

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Thirty-fourth session

Paris, France (hybrid meeting)
13 – 17 June 2022

ITEM 17 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Renaming of MAB Programme and Biosphere Reserves

1. Taking into account UNESCO's global priority on Gender Equality, aimed at promoting equal rights, opportunities, choices, capabilities, and access to knowledge between women and men, and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme works to ensure that this global goal is taken into account in all its related policies, actions and activities.
2. With this in mind, the name of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme has been increasingly questioned in recent years, as the word "Man" is not the most appropriate way to refer collectively to human beings. This aspect was discussed at the 33rd session of the International Co-ordinating Council of the MAB Programme celebrated in September 2021. Additionally the word 'reserve' has also received attention due to comments that it does not reflect the purpose and real mission of biosphere reserves.
3. The 50th anniversary of the Programme is an opportunity to set the vision for the next 50 years, including inclusive language on people and nature.
4. Considering that numerous Member States already use alternative names for biosphere reserves and noting that language trends have changed in the last 50 years, it has been agreed to launch a process for changing the names at stake, without losing the values and mission of the Programme.
5. The MAB-ICC during its 33rd session has tasked the MAB Secretariat to carry out the procedure for revising and changing the names concerned. This procedure included (1) consulting Member States to collect proposals for new names for the MAB Programme and biosphere reserves, (2) presenting a process for the adoption of the new names at the 34th session of the MAB-ICC and (3) implementing the process of adoption of the new names and present a working document at the 35th session of the MAB-ICC in 2023 which would be submitted to the 42nd session of UNESCO's General Conference for official adoption.
6. Given the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the MAB Secretariat will be in the position to start this process after the 34th session of the MAB-ICC once the new MAB-ICC Bureau has been elected.
7. Following the suggestions of the Members of the MAB-ICC made during its last session, the following process will be implemented:
 - a. Carry out a consultation process with Member States at regional level to consider language issues, cultural backgrounds and other aspects, which would result in the submission of one proposal per region. This consultation shall be led by the Bureau members in their respective regions with support from the Secretariat.

- b. The MAB Secretariat would collect the five proposals and present a working document for the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves and the MAB Bureau.
 - c. Present the process of adoption at the 35th session of the MAB-ICC in 2023 and further adoption at the 42nd session of UNESCO's General Conference in 2023.
8. Member States have highlighted that this process must consider not losing the history of the Programme with the change of the names and the fact that the "International Day for Biosphere Reserves" has been adopted at the 41st session of the General Conference in 2021.
9. **The MAB Council is invited to provide further guidance if necessary and to discuss possible proposals received to date.**