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

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**13 – 17 June 2022**

**ITEM 11 OF PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Examination of new biosphere reserves nominations and proposals for extension/modification/renaming to designated biosphere reserves that are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**

1. Nominations for new biosphere reserves and proposals for extensions/modifications/renaming to biosphere reserves that are already part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) were considered at the 28th meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met on hybrid format from 28 February to 3 March 2022.
2. The Advisory Committee examined thirteen (13) proposals for new biosphere reserves and two (2) requests for extensions of existing biosphere reserves.
3. The Advisory Committee formulated their recommendations regarding specific sites in line with the recommendation categories as follows:
  - ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/ renaming to existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval***: the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional information is needed. For existing sites, the proposed changes are recommended for approval.
  - ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/ modifications/ renaming to 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 existing sites are recommended for approval subject to receiving the specific information requested by the Advisory Committee. If the information is received by the MAB Secretariat by 31 May 2022, it will be considered by the MAB-ICC at its 34<sup>th</sup> session, scheduled in June 2022, and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR. If submitted by 30 September 2022, the information will be assessed by the MAB-ICC at its 35<sup>th</sup> session in 2023.
  - ***No Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/ renaming to existing biosphere reserves were recommended for deferral by the Advisory Committee at its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2022.***

4. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the recommendations of the IACBR below as well as the additional information received by the MAB Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information by 31 May 2022. 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.

#### **New nominations recommended for approval**

6. **Sunshine Coast Biosphere (Australia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal and congratulated the country on the new nomination after the last biosphere reserve designation in 2009.
7. The proposed Sunshine Coast Biosphere Reserve is located in Southeast Queensland, 53 kilometres north of Brisbane in an area considered a major urban and economic centre and an emerging city region. The Country of two distinct First Nations groups, the Kabi Kabi and the Jinibara people, extends across the area. It has a strong reputation as a lifestyle region defined by its subtropical climate, picturesque coastline, dunes and beaches, extensive waterways and wetlands, and the hinterland mountain ranges. The natural environment and distinct landscapes are the foundations of the Sunshine Coast way of life.
8. Across contrasting landscapes, from hinterlands to coastal foreshores, the Sunshine Coast offers a vast diversity of native plants and animals which form the basis of the region's highly regarded natural environment and rich biodiversity. The proposed biosphere reserve covers a total of 2,585 square kilometres and features protected marine and terrestrial areas, rural lifestyles and rural living, as well as urban areas where people live and work. The region encompasses both biological and cultural diversity with a rich Indigenous and multicultural history that has resulted in a range of lifestyles and historical places that are valued by the community.
9. The Advisory Committee noted that while traditional economic activities of the Sunshine Coast include construction, tourism and retail services, the region's economy is rapidly evolving with the emergence of diverse high-value and knowledge-based sectors including professional business services, technological innovation, agribusiness, healthcare, education and finance. The Sunshine Coast's food and agribusiness industry is characterized by a wide range of sectors including poultry, seafood, horticulture, cattle and specialty dairy production, with a reputation for producing high-quality fresh food in a clean green environment. Tourism is also an important industry, attracting visitors from around the world, as well as day visitors from the wider region, with about 8 million visitors per year enjoying the natural assets of the region.
10. The Advisory Committee also noted that the Sunshine Coast Biosphere Reserve is experiencing continued growth, with the population estimated to increase by 8,000 people annually, from a current level of approximately 328,030 to a forecast population of over 500,000 by 2041, with further increases expected thereafter. The majority of residents live within established urban centres along the coast.
11. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the surface area is large enough to meet

the long-term conservation objectives of the core areas (43,649 ha) and the buffer zone (182,164 ha) and offers areas suitable for working with local communities to test and demonstrate the sustainable use of natural resources. Transition areas (32,722 ha) have multiple land uses where people live and make a living in suburbs and townships. Sustainable development and resource management practices are promoted and developed in these areas which also contain green spaces, parks, waterways, beaches and very small legally protected areas, such as conservation reserves. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council provides leadership and forms partnerships to implement an integrated management and performance measurement framework, which is essential to a successful biosphere reserve.

12. The Advisory Committee noted that the zonation terminology used in the nomination dossier differed from that of UNESCO in order to satisfy national/local needs. The Committee acknowledged that clear references to UNESCO terminology also have been incorporated into the nomination proposal. While there are no objections to maintaining the existing terminology in communications with local stakeholders, the Advisory Committee recommended that clear references to UNESCO biosphere reserve zonation terminology be made whenever applicable in future (i.e. in information materials/panels/, centres, produces maps, etc.).
13. The Committee noticed that the zonation map does not clearly indicate whether part of a core area located on a western border of the proposed biosphere reserve is protected by a buffer zone. However, based on the submitted information it is assumed that a natural barrier exists along the western part of the core area. Therefore, the Advisory Committee asked the national authorities to submit additional information explaining in detail how this section of the core area is protected by 31 May 2022.
14. The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for this well-prepared nomination dossier and recommended that the site be **approved**.
15. **Doumba-Rey (Cameroon)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Cameroon. The proposal covers the Mbéré Valley, a remarkable site for bird conservation with more than 100 species identified in recent inventories. According to the classification of the International Ornithological Congress (IOC), the classes of birds include 40 orders, 240 families and about 10,891 species. Floristically, the area is characterized by exceptional diversity. The most recent botanical inventory counted 2015 individuals grouped into 50 species belonging to 24 families. The most abundant species include *Anogeissus leiocarpus*, *Isobertia doka*, *Uapaca togoensis* and *Isobertia tomentosa*.
16. The proposed area has a total surface of 201,624 ha. The transition area includes about 60 villages with an estimated population of 90,014 inhabitants. Nomadic Fulani shepherds make intensive use of the site for pastoral activities involving sedentary and transhumant livestock. These communities have relatively low incomes and depend on activities such as animal husbandry, traditional fishing, subsistence agriculture, beekeeping, seasonal collection of non-timber forest products and handicrafts.
17. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information which included maps, information on the zoning and coordination structures, and local development plans for the four regions of the transition area. These plans and existing national park management frameworks provide indications of a well-developed management approach for the entire biosphere reserve.

18. The Advisory Committee also noted that many scientific studies have been carried out on the site, including archaeological research, to which can be added summary studies from student internships.
19. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommended that the site be **approved**.
20. The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to continue negotiations with all stakeholders with a view to enlarging the buffer zone to enhance the protection of the core area. It also encouraged the authorities to submit an integrated management plan for the entire area once completed.
21. **Sena Oura (Chad)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Chad, which covers one of the last ecological areas of the Sudanian savannah with minimal disturbance.
22. The most frequent tree species in the Sena Oura are *Anogeissus leiocarpus* and *Acacia ataxacantha*. The area is also inhabited by species of great conservation interest, such as elephants, giant elands and giraffes.
23. The proposed biosphere reserve covers a total surface area of 173,520 ha. There are about 30 villages with a total population of 186,859 inhabitants. Agriculture is the dominant activity in the area, employing 88.73 per cent of the population.
24. The Advisory Committee commended the well-articulated management policy of the proposed site and noted that the territory has great socio-economic importance for local communities. It also took note that the area is a site for scientific research, environmental education and a student field station.
25. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the procedure used for the designation of the biosphere reserve involved the organization of consultation meetings with all stakeholders.
26. Based on responses to technical comments sent by the national authorities to the MAB Secretariat, the Advisory Committee welcomed this consultation process, the aim of which was to relocate village enclaves and human activities outside the national park during the establishment of the site.
27. The Advisory Committee consequently recommended that the site be **approved**.
28. The Advisory Committee further requested the national authorities to submit by 31 May 2022 an updated zonation map clearly showing the three zones of the biosphere reserve and the link with current spatial land use and socio-economic activities within the proposed site for consideration by the MAB Council.
29. **Dedoplistskaro (Georgia)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this first proposal from Georgia for a site located on the Lori Plateau between the Alazani and Lori rivers in the Dedoplistskaro municipality of southeast Georgia. The region is characterized by remote and unpopulated areas, with only the proposed transition area permanently populated. The site has a total population of 21,435 people and covers 251,952 ha. It incorporates numerous valleys as well as hills, separated by canyons. The southeast region is highly prone to weathering, which has produced diverse geomorphology. The most remarkable geological feature is the Takhti-Tepha mud-volcano natural monument.

30. The proposed site includes two protected areas: the Vashlovani Protected Area and the Chachuna Managed Reserve. The Vashlovani Protected Area is the driest and most waterless territory in Georgia. Considered a biodiversity hotspot, the area is home to many species (52 mammals, 90 birds and 30 reptiles, 18 fish and 6 amphibians). Emblematic species include leopard (*Panther pardus*) and black-tailed gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*). As the proposed site is located close to the border with Azerbaijan, it will offer opportunities for transboundary cooperation to counteract the fragmentation of habitats, a process detrimental to species such as leopards. There is also a high diversity of fauna distributed among the stepped, arid savannah-type woodlands, semi-arid lands and desert-type vegetation.
31. The steppe and semi-deserts have traditionally been used for livestock and grazing. The main land use type is irrigated agriculture with artificial canals and ponds. However, only a few areas are irrigated by canals from the lower reaches of the Alazani. Agriculture contributes significantly to the regional economy, although less than 10 per cent of the population of Kakheti region live in the proposed site. Other economic activities include tourism, mining, processing industries (limestone), services, trade and construction. Agriculture and eco-tourism will be promoted to encourage sustainable development at a regional level.
32. The proposed zonation was developed through a comprehensive participatory planning procedure with the active participation of local community representatives and consultations with various stakeholders, including governmental officers. The Vashlovani State Nature Reserve and the Strict Protection Zone of Vashlovani National Park constitute the core area of the proposed site. Some of the buffer zones are adjacent to the core areas, while others correspond to existing protected areas. Along the north border of the north-eastern part of the core area, the Advisory Committee noted the absence of a buffer zone on the zonation map due to the current land tenure of adjacent plots which will be negotiated in the near future to allow for their inclusion in the buffer zone.
33. The main administrative authority for the proposed site is the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. This body supports a variety of activities related to training, education, knowledge sharing and public participation. Capacity-building training with the local administration and stakeholders is already taking place. Since the proposed site would be the first in the South Caucasus region, it is already attracting attention from national as well as international universities who are interested in conducting research in the area. Documents (including a charter) for the establishment of the management authority of the proposed site are already drafted and have been submitted to both the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the Dedoplistskaro municipality. A non-profit legal entity to manage the proposed site will be established after the designation.
34. The Advisory Committee welcomed this well-documented nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.
35. **Three Alazani Rivers (Georgia)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this second proposal from Georgia. Located in the north-eastern part of Georgia in the eastern Caucasus, bordering the Russian Federation, the area encompasses the catchment areas of the Alazani River and its two tributaries. The proposed biosphere reserve contains a mosaic of different landscapes, varying from Alpine and floodplain forests to areas with permanent snow cover and alpine meadows. The total area of the proposed Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve is 199 944 ha.

36. The area supports a high diversity of mammals, including predators such as the Black Bear, the Grey Wolf and the Lynx. In addition, the territory harbours a number of red-listed birds, such as Caucasian grouse, Caucasian snowcock, golden eagle and the Eurasian griffon vulture, as well as red-listed flora such as *Zelkova carpinifolia* and relics of yew forests. The area is also characterized by high agrodiversity.
37. The transition areas are inhabited by 15,390 permanent residents who form very diverse communities. The northern part of the proposed biosphere reserve is only sparsely populated, with most residents living in villages in the southern part of the proposed area. Between 100 and 150 people stay seasonally in the buffer zone, mainly for herding sheep. The area contains many historical monuments and archaeological sites, while forests and mountains also play an important role in local religious life, with many sacred sites still revered by local residents.
38. Agriculture is the main economic activity in the area and is dominated by historical, locally developed practices including the sopol-bosloba system, which enables cultivation in mountainous areas, as well as viticulture and nomadic livestock husbandry. One of the aims of the proposed biosphere reserve is to revitalize, maintain and support transhumant livestock husbandry, including Tushetian sheep, a local breed. In addition, the proposed site aims to contribute to the maintenance of local agrobiodiversity by supporting historically developed agricultural practices and produce, such as a type of locally developed barley. The promotion of eco-tourism, in particular visits to vineyards and the exploration of local culinary products, will be developed to support agricultural activities and render the area more attractive to younger generations. The proposed activities also include the installation of additional solar panels to provide the area with renewable energy.
39. The proposal has been developed in close cooperation with national, regional and local governments, including the Sabcheo (the local community council), other members of local communities and local companies. The development of the proposal led to increased cooperation between the various stakeholders, who were supported by a number of national and international governmental organizations and academic partners. A draft of the management plan and participatory management structure has been developed with the management plan envisaged as a dynamic document to be adapted over time in response to new developments in the area.
40. The Advisory Committee welcomed the detailed nomination proposal and congratulated the authorities on their participative approach. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.
41. **Harrat Uwayrid (Saudi Arabia)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal from Saudi Arabia. The proposed site is located in the central and north-western part of the AlUla' Mohafazat (county), a hot desert biome located in the Middle-East and Western Asia biogeographic region. The territory was declared a protected area in 2020 by Royal Decree and covers 762,700 ha, consisting of a core area of 193,300 ha, which is home to globally critically endangered species such as the Arabian Leopard and Arabian Gazelle, as well as regionally and nationally threatened and endemic species of flora and fauna, a buffer zone of 275,000 ha, and a transition area of 294,400 ha, equivalent to 39 per cent of the total area of the biosphere reserve.
42. The proposed biosphere reserve is inhabited by 40,500 to 66,000 people who live in the buffer zone (500 permanently, 1,000 seasonally) and the transition area (40,000

permanently 65,000 seasonally). Villagers in the buffer zone and transition areas depend heavily on pastoral activities and farming as a source of income. Major activities include farming, the tending of camels and flocks of sheep and goats.

43. The Advisory Committee noted that several planned programmes and activities at Harrat Uwayrid will contribute to the development of a thriving economy through the implementation of new conservation and ecotourism-based projects. Regarding the tourism activities that are currently managed in line with the national tourism strategy, the Advisory Committee encouraged the Saudi Arabian authorities to properly assess the carrying capacity of the site and to promote highly sustainable forms of tourism, paying particular attention to the use of water resources, energy efficiency and waste management, as well as to the generated impacts on the livelihood of local communities.
44. The proposed site has established a management plan (2020–2025) for implementation under the overall supervision of the Royal Commission of AlUla and the direct supervision of a Steering Committee of international conservation experts and leaders. Although members of local communities are mentioned as stakeholders in the Steering Committee, the Advisory Committee noted that the nomination dossier does not provide any evidence of their involvement in the planning and management of the biosphere reserve, beyond their involvement in an initial consultation on the candidature. The Advisory Committee, therefore, encouraged that the proposed management scheme better define the participatory mechanism by characterizing planning and implementation processes.
45. In addition to research, monitoring, education and information activities to support the functioning of the biosphere reserve, the Advisory Committee recommended that the logistic support function additionally support integration into the WNBR, sharing of experience and good practices, and participation in international thematic projects and networks. In line with this, educational activities also need widen from environmental education to education for sustainable development.
46. Recognizing that the proposed biosphere reserve faces many human pressures (i.e. habitat destruction, overgrazing, illegal hunting) that may threaten protected species, the Advisory Committee encouraged the Saudi Authorities to continue their activities and measures to reduce pressures and negative impacts by enacting new legislation to support conservation efforts and enforce existing laws and measures to combat overgrazing by livestock, such as determining the carrying capacity of rangeland and adjusting herd sizes, capacity building, and public awareness and educational activities.
47. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR and recommended that the site be **approved**.

#### **New nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information**

48. **Burabay (Kazakhstan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination from Kazakhstan. The proposed Burabay Biosphere Reserve is located in the steppe-forest-steppe natural zone in the most elevated part (Kokshetau Upland) of the northern outskirts of the Central Kazakh Uplands (melkosopchnik), which reach altitudes of 220–947 m above sea level. Administratively, the territory of the proposed site belongs to the Burabay District and Birzhan Sal District of Akmola Region. The territory is characterized

by the presence of a large number of lakes including 14 lakes with a water-surface area of over 1 km<sup>2</sup>.

49. The proposed site is highly representative of the biodiversity of the forest-steppe zone of Eurasia. The forest is the most significant type of vegetation in the site and the main forest-forming species is the pine.
50. About 10,000 people live in the transition areas which are visited annually by approximately 676,000 people for tourism and recreational purposes. The potential for sustainable development is associated primarily with the development of ecological and recreational tourism. The Shchuchinsk-Borovoye Resort Zone of which the proposed site forms a part is a complex of tourist infrastructure facilities created in 2005.
51. The proposed site was designed based on the zonation and management system of the Burabay State National Nature Park (SNNP), and consists of five separate cluster components. The boundary and zonation systems of the proposed biosphere reserve are identical to those of the Burabay SNNP. The core areas correspond to a strictly protected area of the SNNP, the buffer zone to the zone of environmental stabilization, and the transitions areas to the zone of tourism and recreational activities and the zone of limited economic activity. It should be noted that the belt of 'protection (or security) lands', which surrounds all boundaries of the proposed biosphere reserve, is not included in the zonation.
52. The Management Plan for the Burabay SNNP (2019-2023) has been elaborated and encompasses the management of all three functional zones of the proposed biosphere reserve. As the present plan ends in 2023, a new one for 2024-2028 will be developed and authorized at the end of that year. The Advisory Committee recommended that the new management plan reflect the particular role and activities of a biosphere reserve and the associated terminology.
53. The proposed biosphere reserve is managed through the Coordination Council of the Burabay Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the relevant legislation.
54. The proposed site has carried out ecological monitoring and research under the SNNP management system. However, very little information and data are available on transition areas and the development function in the nomination dossier, especially regarding tourism, which might offer significant potential for sustainable development.
55. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed site be **approved pending** submission of the following information by 31 May 2022 as per the details below:
  - i. A revised zonation map on which the core areas and buffer zones related to the cluster components located in the eastern and northern parts of the proposed site are indicated in colour on the present map (although the core areas and buffer zones are clearly described in the legend);
  - ii. Detailed information on tourism activities such as types and locations of major tour infrastructure, main attractions, impacts from tour activities and proposed measures;
  - iii. Detailed information and evidence on how and when local people were informed about and involved in the biosphere reserve nomination process (not the process of developing the management plan of the SNNP); and
  - iv. Updated and detailed information on items of the nomination form regarding the development function, logistical support function and governance (15, 16, 17).



56. **Markakol Biosphere Reserve (Kazakhstan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination from Kazakhstan. The proposed Markakol Biosphere Reserve belongs to the Kurchum District of the East Kazakhstan Region, located in the southern Altai near the national border between Kazakhstan and China. The site covers the least anthropogenically disturbed natural complexes and ecosystems of the southern part of the Western Altai. These encompass unique and characteristic mid-mountain taiga and high-mountain alpine landscapes of the temperate steppe zone of Eurasia. There are five high-altitude vegetation zones: meadow-steppe, mountain taiga, subalpine, alpine and nival.
57. The proposed site was elaborated based on the zonation and management system of the Markakol State Nature Reserve (SNR), which aims to protect Lake Markakol and its basin landscapes. Lake Markakol is the largest water body in Altai, fed by small rivers and streams, with a coastline characterized by gulfs. The altitude of the proposed site ranges from 1,449 m to 3,304 m above sea level.
58. About 2,000 people live permanently in the transition areas. Less than 800 tourists visited annually (2015–2020) and the number is declining. The main economic activities are animal husbandry (sheep, goats and horse breeding) and tourism. A sharp increase in the livestock numbers has reduced crop production and led to the expansion of hayfield and pasture areas. The absence of large livestock farms contributes to plant diversity in the Markakol Basin.
59. The boundary of the proposed biosphere reserve corresponds to that of the Markakol SNR and the zonation systems are almost identical except for Lake Markakol. Under the SNR system, Lake Markakol is a strictly protected zone (equivalent to the core area of the biosphere reserve); in the proposed biosphere reserve zonation it functions as the buffer zone allowing amateur/sports fishing in specially designated areas according to the relevant regulations.
60. Under the proposed zonation, two transition areas would be established, but not on the prevailing sections of the north and south-eastern parts of the buffer zones. The nomination administration explained that the proposed site is located in a high elevated mountain area of the South Altai Mountain System and the local population there is not large in comparison with that inhabiting the plain areas to the south of the proposed site. The other sections are elevated mountain areas with taiga forest, subalpine shrubs, rocks, snow and glaciers.
61. The Management Plan for the Markakol SNR (2019-2023) has been elaborated and relates to the management of all three functional zones of the proposed biosphere reserve. As the present plan ends in 2023, a new one for 2024-2028 will be developed and authorized at the end of that year. The Advisory Committee recommended that the new management plan for 2024–2028 reflect the particular role and activities of a biosphere reserve and the associated terminology.
62. The proposed biosphere reserve is managed through the Coordination Council of the Markakol Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the relevant legislation.
63. The proposed biosphere reserve has carried out ecological monitoring and research and implemented conservation measures according to the SNR management plan. However, very little information and data are available regarding the transition areas and development function.

64. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed site be **approved pending** submission of the following information by 31 May 2022 as per the details below:
  - i. Supplemental data on the economy with comprehensive information about the potential for enhancing the sustainable development function of the proposed area;
  - ii. Revision of contradictory or inaccurate information and data found in the nomination document;
  - iii. Detailed information and evidence on how and when local people were informed about and involved in the biosphere reserve nomination process (not the process of developing the management plan of the SNR); and
  - iv. Updated and detailed information on items of the nomination form regarding the development function, logistical support function and governance (15, 16, 17).
65. **Khuvsgul Lake (Mongolia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal from Mongolia.
66. The site of the proposed Khuvsgul Lake Biosphere Reserve is situated between the Sayan Mountains in the north, the Khangai Mountain ranges in the south, the Tuva Mountains in the west and the Baikal Mountain Range in the east. The area encompasses Lake Khuvsgul and its basin, the headwaters of the Eg and Uur rivers, and the eastern Sayan watershed. The site also forms part of Khuvsgul Province, one of the largest regions in Mongolia. The main ecosystems are high mountains, forest-steppe, mountain taiga, mountain steppe and floodplain meadow, and the main types of land use are tourism and pasture use.
67. The biodiversity surrounding Lake Khuvsgul differs in unique ways from other parts of Mongolia, with similarities to the west and east Siberia. Natural formations include steep mountains, rocky cliffs, and deep, dense taiga with abundant rivers and swamps. These vast areas are untouched and uninhabited by humans, which enables the growth of rich, fragrant and brightly coloured wild plants, although their life span is short due to the natural conditions of the habitat. The vicinity of the Khuvsgul Lake consists of various distinctive natural zones such as tundra, sub-tundra, taiga forest, forest-steppe and mountain-steppe that are home to a variety of unique species including some that are rare and endangered such as snow leopards, ibex, Siberian musk deer, moose, reindeer, red deer and brown bears. Of these mammals, 9.5 per cent are classified as extremely rare by the Mongolian Law on Fauna, and 7.9 per cent are classified as rare under a government decree.
68. As of 2020, there are 7,016 locals residing in this region with 119,776 livestock. Animal husbandry, tourism and the use of natural resources serve as the main sources of income for the people of this region. Local inhabitants and people from neighbouring 'soums' harvest nuts and fruits during the autumn season when natural produce ripens. Although no mineral resources have been discovered in the region, private entities that abuse land licenses obtained for tourism purposes impose a significant negative impact on the environment.
69. The Advisory Committee noted that the Lake Khuvsgul area has been used for tourism purposes since 1996, with both tourists and locals utilizing the land for winter and spring settlements. There is no mining or agriculture in the area. Instead, local people are reliant on livestock and fishery and harvest hay according to their livestock needs. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals and businesses engaged in tourism activities in the region, both foreign and domestic, with a concomitant rise in the number of people providing services such as horse-riding and boat rides even

from other neighbouring 'soums'. The number of tourist camps is also increasing from year to year.

70. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to continue their efforts to increase existing tourism activities in line with sustainable development needs.
71. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that a Management Plan has been developed and implemented to protect the ecosystem of the Khuvs gul Lake National Park. The latest plan covered the period 2015–2019, and its successor is under development and due to be finalized in 2022. Local development plans, transition area management plans, tourism plans and waste management plans will also be elaborated in line with the Management Plan. Development of the Khuvs gul Lake National Park Management Plan involved the participation of representatives of local government officials, herders, tourism organizations, non-governmental organizations, self-employed workers, as well as scientists, researchers, heads of conservation administrations, experts and rangers who provide professional advice and consultation. The approved management plans are implemented by the Administration Office of Khuvs gul Lake National Park. The surface area of the proposed site is large enough to meet the long-term conservation objectives of the core areas, buffer zone and transition area.
72. The Advisory Committee noted that a zonation map had not been submitted in a satisfactory format to enable clear identification of all three zones and protection of the core areas.
73. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommended that the site be **approved pending** the submission of a revised zonation map that clearly determinates all three zones and provides detailed information on measures to ensure the protection of the two core areas located in the western and eastern parts of the proposed site by 31 May 2022.
74. **Kafue Flats (Zambia)** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this well-organized nomination dossier from the national authorities and commended them on their efforts to implement the biosphere reserve concept through the nomination covering diverse ecosystems.
75. The proposed biosphere reserve has an area of 2,609,400.6 ha comprising a core area of 36,806.6 ha including part of the Lochinvar and Blue Lagoon National Parks, a buffer zone of 470,904 ha including the Kafue Flats Game Management Area and the remaining section of the Lochinvar National Park, and a transition area of 2,101,690 cutting across various districts with archaeological and historic sites. The proposed site is also designated a Ramsar Site and an Important Bird Area hosting over 400 species of birds and several mammal species including zebra, buffalo, hippo, sitatunga and the endemic Kafue lechwe.
76. The proposed site supports human development through activities such as artisanal fishing, cattle ranching, controlled hunting and hydropower generation with huge potential for the development of solar and geothermal power.
77. The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities on the international monitoring and research activities undertaken in the proposed site in collaboration with Birdwatch Zambia and Earthwatch, an environmental education programme involving 82 schools, and the consultative process used to demarcate the transition area which involved Indigenous groups and traditional authorities.

78. The Advisory Committee appreciated the submission of various management plans for the zones and the financial commitment towards the development of an integrated management plan for the area.
79. The Advisory Committee noted, with concern, the presence of a geological mine site in the southern section of the Lochinvar National Park, which is included as a transition area and demarcated with a buffer zone. Its activities are not compatible with the objectives of category II by IUCN protected area categories system and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. The Advisory Committee observed that this could affect the integrity of the proposed biosphere reserve as a site of excellence for modelling sustainable development approaches. The Advisory Committee also noted that data on the human population of the area and the applicable indicators in Appendix II of the nomination form were not provided.
80. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed zonation be revised and information from the last national population census be used to fill in the population table of the nomination form.
81. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommended that the proposed site be **approved pending** the conclusion of the planned mission by UNESCO to the proposed site and consultations with local stakeholders, which are expected to inform the final decision of the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to submit the updated zonation map, population data and a plan for participatory management of the proposed site.
82. **Chimanimani (Zimbabwe)** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this well-prepared nomination dossier for the second biosphere reserve in the country. The area includes the Chimanimani National Park and comprises a complex of a mountain, forests, grasslands and shrubs, and freshwater ecosystems. The landscape extends into Mozambique, forming part of a proposed transboundary biosphere reserve as well as into the East African montane ecosystem, which is a global biodiversity hotspot.
83. With a total area of 345,014 ha, the proposed biosphere reserve has a core area of 27,030 ha including the Eland Sanctuary and Haroni and Rusitu Botanical Reserves which contribute to tourism; a buffer zone of 52,032 ha, which includes several forest plantations of pine, eucalyptus and wattle; and a transition area of 273,406 ha, which supports smallholder agriculture and forestry.
84. The area is inhabited by about 154,000 people mainly from the Ndau culture, most of whom speak Ndau, an endangered language which is also spoken on the other side of the protected area extending into Mozambique. There are six key biodiversity areas rich in endemic plants and 88 archaeological sites. The local population benefits from natural resources through tourism and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as honey and livestock production.
85. The Advisory Committee congratulated the national authorities on the participatory process used for the nomination which involved 50 stakeholders and a strong civil society presence in the management of the area. The Advisory Committee commended the outlined governance structure for the proposed management plan, the regular stakeholder engagement mechanism to be used for the development of the proposed biosphere reserve, and the proposed engagement with the University of Zimbabwe and other universities as key partners to enhance research, education and monitoring activities.

86. The Advisory Committee noted that the legal documents cited in the dossier and the shape files for the maps were not submitted as required. The Advisory Committee further observed that the indicator section in the appendix was not completed.
87. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommended that the site be **approved pending** the submission of the following information by 31 May 2022:
  - i. Shape files of all the maps in the nomination dossier;
  - ii. Copies of legal instruments/laws and policies governing the management of the entire area, including all zones;
  - iii. A completed Appendix 2 with applicable indicators on the checklist; and
  - iv. The management plan for the area.
88. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Management Plan take into consideration approaches to prevent previous challenges encountered with illegal artisanal gold mining in the core areas and buffer zones. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the national authorities to collaborate with the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Programme of UNESCO for research and other activities geared towards the preservation of the Ndau language.

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

89. **El Hierro Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal submitted by the Spanish authorities for the extension and rezoning of the existing El Hierro Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2000.
90. Located on the island of El Hierro in the archipelago of the Canary Islands, the biosphere reserve has presented a proposal for an extension of its marine area and the creation of a new marine core area, which would increase the total surface area to 58,598.60 ha. The population living within the biosphere reserve's boundaries remains the same and is estimated at 10,968 inhabitants settled mainly in the transition area.
91. The extension proposal was prepared by a member of the scientific council of the Spanish MAB Committee. The process was carried out virtually and consisted of an initial workshop, surveys and a final workshop.
92. The management of El Hierro Biosphere Reserve is led by the Island Council and includes Governing, Advisory, Scientific and Participation Councils. The biosphere reserve is managed under the 2030 Action Plan (PAO2030), which is structured around five objectives and aligned with the MAB Strategy. This extension proposal was approved by the biosphere reserve's Governing Council in May 2020.
93. The Advisory Committee praised the efforts undertaken in preparing this extension and the creation of a new core area and recommended that the extension proposal be **approved**.
94. The Advisory Committee recommended the creation of a marine transition area within the extension of the biosphere reserve, which would complete the protection of the marine buffer zone, including Puerto La Estaca. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the terrestrial buffer zones be redefined to facilitate the operation of the ecological corridor.

95. The Advisory Committee, therefore, requested the national authorities to:
  - i. Present the participatory process carried out for the biosphere reserve extension;
  - ii. Present the methodology to justify the new zonation;
  - iii. Report on the activities of the governance bodies; and
  - iv. Present a strategic management plan for the extended biosphere reserve, including the extended marine area.
96. **Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for the extension of the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 2005. The proposal increases the size of the transition area by 2.5 per cent (from 7,625.7 ha to 8,480.8 ha) and includes the entire municipal area of Madarcos, which is historically and ecologically related to the five municipalities that currently make up the biosphere reserve. The total area of the biosphere reserve would increase from 15,230.8 ha to 16,091.7 ha as a result of the proposed extension.
97. The inclusion of the municipality of Medarcos would enhance the protection of the area's rich biodiversity, especially its ornithological richness, and the associated cultural heritage. The extension would also reinforce the socio-economic development initiatives of the region, especially in the field of sustainable tourism.
98. The biosphere reserve harbours a variety of species of flora and fauna associated with the region's history of farming and husbandry. The singularity of the biosphere reserve arises from the landscape mosaic formed by 'Dehesas' – rocky areas, scrubland, rural units and reforested woodlands, all of which are organized around four depressions of varying size, namely the Montejo depression and the valleys of Horcajuelo, la Hiruela and la Puebla, which together form the Pradena.
99. The Pradena is surrounded by mountainous belts, namely the southern foothills of the Cebollera massif, and the Peña de la Cabra and la Hiruela sierras. The Dehesas, clearly delineated by their fences, are located across the lower slopes and valley thalwegs. They alternate with fenced-in fields and rural units. The reforested woodlands are located on the higher slopes together with rocky outcrops and scrubland, with grasslands developing in the highlands.
100. The small population of the extended biosphere reserve would amount to just over 700 inhabitants concentrated entirely in the transition area. Despite the proximity to the metropolitan area of Madrid on which the entire biosphere reserve depends, both economically and socially, the resident population maintains its own characteristic usage of the territory. Economic activity is concentrated mainly in services, construction, small-scale agriculture and forestry activities. The new settlers who have moved their economic activities to the region are responsible for a significant proportion of the most innovative activities and represent a large section of the younger population.
101. The Advisory Committee:
  - i. Recommended that the biosphere reserve work together with the other sites located in the Cantabrian Mountain range due to their proximity and similarities; and
  - ii. Requested the national authorities to present a map showing the biosphere reserves located near the Sierra del Rincón Biosphere Reserve.
102. The Advisory Committee recommended that the requested extension of the biosphere reserve be **approved**.