

- **Face to face meetings**: Taking advantage of the MAB ICC, informal meetings of the WG and its TSGs may be organized by the MAB Secretariat to coincide with MAB ICC. Member States should support their experts' attendance costs. The agenda of these meetings will be decided by the WG Bureau and circulated at least one month prior to the MAB ICC.

- **Reporting**: The WG shall report to the MAB Bureau, which has been entrusted by the MAB ICC to approve the work of the WG. With clearance from the WG Bureau and the MAB Bureau, the Secretariat brings forward the draft item in the form of a MAB ICC document for consideration by the MAB ICC.

- **Working language**: The main working language of the WG and TSGs is English.

- **Budget:** participation in activities of working groups is expected to be covered by Member States' voluntary contributions. No allowances, transportation or other financial benefits will be paid by UNESCO.

5. Objectives and expected results

The objectives and expected results of the WG and its TSGs are to prepare the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves for approval of the MAB Bureau through the following actions:

5.1 Working Group:

i. Review the layout and the table of contents of the Prototype of Technical Guidelines of BR prepared by the MAB Secretariat for the 29th session of MAB ICC https://en.unesco.org/op-wnbr based on the discussions held by the MAB ICC at its 29th and 30th sessions respectively and prepare the first draft layout and table of contents of the TGBR;

ii. Circulate through the MAB Secretariat, the first draft of the layout and the table of contents of the Prototype of TGBR for inputs and comments by the MAB national committees;

iii. Prepare updated versions of the draft layout and table of contents of the TGBR based on inputs and comments received from the MAB National committees and consolidated by the MAB Secretariat;

iv. Prepare the final draft layout and table of contents of the TGBR for review by the MAB Bureau and for its approval.

v. Review and approve the draft of completed items of the TGBR and submit the draft to the MAB Bureau.

vi. Oversee the production of the content of the TGBR and decide about the possible need for additional generation of input and comments by MAB national committees

vii. Work in close synergy with the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere reserves (IABCR) in order to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of the members of the IABCR and will seek their advice, comments and inputs as appropriate.

5.2 Technical Sub-Groups:

i. Prepare the drafting of content of the 4 identified priority areas based on draft input provided by the Secretariat:

1. Zonation of BRs
2. Governance of BRs
3. Policy and management & Business Plans of BR
4. Data management and monitoring

including specific reflection on cross cutting themes pertaining to the Excellence Process.
If the MAB ICC decides to add new themes, related new TSG may be established. If needs be, additional experts will be nominated and selected under the same procedure described above within the duration of the mandate of the WG.

ii. Circulate , through the MAB Secretariat, the first draft of completed items of the TGBR for inputs and comments by MAB National committees;

iii. Prepare updated versions of the draft of completed items of the TGBR for inputs and comments based on inputs and comments received from MAB national committees and consolidated by MAB Secretariat ;

iv. Prepare the final draft of completed items of Technical Guidelines of BR for review by the WG and later the MAB Bureau and for its approval no later than one month prior to the session of the MAB ICC of the year when its mandate ends.

5.2 Consistency of the work

Throughout its mandate, the Bureau of the WG will review the work of the TSGs to ensure consistency of the entire document.

To insure that the work of the WG is consistent with practices worldwide and in particular, to take advantage of the sum of knowledge and experience accumulated by the members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves on matters pertaining to the WNBR, the WG will seek advice and contribution from the IABCR to its work as appropriate.