

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Thirty-four session

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

ITEM 7 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme

1. The Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, as UNESCO's longest standing scientific intergovernmental programme, has been celebrating its 50th anniversary since 2021.
2. The celebration has taken place throughout 2021 and will continue until December 2022 at the request of 33rd session of the MAB Council. In the framework of the celebration, the MAB Secretariat launched some key activities and products, and has been playing a central role in facilitating the celebrations in biosphere reserves and ensuring that people living in biosphere reserves all over the world take ownership of the 50th anniversary.
3. The conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic along with considerably reduced human resources have represented a significant setback for the organization of the celebration and resulted in delaying some activities.
4. The activities carried out and under preparation to this day are the following:
 - On 17 November 2021, during the UNESCO General Conference, a special event "It's about life!" was held in presential and in streaming to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme. The event included an intergenerational dialogue with the participation of the MAB youth spokespersons for the 50th anniversary: Alicia Donnellan Barraclough (EuroMAB), Rebecca Laibich (AfriMAB) and Obed Palagot Echavarría (IberoMAB). The youth spokespeople participated in the dialogue alongside prominent personalities: Dr Jane Goodall, official spokesperson for MAB's 50th anniversary, famous for her historic and ground-breaking work with chimpanzees (United Kingdom); Anthony Blair Dreaver Johnston, member and collaborator for Special Projects with the Mistawasis Nêhiyawak community (Canada); Mauro Colagreco, Argentinean chef with three Michelin stars, who works to enhance the cultural and natural heritage of the Alpes-Maritimes region (France); and Vik Muniz, internationally renowned artist and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (Brazil).
 - For its 50th anniversary, the MAB Programme partnered with renowned Brazilian contemporary artist Vik Muniz, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador whose works are exhibited in the world's most prominent museums. Mr Muniz created the artwork "*Wild Flowers, Summer 1915 after Tom Thomson, 2021*" with canvases and photos of materials collected on a voluntary basis in different biosphere reserves around the world that represent their cultural and biological uniqueness, and their inhabitants' relationship with the living. The artwork was donated to UNESCO HQ and presented during the General Conference.
 - Since 2020, the MAB Programme has been preparing its new database. In early 2021, data collection started in pilot biosphere reserves in five MAB regional networks, and between July and August a survey was sent to the entire World Network of Biosphere

Reserves to collect all the data that will feed the database. The database is expected to be launched by the end of the 2022 in order to benefit the entire World Network with up-to-date, quality information.

- The official exhibition of the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme has been developed thanks to the support of the Abertis Foundation, the National Parks Autonomous Agency (OAPN) of Spain, Volkswagen and the Alliance of International Science Organisations (ANSO). The exhibition will be officially opened on 18 May 2022 in Barcelona at the Park Joan Miró and will be presented in different parts of the world in the following months. The exhibition is a virtual journey to different biosphere reserves around the world. The panels give access to podcasts of interviews with different biosphere reserves managers, members of local communities, researchers, artists and many more to learn about their activities and projects, as well as the sounds of emblematic species. Printable materials for use in biosphere reserves can be accessed through the exhibition website.
- A side event hosted by Nigeria for the global launch of BIOPALT's Lake Chad Basin Water Quality Monitoring Portal, developed with the technical support of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), at the request of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). This innovative scientific tool will enable the Member States of this transboundary basin of more than 45 million people to monitor water quality and natural resources status, develop policies to reduce pollution, and contribute to their sustainable management. It will also contribute to human health, economic development and peace in the region. On this occasion, the results of the BIOPALT project were also presented.
- The Brazilian photographer Sebastiao Salgado and the Oscar' awarded French filmmaker Luc Jaquet, both personalities recognised for their work on issues related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development have been video interviewed. These conversations -available on the 50th Anniversary MAB website- are part of a series of mini-documentaries about their work that will help inspire the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and raise the visibility of the Programme.
- A series of interviews with MAB Young Scientist Award laureates has been published on the website. The aim is to show how this award has supported the research and careers of young scientists throughout MAB's history.
- The MAB Programme is currently producing the educational material VITA a board game on biosphere reserves that will be launched at the end of 2022. The material, in the form of a game, aims to teach, in a playful way, the work of MAB and the importance of biosphere reserves worldwide.
- The MAB programme will seek to organize a meeting in late 2022 on transboundary biosphere reserves, to highlight the potential for biosphere reserves to work together for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of their local communities.

5. The MAB ICC is invited to provide guidance to the MAB Secretariat on the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the MAB Programme.