

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Seventh Consultation between the International Support Group (ISG) for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme

UNESCO Headquarters (Paris), Room XIII (Bonvin Building)
19 October 2011, 14:30 - 17:00

REPORT

1. The Chair of the ISG, the Permanent Delegate of Egypt, Mr Mohamed El-Zahaby, opened the meeting and invited Mr N. Ishwaran, Secretary of the MAB Programme, to present to the Delegates a report on the progress made since the last ISG meeting, held on 9 February 2011.
2. Mr Ishwaran thanked the Chair of ISG and all Member Countries for the work achieved concerning the MAB Statutory Documents and he informed the Delegates about the successful finalisation of the revisions. He informed that the 187th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO has approved the 'Statutes of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves' as well as the 'Statutes of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme', the latter is to be submitted for final approval to the 36th General Conference of UNESCO, to be held from 25 October to 11 November 2011.
3. Mr Ishwaran furthermore informed about the successful holding of the 23rd Intergovernmental Council (ICC), held in June this year in Dresden, Germany, from 28 June to 1 July 2011 and which has been preceded by the International Conference "For Life, for the Future: Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change" to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the MAB Programme. He informed the Delegates about UNESCO's preparations for the Rio+20 event and for the upcoming celebration of the MAB and Biosphere Reserves Day, during the upcoming 36th session of the General Conference on 3 November 2011, for which already 15 countries have sent local products from their respective biosphere reserves.
4. Finally, Mr Ishwaran informed about the first Latin American Trinational biosphere reserve Trifinio/Fraternidad of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala as well as on other new biosphere reserves, which were approved during the last ICC. He also informed about the mid-term evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) and that the next ICC (i.e 24th) session will be held in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. He informed the Delegates that the dates 9-13 July 2012 had been proposed and that the Secretariat was awaiting responses from ICC Member States for this proposal before confirming them.

5. The Chair and many representatives stated that the MAB Programme and its World Biosphere Reserve Network (WNBR) is a crucial tool for sustainable development, for poverty eradication and nature protection and that it be further strengthened within the science programmes of UNESCO. They also called for a discussion on the future of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves beyond 2013 when the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) will be completed.
6. Mr Ishwaran informed that although the MAB Programme has been successful in securing extrabudgetary funding since 2005, an increase in the regular programme funds is also badly needed. For the next (2012-2013) biennium regular programme funds need to be maintained at least at the level of 2010-2011. He also informed that UNESCO is preparing a substantial contribution to the Rio+20 event; MAB intends to make its own inputs through a South-South Co-operation Conference focussing on tropical forests as well as through specific initiatives of the IberoMAB Network, particularly in Latin America's first transboundary biosphere reserves shared by El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.
7. In conclusion, representatives invited the Secretariat to prepare a concept note of MAB for Rio+20 in order to help regions and sub-regions to prepare their contributions, to prepare a mail to all member states in order to invite them to suggest the MAB programme contributions for Rio+20. Furthermore, the regional groups should discuss during their upcoming meetings about possible contributions from MAB and biosphere reserves; MAB Secretariat should also make proposals for seeking potential contributions from other UNESCO Sectors.
8. As this was the first meeting of the International Support Group concerning the discussions on possible MAB contributions to Rio+20 and to the future of MAB beyond the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan after 2013, Mr El-Zahaby thanked all the Delegates present for their continuous support and declared the Seventh Consultation between the International Support Group (ISG) for the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) and the Secretariat of the MAB Programme closed. He invited the MAB Secretariat act on all tasks referred to in paragraph 7 above and expressed the wish that the next meeting of ISG could be called in early 2012.