

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

**6th Skype meeting of the Bureau of the International Co-ordinating Council of
the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**
Wednesday 29 July 2020, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

Bureau Members

Chair: Indonesia (Group IV): Ms Enny Sudarmonowati

Vice-chairs:

Sweden (Group I) serving also as the Rapporteur: Ms Johanna Mac Taggart (Absent)

Estonia (Group II): Mr Toomas Kokovkin (Absent)

Honduras (Group III): Mr Carlos Madariaga

Nigeria (Group V A): Mr Adepoju Olatunde Adeshola

Sudan (Group V B): Ms Salwa Mansour Abdel Hameed

MAB Secretariat:

Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, MAB Secretary

Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa

Ms Meriem Bouamrane

Ms Marie Prchalova

Mr Bandiougou Diawara

Ms Maria Rosa Cardenas Tomazic

Mr Peter Dogsé

Ms Sima Taheri-Gauter

Ms Patricia Ramé

Ms Sandrine Baron

UNESCO Office in Abuja

Ms Magdalene Anene-Maidoh

Ms Enang Efiom Moma

1. The sixth meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB-ICC) was held through Skype for Business on 29 July 2020.
2. Four of the six MAB Bureau Members attended the session: the Chair, representative of Indonesia, representatives of Honduras, Nigeria and Sudan. Representatives of Estonia and Sweden were absent. Twelve participants from the UNESCO Secretariat attended the meeting including two colleagues from UNESCO Office in Abuja.
3. The full list of participants is presented at the beginning of this report.

4. The meeting was opened by the MAB Secretary, Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt. After a brief introduction on the current situation at UNESCO vis-à-vis of the COVID-19, the Secretary informed that the 209th session of the UNESCO Executive Board was held partly virtually and partly physically in Paris from 29 June to 10 July 2020. Most of the Permanent Delegates were present and nobody came from outside. There are still travel restriction and encouragement of teleworking. Some of the European countries are going to reconfinement on cluster basis.

5. The meeting was chaired by Ms Enny Sudarmonowati who thanked the Bureau Members and the MAB Secretariat for the organization of this fifth meeting. She mentioned that the main objective of this meeting is to find out a date and place for the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC. The Chair specified that a lot of events were held since the last Bureau meeting: webinars with field offices, regional networks and an exceptional meeting with the MAB-ICC Bureau members on the questionnaire dedicated to a consultation of the MAB Programme in relation to the New Mid-term Strategy 2022-2029 of UNESCO. All these events showed possible solutions and innovative actions that the MAB Programme provided during the COVID-19 situation

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Bureau Members of the MAB-ICC adopted the agenda of its sixth Skype meeting without modification.

7. Item 4 of the agenda was about the update on COVID-19 situation regarding the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC originally planned in 2020 in Abuja.

8. The MAB Secretary provided an update on the situation. He mentioned the good progress on the preparation of the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC. He also provided some information about the changes occurred in UNESCO Abuja office: Mr Yao YDO, director of UNESCO Abuja office has been transferred to Geneva and Mr Simone Grego to the Hydrology division within UNESCO HQs. The MAB Secretary specified that the fall session of the Executive Board will be held from 4 to 18 November 2020 and a lot of statutory meetings have been postponed to 2021 such as the Word Heritage and Geoparks meetings. Furthermore, travels and missions were very difficult in this situation because of the quarantine while going to a country and coming back from the visited country. There are no missions for UNESCO staff since March 2020, taking into consideration the fact that the figures of COVID-19 are not decreasing in the world. Furthermore, the MAB Secretary mentioned that Nigeria asked to the MAB Secretariat for the postponement to the first quarter of 2021 of the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC originally planned in Abuja in 2020. However, as next year the MAB Programme will be celebrating the its 50th Anniversary, the main event will be organized in Paris at UNESCO HQs in June 2021 in order to enable all Permanent Delegations to attend as the presence of all countries is envisaged. For this reason, two MAB-ICC cannot be held in one year and therefore, the MAB Secretary suggested that the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC be held virtually on 27 and 28 October 2020 and in this way, representatives from delegations can attend the meeting from Paris. The MAB Secretary proposed that the virtual 32nd session of the MAB-ICC only approves new sites this year, as well as the election of the new MAB-ICC Bureau. Some other items such as the national and regional presentations, Lima Action Plan mid-term evaluation, the result of the TGBR and the MAB Young Scientist Award can also be part of the agenda of this virtual session. The Process of Excellence and the Exit Strategy will be at the agenda of the 33rd session of the MAB-ICC. The MAB Secretary proposed that 32nd session of the MAB-ICC

be held before the 210th session of the Executive Board, to show to the Member States that the MAB Programme is active and working even with the COVID-19 situation. Finally, the MAB Secretary thanked Nigeria for its generous offer to keep his proposal for 2021 but proposed to postpone the offer to 2022 and the MAB-ICC will review it with the offer of other countries such as Austria and Australia. However, priority must be given to Nigeria as it will be the first time for the African continent to host the MAB-ICC. Furthermore, Nigeria will remain member of MAB-ICC until 2023.

9. Before giving the floor to the members of the MAB Bureau and opening the discussion, the Chair made a recapitulative of the situation and the propositions made by the MAB Secretary.

10. After a very long and fruitful discussion, the MAB Bureau members present decided to keep the option of a virtual 32nd session of the MAB-ICC in October 2020 if it is technically feasible.

11. Sudan suggested that if the organization of the virtual 32nd session of the MAB-ICC in October 2020 is impossible; the election of a new MAB Bureau would be postponed and the actual Bureau would be maintained until a new election during the next MAB ICC. Sudan also mentioned that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme in Paris is very important.

12. In order to have a clear idea of the proposal, the MAB Secretary provided the following options:

- a. 32nd session of the MAB-ICC to be held virtually in Paris on 27 and 28 October 2020
- b. 33rd session of the MAB-ICC and the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme to be held in Paris in June 2021
- c. 34th session of the MAB-ICC to be held in Nigeria in June 2022 if Nigeria maintains its offer

13. Nigeria renewed the offer of the country to host the next MAB-ICC in Abuja in the first quarter of 2021. He further suggested that the 50th anniversary of the MAB programme can take place in Paris in 2020, while the 32nd Session of MAB ICC can still hold in Abuja, Nigeria in 2021. He also mentioned that he must consult with his country about the possibility to maintain the offer for 2022. Nigeria also suggested that the current MAB Bureau remains on activity until the election of the new bureau during the next MAB-ICC which will be held physically.

14. Honduras agreed on the suggestion made by the MAB Secretary.

15. The Chair concluded that the MAB-ICC Bureau members should take a decision on the date of the upcoming MAB-ICC.

16. The Bureau Members accepted the proposition made by the MAB Secretary that a short meeting for the 32nd MAB-ICC be held this year on 27 and 28 October 2020 only virtually with a limited agenda. In this way the results can be communicated to the UNESCO Executive Board at its fall session starting from 4 November until 18 November 2020.

17. The Bureau Members also accepted to postpone to the next MAB Bureau meeting the item on the date and place of the 33rd MAB-ICC to be decided later on. The MAB Bureau members

and the MAB Secretariat suggested 17 September 2020 for the next MAB Bureau meeting so all the Bureau members will be present.

18. The question of extending the current MAB Bureau was raised by several Bureau members. The MAB Secretary mentioned that new MAB members joined during the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019 and some are not part any more of the MAB-ICC such as Honduras who is part of the current MAB Bureau. However, Indonesia and Nigeria are members of the MAB-ICC until 42nd session of the General Conference in 2023 and Sudan, Estonia and Sweden remain member of the MAB-ICC until 41st session of the General Conference in 2021. For this reason, the current MAB Bureau cannot be extended and has to be renewed at the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC. The MAB Secretary mentioned that he will check with UNESCO Legal Affairs, the possibility of voting for the new MAB Bureau during the virtual session of the MAB-ICC.

19. Item 5 of the agenda was about the progress on the logistic of the upcoming MAB-ICC.

20. The MAB Secretary mentioned that no advancement on logistics in Nigeria can be done as there is no fixed dates for the 32nd MAB-ICC originally planned. The administrative aspects have already been cleared but UNESCO did not receive the funds from Nigeria. If the virtual meeting is held in October, the MAB Secretariat will check the administrative and technical aspects for the meeting with the appropriate colleagues. All documents are ready.

21. The Bureau Members took note without comments on the item 5 of the agenda.

22. Item 6 of the agenda was about the update on the status of the TGBR.

23. Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa shared a slide below showing the advancement of the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR). The first draft of TGBR has been finalized and reviewed by subgroups and sent to the MAB Advisory Committee who reviewed it already and enhanced the quality especially with regards to the variety of examples. Ms Raondry Rakotoarisoa mentioned that this first draft presents a good content but very much biased on the composition of groups, especially for Europe. The second draft will be shared with the MAB Bureau members who can send their comments. The members of MAB-ICC will be able to review the document until end of August so it can be finalised before the 32nd Session of the MAB-ICC in October 2020.

TSG

- **Size and zonation** : Monday 18/05/2020 14:00 - 15:30
- **Governance** : Tuesday 19/05/2020 14:00 - 15:30
- **Policy, Management and Business Plans** : Wednesday 20/05/2020 14:00 - 15:30
- **Data, Management and Monitoring**: Monday 25/05/2020 14:00 - 15:30

Bureau Working Group TGBR

- Tuesday 02/06/2020 12:30 - 14:00
- Thursday 25/06/2020 16:00 - 18:00

IACBR

- **1st Telemeeting** : Thursday 25/06/2020 16:00 - 18:00
- **2nd Telemeeting**: Tuesday 21/07/2020 16:00 - 18:00

24. The Chair thanked and congratulated for the good progress of the TGBR work. She mentioned that the document is lacking examples for some regions and advised to integrate sites serving as model. Japan and Republic of Korea can be served as examples for governance. The Chair mentioned that she has reviewed the TGBR document and will send it to the Secretariat after the meeting and encouraged other Bureau members to do the same.

25. Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa mentioned that comments should be sent to the MAB Secretariat and based on the TGBR calendar, MAB-ICC members will have access to the online document to review the document. Virtual meeting will also be planned with the MAB ICC Bureau to support their review process.

26. Sudan congratulated the Secretariat for the good progress of the work and mentioned that she will send her comments the soonest possible. She already sent some examples for the Arab region.

27. Nigeria also congratulated the Secretariat for the good progress of the work and mentioned that some cases should be added and link them to the document.

28. On item 7, the Bureau Members agreed that the next Skype meeting to be held on 17 September at the same time i.e. 11 am Paris time. A skype invitation will be sent at a later stage. The MAB Secretary specified that this meeting will be mainly dedicated to find a date and a place for the 33rd Session of MAB-ICC.

29. Nigeria mentioned that he will be able to provide more information about the financial participation of Nigeria.

30. Item 8 of the agenda was about events related to the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme.

31. Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa mentioned that the MAB Secretariat would like to propose the possibility of having an ambassador for the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme. If this proposal is accepted by the Bureau members, the MAB Secretariat would like to propose Dr Jane Goodall to fulfil this important role. Dr Goodall is an internationally recognized scientist, mainly for her innovative discoveries on chimpanzee behaviour. Much of Dr Goodall's research was conducted in the area that is currently the Gombe Masito Ugalla Biosphere Reserve (a proposal supported by Dr Goodall). The MAB Secretariat has worked constantly with the Jane Goodall Institute and with Dr Goodall herself (in the Great Apes Survival Partnership - GRASP) and is invited in December 2020 by the Director-General of UNESCO to highlight the high level of scientists working with the Organization. For all these reasons, the MAB Secretariat wishes to propose Dr Goodall to the MAB Bureau as a potential Ambassador for the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme.

32. The Chair congratulated the Secretariat on the work being done to organize the 50th anniversary of the Programme. She mentioned that while she is well aware of Dr. Goodall's work, she suggested that other candidates should be proposed to the members of the Bureau so that they can select. She then gave the floor to the members of the Bureau to discuss this issue.

33. Nigeria and Sudan both welcomed the idea and asked for the criteria to be able to select the Ambassador. Moreover, they asked for at least 3 candidates in order to have the option and select the best one.

34. The MAB Secretary mentioned that the Secretariat not only took into consideration the important aspects that Ms Raondry Rakotoarisoa mentioned before but also considerate the communication aspect as Ms Jane Goodall has millions of followers on social media and this will make an immediate large communication impact on the MAB Programme and its anniversary. He mentioned that the Secretariat will prepare the criteria and send MAB-ICC Bureau members for them to suggest names for potential Ambassador for the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme.

He also emphasized on the fact the 50th MAB Anniversary should be celebrated throughout the year 2021 in all countries where there is a Biosphere Reserve as this is not only a UNESCO event.

35. Ms Maria Rosa Cardenas added that MAB Secretariat is organizing an information meeting addressed to the Permanent Delegates to UNESCO on the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme, planned on 11 September 2020 in UNESCO. She also mentioned floating of a website for the 50th MAB anniversary in September, 2020, as such there is the need to hasten the selection process of the MAB Ambassador which will be placed on the website. For this reason, the MAB Secretariat would like to present the Ambassador for the 50th Anniversary at this occasion and will appreciate if the MAB Bureau can choose the Ambassador on the first week of September.

36. Item 9 of the agenda was about any other matters.

37. The Chair mentioned the Consultation on the MAB Programme. The MAB Secretary stated that this survey has been sent in July to the MAB Focal points and the results are accessible here after under the tab “responses”:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?fragment=FormId%3DUq5PHbM5-kuwswlpVrERINcQIhtlNvdFrvC_zW7_Y5UM0hOTTJCNUhSSUhOMEhaWTRIUjQzWjVDNi4u%26Token%3D53f975b6d14e4a4caa345cd497104f9f

38. The Chair thanked the Bureau Members and the MAB Secretariat for their active participation and holding these virtual meetings and closed the meeting.