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

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris (France)**

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<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/about-mab/icc/icc/24th-session-of-the-mab-council/>

**FINAL REPORT**

**I. Introduction and Opening by the outgoing Chair of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council**

1. The twenty-fourth session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held at UNESCO, Headquarters, from 9 to 13 July 2012.

2. Participants included representatives of the following Members of the ICC as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> sessions: Arab Republic of Egypt, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Benin, Chile, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, , Estonia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, and Vietnam.

3. In addition, Observers from the following Member States were present: Argentina, Brazil, Cameroun, Canada, China, Congo, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Equador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Oman, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, United Arab Emirates and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

4. The following international/multilateral organizations and Institutes were present: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), European Union, Institut d'Orient, Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment (SCOPE).

5. The full list of participants is presented as Annex 1 to this report.

6. Prof. Chung-Il Choi, Adjunct Professor of Earth & Marine Sciences at Hanyang University (Republic of Korea), officially opened the meeting as outgoing Chair of the MAB Council. He welcomed all members of the MAB Council and Observer delegations from UNESCO's Member States as well as representatives of international organizations.

**II. Opening remarks**

7. Ms Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, as the representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, warmly welcomed the MAB ICC delegates. She recalled the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the MAB ICC and its important outcomes, especially the Dresden Declaration.

8. Ms Kalonji stressed that the 24<sup>th</sup> session of MAB-ICC comes at an important moment in the global sustainable development agenda – two weeks after the *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)* and agreement on its Outcome Document. She said that Rio+20 showed that the international community needs innovative and inclusive programmes more than ever before – to better understand our environment, our economic and social concerns, and to incentivise decision-makers to push global sustainability forward. In this regard, she affirmed that MAB programme is as essential today as when it was launched in the early 1970s, in continuing to enhance knowledge of sustainable development issues and contribute to new ways of thinking and acting for development through its scientific programmes and the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

9. Ms Kalonji acknowledged that Rio+20 has been criticised from many sides, but it was successful in raising the profile of sciences for sustainability. She informed the MAB-ICC that on 21 June, at the side event in Rio on the Report of the UN Secretary General's *High-level Panel on Global Sustainability*, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called upon UNESCO to take a lead role in the implementation of the science recommendations of the Global Sustainability Panel Report – in particular, by leading a Scientific Advisory Board which is expected to provide the UN Secretary General and UN agencies with comprehensive advice on all dimensions of science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, while promoting cooperation among various UN agencies and with the international scientific community. Ms Kalonji stressed that there is a great opportunity for the MAB programme to contribute to the Scientific Advisory Board. This may take the form of knowledge production, as well as information and experience sharing.

10. Ms Kalonji also informed the Council on the launch of the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Panama. UNESCO has a joint candidacy with UNEP, UNDP and FAO to provide the secretariat. She added that the MAB programme should take advantage of this opportunity to link BRs with the work of IPBES.

11. Focusing on some items of the agenda, Ms Kalonji recalled that the evaluation of the *Madrid Action Plan* will be the first comprehensive evaluation of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves against agreed targets. She stressed the importance of this task that will require the full participation of the MAB community. Scheduled for late 2013 / early 2014, this evaluation will be critical for shaping a future road map for the MAB operational framework, in line also with the next Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021. Regarding the proposal for the creation of a new category of sites linked to the MAB programme – Support/Study sites, Ms Kalonji underlined that if adopted, this new category of sites will open a new era for the MAB programme and its World Network, and they will change the way MAB operates.

12. UNESCO currently faces a difficult financial situation. As throughout the Organisation, the impact of the lack of resources on the MAB Programme has been substantial. However, Ms Kalonji underlined that thanks to the generous support of Member States, donors and various partners, the MAB programme has been able to implement important activities – especially those related to MAB regional and ecosystems networks. She especially thanked the Austria MAB National Committee for granting two additional MAB Young Scientist Awards in 2012. On behalf of the Director-General, Ms Kalonji assured the MAB-ICC that in line with the Member States' recommendations at the 36<sup>th</sup> General Conference, UNESCO will do its utmost to support the MAB Programme in promoting sustainability and international cooperation.

13. Ms Kalonji thanked the outgoing Bureau for their excellent work and contribution.

14. Ms Kalonji informed the MAB-ICC that this session will be the last attended by Mr. Ishwaran Natarajan in his capacity as Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Secretary of the MAB programme. Ms Kalonji paid tribute to his work and thanked him for his tremendous contribution in moving forward the MAB programme and its

World Network as key platforms for sustainable development.

15. Ms Kalonji ended her opening remark by wishing the participants very productive discussions.

### **III. Report by the outgoing Chair of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council**

16. Prof. Chung-II CHOI recalled the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MAB Programme which had culminated in the international scientific conference “For Life, for the Future: climate change and biosphere reserves” held in conjunction with the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB Council in Dresden (Germany). He also informed of other MAB anniversary related events that had taken place in 2011, such as the highly successful “MAB Special Day” observed on 3 November 2011 on the occasion of the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris (France) which delighted guests with culinary products from biosphere reserves around the world, as well as the special event organized by the MAB National Committee of Burkina Faso in December 2011 on the occasion of the 9<sup>th</sup> International Workshop of the UNESCO-MAB Project on “Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD)” in Bobo Dioulasso. The latter event had been attended by the Minister for Secondary and Higher Education of Burkina Faso, the Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the mayor of Bobo Dioulasso, in addition to scientists from Belgium, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Jordan, Pakistan, Tunisia, UNCCD, UNESCO and UNU-INWEH who participate in the SUMAMAD Project.

17. Prof. Choi further informed that the UNESCO General Conference at its 36<sup>th</sup> session had also taken note of the “Dresden Declaration on Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change” which had been adopted by acclamation at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB Council in Germany last year, thus informing the world community about the outstanding role of biosphere reserves. Moreover, the UNESCO Executive Board at its 187<sup>th</sup> session held at UNESCO Headquarters in September 2011 had approved the revised Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, while the UNESCO General Conference, at its 36<sup>th</sup> session had endorsed the updated Statutes of the MAB International Coordinating Council. The updated Statutes as well as the Dresden Declaration are available on the UNESCO-MAB website.

18. In his function as Chair of the MAB Council, Prof. Choi had the honour to deliver on 1 November 2011 to the UNESCO General Conference the “Joint Statement” on behalf of the Chairpersons of the six UNESCO science programmes: the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP), the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), the Programme on the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) and the MAB Programme. This statement had been developed through close consultation among the programme chairpersons. It highlighted the important contributions that the UNESCO scientific programmes have made over the years of their existence, and the strong social, environmental and economic components which have contributed towards achieving global sustainable development goals. The statement recalled that Science is crucial for improving human well-being and for combating poverty, environmental degradation, water scarcity, natural disasters and developing new and alternative energy solutions for the future. The statement also advocated obtaining the necessary financial and political support from the Director-General and Member States to enhance UNESCO’s role in the development of global collaboration in the sciences.

19. As a MAB Council representative of his own country, the Republic of Korea, Prof. Choi also informed of several contributions that his country had made to the MAB Programme. The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea has supported the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN) since 1994. With this support, various EABRN activities such as training workshops, a Biosphere Reserves Atlas, and network meetings of EABRN have been

implemented. The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of EABRN was held in September 2011 in Shinan Dadohae Biosphere Reserve of the Republic of Korea with a special focus on coastal and island biosphere reserves. At this meeting, the MAB National Committee of Kazakhstan had become an additional member of EABRN. Prof. Choi was pleased to announce that EABRN begins as from this year a joint research project on comparative studies of biodiversity of mountain biosphere reserves in East Asia including the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, and the Russian Federation, which will contribute to seeking solutions to climate change adaptation.

20. Jeju Biosphere Reserve of the Republic of Korea also contributes to work on Climate Change and Sustainable Development through the creation and operation of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves together with Menorca Biosphere Reserve of Spain. The first meeting of the network had been organized in Menorca Biosphere Reserve in February 2012, and the next meeting of the network will be held in Jeju Biosphere Reserve in September during the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

21. In closing his report, Prof. Choi announced that the Republic of Korea was preparing - together with the UNESCO-MAB Secretariat – a new ODA project entitled “Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves” to be funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). This project aims to reduce poverty and to contribute to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa through biodiversity business development in biosphere reserves for the benefit of African countries.

#### **IV. Election of the Chair, Vice – Chairs and rapporteur**

22. The Council elected its Bureau as follows:

Chair: Arab Republic of Egypt (Dr Boshra Salem)

Vice-Chairs:

- Austria will act for a year until the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICC in 2013, at which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will take over.
- Belarus
- Côte D'Ivoire
- Mexico (Mr Sergio Guevara Sada also acting as the Rapporteur)
- Islamic Republic of Iran

#### **V. Adoption of the agenda and timetable**

23. The Council adopted its agenda and time table as proposed by the Secretariat (see agenda appended as Annex 2 to this report).

#### **VI. Report by the Secretary of the MAB Programme**

24. The Secretary of the MAB Programme introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/4 (see Annex 3 of this report) on activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the conclusion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC on 1 July 2011.

25. He highlighted the important achievements of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative activities in 2011 for the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). The Dresden Declaration, the principal outcome of the International Conference, “For life, For the Future: biosphere reserves and climate change” (27-28 June 2011; Dresden, Germany) was adopted by the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC (28 June – 1 July 2011; Dresden, Germany) and then later by the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference (October-November 2011; UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France). The Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO at their sessions in autumn of 2011 also approved statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) and the MAB/ICC, respectively.

26. The 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference also adopted the recommendations of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC on the mid-term evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) and called upon the Secretariat and Member States to start thinking about strategic and action futures of MAB and WNBR beyond the end of 2013. The General Conference requested that the Secretariat provide to its 37<sup>th</sup> session in late 2013 a draft document that will outline future directions of MAB and WNBR beyond 2013.

27. The Secretary outlined UNESCO contributions to the Rio+20 Summit (20-22 June 2012) as well as the opportunities for MAB and WNBR to contribute to the follow-up of the Summit. He emphasized that the combination of lessons learned from individual biosphere reserves as well as the range of expertise embedded in regional, sub-regional and thematic networks of MAB could make significant contributions towards articulating sustainable development goals (SDGs) and defining indicators, benchmarks and other related monitoring parameters. He said that the Rio+20 follow-up provides significant opportunities to realize the positioning of the MAB and WNBR as priority internationally designated places for sustainable development – a recommendation of the 35<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference (2009) reiterated by its 36<sup>th</sup> session (2011).

28. In broadly highlighting the importance of the work of regional, sub-regional, national and thematic networks of MAB and biosphere reserves, the Secretary highlighted the significance of the new interregional network on Coastal Zone and Island Biosphere Reserve and its potential for contributions towards several UNESCO and UN-wide themes such as climate change, Small Islands Developing States, and others. He invited the Council's advice to find ways and means to strengthen staff and financial resources for this global network in the current difficult financial situation within UNESCO. He described the re-activation of the work of the Urban Ecosystem Network under the Urban Futures initiative which has already generated a specific partnership with the CHIC Corporation of China worth US\$ 2 million and has attracted the interest of European Union's Covenant of Mayors and related initiatives. The Secretary noted that the combination of coastal, island and urban ecosystem networking initiatives also have importance for using biosphere reserves as places for promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy driven development alternatives. He noted that the Canary Islands Biosphere Reserves in Spain are promoting a “Biosphere Smart” initiative to share experience and lessons in using biosphere reserves in green economic development.

29. The Secretary also provided an update on the work of many regional and sub-regional networks as well as other ecosystem networks such as that concerned with mountains. He highlighted the emerging South-South Co-operation opportunities: amongst Member States sharing tropical forests of the Amazon, Congo and Southeast Asia; amongst India and African Countries such as Rwanda and Kenya for training women in order to expand the use of renewable energy resources for rural development. He lauded the important work ERAIFT (Ecole Régionale d'Aménagement Intégré des Forêts Tropicales) has been doing for capacity development in Africa; it has already trained nearly 150 Africans from 27 countries and will open to Anglophone Africa beginning from 2012-2013. The Secretary called upon UNESCO Member States, in partnership with the main donors such as European Commission and

Belgium to give serious consideration to ensuring financial and institutional stability to ERAIFT and to support its replication in other countries of the African region.

30. Most of the Delegates congratulated the Secretary for the good report and the work done by the Secretariat. Some delegates also welcomed the link between MAB and the Rio+20 outcomes. Regarding the MAB strategy the delegates welcomed the alignment of its timeframe with the UNESCO mid-term strategy. With respect to capacity building a delegate lauded the contribution of ERAIFT towards the management of tropical forest. He welcomed the prospective introduction of the Anglophone curricula which will strengthen cooperation at regional level.

31. Some Delegates also stressed the need for biosphere reserves to better demonstrate the importance of ecosystem services for conservation of biological diversity especially in the buffer and transition zones with regards to sustainable development issues; ecosystems services should be integrated into the criteria for zonation of BRs.

32. Delegates strongly supported the new Interegional Network of Coastal and Island Biosphere Reserves. This new network is very important for Climate Change issues with respect to monitoring and adaptation. Latin America and the Caribbean regional network stressed the importance of linking this thematic network with the Continental Biosphere Reserves. The delegates also encouraged the nomination of biosphere reserves that included modified ecosystems, in particular agricultural landscape.

33. Some Delegates also underlined the importance of partnerships especially with regards to fund-raising. They also encouraged exchange within the regions and between the various regional MAB networks as well as south-south and north-south cooperation. A Delegate stressed the importance of involving the local authorities to ensure the political commitments to the MAB programme and biosphere reserves. He added that a forum of biosphere reserve local authorities should be created in order to share their experience in best practices in the management of BRs.

34. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) representative stressed the importance of linking the MAB Programme with other international programmes and welcomed future collaboration with the MAB programme. The EU representative mentioned that they are interested in biosphere reserves because of its potential to demonstrate a bottom-up governance approach for territories making it best for mitigation of climate change. He said that the market rules have their own limits and that another approach should be adopted with a long term vision based on partnership with private sector and civil society.

35. In his reponse the Secretary of the MAB Programme thanked the Delegates for their words of appreciation and their valuable contributions. He acknowledged that regional cooperation is very important and if new communication technologies are more effectively used this will help in facilitating the exchange of best practices and other relevant information for the WNBR.

## **VII. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States, regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB**

### **A. National reports**

36. MAB ICC Council members reported on their progress in implementing the MAB Programme since the 23<sup>rd</sup> MAB ICC. Written reports submitted in advance have been published on the MABNet and all written reports submitted to the Secretariat at the time of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the ICC will be added to this webpage. In the order of presentations, oral reports were given by the UK, Egypt, Ghana, Israel, Turkey, Portugal, Cote d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Japan,

Iran, Haiti, Norway, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mexico, Tanzania. Moreover, Observers to the MAB ICC from France, Italy, Indonesia, Sweden, Russian Federation, Spain, and Canada also took the floor.

37. Many delegations referred to the success of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the MAB programme, amongst regional networks and at the biosphere reserve level. Several speakers stressed the potential of MAB and biosphere reserves playing a key role in the follow-up to Rio+20 as dedicated platforms for sustainable development learning and networking including in the context of climate change, ecosystem services and urbanization; the three key challenges recognized in the Madrid Action Plan.

38. Indeed, many countries gave strong emphasis on the effective implementation of the Madrid Action Plan especially upgrading pre-Seville sites through improved zonation schemes and public participation within existing biosphere reserves. A few Member States also mentioned the delisting of sites that no longer meet, or hold potential to meet the Seville criteria all with a view to enhance the credibility and overall quality of the WNBR. Several Member States referred to ongoing processes to identify and develop new biosphere reserve proposals as well as relevant national legislation. Proposals for transboundary sites, international collaboration and networking through regional and thematic networks were frequently mentioned.

39. Several interventions acknowledged the support of the UNESCO MAB secretariat and UNESCO field offices to successfully complete activities in Member States. They especially acknowledged and thanked the MAB Secretary, Natarajan Ishwaran, for his excellent and visionary leadership, as this will be his last MAB Council before retirement.

#### **B. Reports on regional, sub-regional, MAB/biosphere reserve, ecosystem and other thematic networks**

40. Short overviews of the following networks were presented: IberoMAB, EuroMAB, SACAM, ArabMAB, Islands and Coastal Area, Mountains, SUMAMAD. Regional and thematic networks reported on the increasing need for integration of work on topics such as climate change, green economies, ecosystem adaptation, and environmental management in specific ecosystems including coastal, drylands and mountains.

### **VIII. Regional and thematic MAB and biosphere reserve networks in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and the future of the MAB Programme**

41. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/12 on Regional and Thematic Biosphere Reserve Networks in the Implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and the MAB Programme. The Secretariat mentioned that this document has been prepared upon the suggestion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ICC in order to give special attention to how these networks contribute to the implementation of the MAB Programme in general and the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) in particular. The Secretary of the MAB Programme also raised the questions as to whether the Networks support the implementation of the outcome of Rio+20 and whether there should be a new Action Plan for the period 2014-2021. Many countries reacted to the presentation of this document and a very lively debate took place. Summarizing, countries strongly supported the functioning of regional and thematic networks, as they reflect better regional priorities and respond better to the needs of particular ecosystems. One country stated that more focus should be given to landscapes rather than to ecosystems in the work of biosphere reserves.

42. Very strong support was expressed for the Interregional Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves and to strengthening this network within the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences with human and financial resources. In this context, it is worthwhile to mention

that this network includes all island and coastal zone biosphere reserves world-wide and that it is not limited to any specific region.

43. Countries also gave special attention to the ongoing network activities in drylands. In this context, the excellent results of the SUMAMAD project were mentioned, including a request to expand the dryland work of SUMAMAD to more countries. Several countries showed great interest on sacred sites in biosphere reserves and recalled a very successful project, which had been implemented some years ago by the MAB Secretariat.

44. Some concern was expressed about the long-term functioning of these networks, and the importance of implementing projects in the shorter term was stressed, in addition to organization of meetings. Particularly, the sponsoring of some networks by Spain and the Republic of Korea and Japan has been lauded, but questions were raised about their future sponsorship. Both Spain and the Republic of Korea confirmed that they will continue financing activities. The Republic of Korea announced their sponsorship of the upcoming 2nd Meeting of the Interregional Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves in September 2012 in Jeju Island. Spain informed that in November 2012 it will host the next meeting on Rural Development of the Amazonian Biosphere Reserve Network in Leticia, Colombia. In March 2013 it will host the next IberoMAB meeting in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in May 2013 and the next REDBIOS meeting in Principe Island. Spain will also continue to sponsor the Biosphere School Initiative, which has already been established in schools in El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Peru, Mauritania and Guinea Bissau. Spain also presented the Biosphere SMART proposal, which is a global mapping of biosphere reserves linked to an interactive database on all related biosphere reserve information including green economies and sustainable energy with a special view on drylands and islands (for more information, see the web link <http://biospheresmart.org>)

45. Some countries emphasized the need to increase focus and establishment of transboundary biosphere reserves; the arid lands ecosystem network of MAB could focus on net zero degradation of land as suggested by the outcome document of Rio +20, 'The future we want'.

46. A Delegate stressed the need to hold workshops on environmental monitoring in biosphere reserves for Arab countries. The involvement of BRs in water, liquid and solid waste management was also emphasized.

47. In conclusion, the Chair stated that the networks should focus on synergies between them, including transboundary sites and to take an example from the results of the SUMAMAD project and on the Interregional Network of Islands and Coastal Biosphere Reserves. The Chair and the Secretary of the MAB Programme underlined as well the ideas of zero degraded lands concepts for arid land ecosystems and the use of similar concepts for other ecosystems as a way to link the work of ecosystems and BR networks. Moreover, the Secretary stressed the need of the MAB Programme and its networks to be a substantial tool for the implementation of the Rio+20 follow up and for this purpose on the need for the improvement of the communication by using tools like Biosphere SMART on green economies and by using biosphere reserves as study sites for all UNESCO Programmes.

#### **IX. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) – Improving data gathering, monitoring and systematic assessment**

48. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/5 reiterating the decision of the MAB Council taken at its 23<sup>rd</sup> session (Dresden, Germany, 2011) that an external evaluation on the accomplishments of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) be carried out towards the end of 2013/beginning of 2014, so that the results of the MAP can be submitted for the consideration of the MAB ICC at its session in 2014. Since early 2012, the MAB Secretariat has



worked closely with UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) so as to elaborate a methodology for the final evaluation of the MAP. Ms Elena Shishkova (IOS) gave a power point presentation proposing ways to effect the final evaluation. In essence, IOS noted that a total of 159 actions need to be tracked, of which 67 actions figure in the MAP and 92 recommendations emanate from the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves. Moreover, over 700 actors are involved, including 580 biosphere reserves, over 100 MAB National Committees, 15 regional networks, the WNBR itself and the MAB Secretariat. Regarding "monitoring", IOS was of the opinion that data collection on 159 actions from over 700 actors would not be cost-effective; therefore, a smaller set of key measurable indicators from the MAP should be monitored over time, ideally through the creation of a web-based relational database (e.g. using MS Access, and online questionnaires e.g. Survey Monkey). Data aggregation should be effected at national levels by MAB National Committees, and the reporting on implementation rates for actions and targets in the MAP could be carried out by region and country.

49. IOS proposed that the cut-off date for receiving responses on the implementation of the MAP be 31 December 2013, and that in early 2014 an external evaluation should be effected with the purpose of assessing results achieved, drawing lessons from the implementation of the MAP, and to shape the next Action Plan. Evaluation questions could focus on the following: (a) Has the MAP been successful as a tool for further implementing the Seville Strategy? (b) Were MAP targets helpful for achieving MAP objectives? (c) Did MAP help to promote functioning biosphere reserves and improve the overall WNBR? With regard to the methodology, IOS suggested interviews, a desk review, questionnaires, on-site visits and case studies selected through stratified sampling. IOS would help define the draft terms of references for the external evaluation in consultation with the international MAB Secretariat to be submitted to the MAB ICC for its consideration and approval at its 25th Session in 2013.

50. The MAB Secretariat added that the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves at its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting (UNESCO Headquarters, April 2012) had welcomed the proposals by IOS. Some members of the Advisory Committee had observed that not all biosphere reserves are connected to Internet and that direct consultations (e.g. via telephone) may need to be effected. Moreover, in some countries, MAB National Committees are not always directly involved with activities happening at the local levels of individual biosphere reserves. Advisory Committee members therefore suggested that the monitoring of biosphere reserves and evaluation of the MAP be effected both at the national level (involving MAB National Committees) and at the local level involving biosphere reserve managers directly and using information emanating from the periodic reviews of biosphere reserves. Some thought has also been given to using stratified sampling, e.g. focusing on biosphere reserves that have submitted periodic reviews. The MAB Council was also made aware of the high cost factor involved in carrying out the external evaluation of the MAP in 2014; in the interest of time and cost effectiveness, a stratified sampling would be the most feasible way of going about the final evaluation of MAP.

51. The MAB Council welcomed the proposals made by IOS and considered several bullet points that the MAB Secretariat had proposed for discussion in the above-mentioned document. Some delegates underlined the fact that the evaluation of the MAP is a process to help shape the future of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves beyond the termination of the MAP. Moreover, the evaluation should be considered as a strategic thinking tool to also evaluate the Seville Strategy and to place the World Network of Biosphere Reserves into the context of the follow up to Rio+20, green economy, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification and the challenges imposed by climate change. Specifically in the context of the MAB Programme, the evaluation of MAP should also be seen to strengthen regional collaboration, such as that already practiced through the IberoMAB Network and its 10 year workplan (2010-2012) related to the MAP.

52. Regarding the cost factor that an external evaluation will entail and the current difficult financial situation of UNESCO, the MAB Council recommended that an "internal", rather than

an “external” evaluation (as had been earlier decided at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB Council) should be implemented so as to keep costs as low as possible. A small working group (with a maximum of ten members) deriving from the MAB Community and with the involvement of the MAB Secretariat should be established to reflect on the key issues that the MAP evaluation should focus on, rather than covering all 67 actions of the MAP. These could be, for example, how biosphere reserves contribute to improving the living conditions of local communities and contribute to sustainable development. Moreover, the actions to be addressed should be primarily those targeting the role of MAB National Committees and individual biosphere reserves. This working group should report on its work to the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB Council.

53. The MAB Council decided that MAB National Committees (and where they don't exist, UNESCO National Commissions or other appropriate national bodies) should take the lead role with regard to soliciting inputs from individual biosphere reserves needed for the evaluation of the MAP, supplemented by the work of relevant regional and thematic MAB networks. The MAB Council also welcomed the offer of some Delegates and Observers to help translate into national languages questionnaires that will need to be worked out related to the MAP evaluation.

## **X. Support/Study sites for the MAB Programme**

54. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/8 recalling that the MAB Council, at its 23<sup>rd</sup> Session, had considered the recommendations of an Expert Meeting (consisting of members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves) which had been held at UNESCO Headquarters on 21 February 2011, regarding the proposed creation of a new category of Support/Study sites for the MAB Programme for those pre-Seville Biosphere Reserves which cannot meet the criteria of the Seville Strategy by 2013 but which demonstrate scientific and/or societal value for the MAB Programme and for which a Member State wishes to retain an international UNESCO designated status. These sites would not be part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The objectives of these sites could be, for example, to:

- provide scientific data/monitoring for biosphere reserves and for study themes of local, national and international interests;
- focus on a specific theme, such as climate change, through networking with other similar support/study sites and biosphere reserves, particularly those in developing countries;
- study sustainable development, and encourage cooperation with biosphere reserves.

55. The MAB Secretariat further recalled that the MAB Council, at its 23<sup>rd</sup> session, had reiterated that every attempt should be made so that all existing biosphere reserves meet the criteria of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework in line with Madrid Action Plan by the end of 2013. Only for those sites that cannot meet the criteria should further reflection be given whether they can be moved into a separate category (preferably within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves). With this in mind, members of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB Council had decided that the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves in collaboration with the MAB Secretariat give in-depth thought to this issue and prepare draft selection criteria at its next meeting in early 2012, and submit the draft selection criteria to the MAB Council for its consideration at its 24<sup>th</sup> session in 2012.

56. Consequently, the Advisory Committee had further reflected on the future designation of MAB Support/Study Sites at its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting (UNESCO Headquarters, April 2012), and considered draft selection criteria worked out by the MAB Secretariat, although several members questioned the desirability for the creation of a category of MAB Support/Study Sites. The Advisory Committee suggested that a clear definition be given to the MAB Support/Study Sites and to expand the section in the draft Nomination Form on how such sites would interact with the MAB Programme and existing biosphere reserves. Moreover, it proposed that the

section on “zonation” be reformulated to reflect the specific research functions of the core/buffer zones.

57. Several members of the Advisory Committee had considered the “pros” and “cons” for the creation of a new category of sites as follows:

Pros:

- a) For political and geopolitical reasons, some Member States would not be excluded from the MAB network;
- b) National MAB Committees would be encouraged to dismiss non-functional biosphere reserves;
- c) Information sources available in the MAB network could be retained and environmental monitoring sites in particular long-term monitoring data sets which would be in the interest of the MAB network would not be excluded.

Cons:

- a) The MAB Programme is also about promoting sustainable development and not only science;
- b) Decreasing visibility and understanding of the public and scientists on what a biosphere reserve is compared to other designations and sites;
- c) No accountability of these sites, as it is not clear who will manage and oversee them;
- d) Growing number of international networks of long-term monitoring worldwide;
- e) The category of MAB Study/Support Sites would be counterproductive to the biosphere reserve concept, as it gives a signal to countries and managers to not try to reach the Seville criteria;
- f) Reducing the UNESCO-MAB Secretariat human resources affected to the MAB Programme in charge of research, support and activities related to biosphere reserves;
- g) Loss of credibility of the MAB Programme at the local and national levels;
- h) The proposal of MAB Support/Study Sites stresses again the need to clarify what kind of research the MAB Programme wishes to promote. From our perspective, the focus of the research and the added value of the MAB Programme and its biosphere reserves is research done on the interaction and integration between Humans and the Biosphere.

58. The Advisory Committee had agreed to submit by e-mail concrete proposals for modifications of the draft Nomination Form for MAB Support/Study Sites by 23 April 2012 to the MAB Secretariat which in turn would prepare a new consolidated version for consideration by the MAB ICC at its 24<sup>th</sup> Session. In a lively e-mail discussion which went beyond 23 April 2012, several members of the Advisory Committee expressed their uneasiness about the creation of a new category of MAB Support/Study Sites or felt that more in-depth discussions were needed regarding selection criteria for such sites. One member of the Advisory Committee provided a modified draft Nomination Form (Option A); another member of the Advisory Committee provided a different version of the draft Nomination Form for First Generation Biosphere Reserves which goes more into the direction of re-nominating pre-Seville biosphere reserves (Option B). In sum, the Advisory Committee concluded that the MAB Council at its 24<sup>th</sup> Session will have to decide whether work on MAB Support/Study Sites be pursued or not, and if work thereon be continued, which direction it should take.

59. After considering the reflections of the International Advisory Committee, the MAB Council concluded that there were more “cons” than “pros” for the adoption of a new category of MAB Programme sites. The majority of the MAB Council concluded that biosphere reserves are already considered as sites of excellence which would be undervalued by the adoption of MAB Support/Study sites. Moreover, a new category of MAB sites would undermine the

working capacity and delivery of the MAB Secretariat. It was argued that a number of countries had already gone through the process of withdrawing biosphere reserves from the World Network which are not in a position to comply with the Seville Strategy criteria for biosphere reserves, while at the same time these countries had successfully managed to improve the functioning of existing biosphere reserves. With this in mind, the MAB Council decided, through a majority vote, not to continue work on the elaboration of a new category of MAB Support/Study sites.

60. In the context of the discussions on the proposed category of MAB Support/Study sites, several countries cautioned, however, that they needed more time to align their existing biosphere reserves to the criteria stipulated in the Seville Strategy, for example with regard to establishing a multiple zonation system. The MAB Secretary recalled that the MAB Council at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session in 2010 had decided that those countries concerned could officially inform the MAB Secretariat of the timeline needed to make their sites fully functioning biosphere reserves. Some delegates pointed out that countries would have had eighteen years to comply with the Seville Strategy by 2013, therefore no grace period should be given beyond 2013. However, after a lively debate, the MAB Council decided that the MAB Secretary sends a letter to all MAB National Committees (or to the UNESCO National Commissions in the case of the absence of a MAB National Committee) by which MAB member states are requested to inform on the process of upgrading existing biosphere reserves, and in particular “first generation” biosphere reserves, into biosphere reserves that meet the criteria of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves by the end of 2013. If member states cannot comply by the end of 2013 with the upgrading of their sites, they are requested to provide information on the precise timelines that they would require to do so.

#### **XI. MAB and WNBR – post Rio + 20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021**

61. The Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/11 and also recalled the presentation of the Secretary’s report (document SC-12/CONF.224/4) earlier during the session and discussions that followed particularly on potential for linking MAB and WNBR futures beyond the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013). The Secretariat emphasized the request of the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference for at least a draft strategy for MAB and WNBR beyond 2013 to be submitted to the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference in late 2013 even though results of the final evaluation of the MAP would not be completed until 2014. The Secretariat pointed out that the next cycle of planning for MAB and WNBR will be the same as the next UNESCO Medium-Term Strategic Plan (37 C/4 covering 2014-2021). Thus the Secretariat called upon the ICC Delegates to suggest ways and means for a process so that after submitting a draft strategy to the next session of the General Conference, in late 2013 we will be able to adapt to lessons and opportunities that may become available during 2014 through the final evaluation of MAP, and also other outcome of international processes related to the work of the MAB Programme. The Secretariat suggested 2014-2015 as a phase for finalizing the strategy and plan and the period during 2016-2021 as a phase for implementation.

62. Several Delegates expressed broad agreement with the suggestions made by the Secretariat. The process for the preparation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as called for by the Outcome Document of the Rio + 20 Summit was seen as an opportunity for the MAB Programme to contribute its knowledge, experience and lessons particularly via the role of UNESCO to advise the Secretary General of the United Nations in addressing the scientific dimensions of the Rio + 20 follow-up. Several Delegates supported the establishment of a small working group (it could be the same group as that which would be established for the evaluation of the MAP) that could on the basis of an in-depth study of the outcome document “The Future We Want” could propose how MAB and WNBR contributions could be channeled to strengthen the role of biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development both within UNESCO as well as within the broader UN system. Some Delegates called for a

more open-ended consultation process involving Member States and recommended that the work of the ISG (International Support Group) be continued to ensure such consultations among UNESCO Member Delegations.

63. Many members suggested various themes for the future focus of the MAB and WNBR strategic directions; examples include: transboundary co-operation; sustainability science; the importance of local governments and the need to harmonize local, national and global governance processes to demonstrate nested governance arrangements involving public and the private sector and the civil society critical for effective functioning of biosphere reserves; food security etc. Collaboration with other UNESCO Intergovernmental Science Programmes, UNITWIN, ASP Network and ESD was called for. The end-of-the Decade Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, to be hosted by Japan at the end of 2014 could be an important platform for articulating more clearly the vision for MAB and WNBR for sustainable development as recommended by both the 35<sup>th</sup> and the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference. Member States noted the opportunity for MAB and WNBR to be considered the principal UNESCO platforms for ESD follow-up activities for the period 2015-2021. However, some Delegates called upon UNESCO to review the current institutional structure for administering the MAB programme and its WNBR and make necessary adaptations to fully exploit the transdisciplinary and intersectoral contributions they could make towards sustainable development learning.

64. Many Delegates pointed out that while Rio+20 follow-up is critical, MAB must also strengthen its relations and co-operation with other Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD), international initiatives (UN Forest Forum) and events (World Parks Congress in 2014). Concepts such as green economy and sufficiency economy must be enhanced with appropriate relevance not only to growth but also introducing appropriate sustainable livelihoods and life styles based on moderate consumption and cultural patterns. While it is important to be part of as many partner international events special efforts must be made to research, document and transmit the experience and lessons from biosphere reserves for sustainable development and communicating such information to the widest possible audience. The future of MAB and WNBR claiming a clear and strong niche in the future of the sustainable development agenda would most critically depend upon the National MAB Committees, UNESCO National Commissions and biosphere reserve co-ordinators interacting with appropriate Government Ministries and Departments to make their experience and lessons widely known.

65. Based on a proposal by the Arab Republic of Egypt Delegation, the ICC requested the Secretariat to use both a small expert group (the Bureau members) as well as the open-ended consultations with Member States using the ISG Mechanism to prepare a draft strategy for MAB and WNBR futures for the period 2014-2021 for the consideration of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the ICC in 2013; this draft with necessary changes proposed would then be updated and submitted for the consideration of the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference later in 2013.

## **XII. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR**

### **A. Decisions concerning proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR**

66. Taking into account the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (2-4 April 2012) and the Bureau's further deliberations thereon on 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> July, the Council took the following decisions concerning approval and deferral of new proposals as well as approval of a selected number of extensions and name changes to biosphere reserves that are already part of the WNBR:



## **New nominations approved by the Council**

### **Salzburger Lungau & Kärntner Nockberge, Austria**

67. The Council welcomed this proposal. It consists of a representative example of inner-alpine landscapes with high mountains and deep valleys. It is a richly structured landscape with a wide range of altitude (600-3000 m above sea level) and encompasses typical ecosystems, including man-made, of the Central Alps such as mountain meadows, and mires (Ramsar and Natura 2000 sites) and has a high biodiversity. The proposed site covers an area spreading along two provinces, with separate nature conservation legislation. The Kärntner Nockberge part is a whole national park.

68. The proposed area is a total of 149 000 ha. Human history is characterized by migration. Apart from hunting and gathering, early farming techniques including meadows for fodder, trade and mining have been important ways for earning a living. The permanent population is 33 350 of which 21 000 live in small towns. More than 50% of the jobs are found in construction industry, public health sector and commercial goods industries (cosmetics, luxury food, wood, rubber, plastics). In the side valleys, service sector including tourism is the most important job provider.

69. The Council noted with satisfaction the clarification provided on the zonation especially as regards the core areas, the future benefits for the designation of the proposed area and the sustainable development vision as well as the clarification on the coordination authority for the management of the proposed site with involvement of local communities.

### **Jinggangshan, China**

70. The Council recognized that this proposed biosphere reserve has diverse landscapes of mountains, valleys, structural basins and karst with elevation varying from 381m to 1779m above sea level. Local residents live on agriculture and forest industries, such as rice, potato, vegetables, bamboo and tea-tree oil cultivation. Tourism industry has developed not only because of the marvelous landscapes and scenic spots but also the historical sites of China's revolution.

71. The Council noted with satisfaction that the authorities provided a clear zonation and land-use map, as well as clarification on the direct connection of the core area to the transition area. The authorities also provided a management plan for the entire proposed area and the evidence of an integrated coordinating body for the three zones. The Bureau finally acknowledged the corrected scientific names of plants and animals.

### **Niubeiliang, China**

72. The Council commended the Chinese Authorities for this well-prepared nomination. The site is located in the eastern segment of the Qinling Mountains, with a typical temperate broad-leaved mixed mountain forest system. The site exhibits high biodiversity with many endangered species including golden takin (*Budorcas taxicolor bedfordi*) and dwarf musk deer (*Moschus berezovskii*). Local residents in the transition area have developed rural tourism for increased income. Research, monitoring, and programs of public awareness and training have been carried out very actively in this site.

73. With regards to the zonation system of this site, the Bureau noted with satisfaction the provision of a clear zonation map as well as an outline of the management plan. The two transition areas are clearly delineated and evidence of an integrated coordinating body has been provided.

### **Mura Drava Danube, Croatia/Hungary**

74. The Council examined the submission of this proposal for a second time, which was deferred in 2010. The Council welcomed the joint submission from the two countries and the efforts made to provide the elements requested at the previous session, namely statements on transboundary cooperation and to describe the envisaged mechanisms for coordination of activities between the two countries.

75. The Council welcomed the additional information provided by both countries on the coordination structure between the two countries (coordination committee and the Croatian – Hungarian Nature conservation sub-committee) as well as the partnership with the upstream management bodies through the establishment of pentilateral coordination board. It also acknowledged the explanation provided on how the management plan of the whole area will address the water and sediment management issues. Finally it also acknowledged the role of the County Councils for involving local municipalities and local communities in both countries in the management of the proposed area.

### **Sheka, Ethiopia**

76. The Council welcomed this proposal which covers a total area of 238 750 ha and consists of a mixture of forests, bamboo thickets, wetlands, agriculture lands, rural settlements and towns. The Council commended the Ethiopian Authorities for a well-prepared nomination. The forest in Sheka which is also part of the Southwest Highlands Forests of Ethiopia is important for the conservation of the Afromontane forest vegetation types especially the Afromontane Rainforest and Alpine Bamboo thickets. The area is rich in plant and animal species with over 38 threatened species both flora and fauna on the IUCN list.

77. The Council acknowledged the cultural and spiritual significance of the proposed area to the people and their commitment to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem through the practice of ecologically sustainable agriculture.

78. The Council encouraged the authorities to develop the potential of the area for use as a demonstration site for environmental education and also to show the link between culture and biological diversity.

### **Bassin de la Dordogne, France**

79. The Council welcomed this very well-prepared and comprehensive proposal which consists of the whole Dordogne watershed, which is a hydro system of 24 000 km<sup>2</sup>. The Dordogne's catchment area shelters a great biodiversity (flora and fauna) and represents a diversity of landscapes from mountains to cliffs and contains one of the biggest estuaries. Human activities are mainly rural, with low population density and no large cities. Among main activities are tourism based on natural and cultural heritage and agriculture and forest exploitation. It is one of the three most hydroelectric power production places in France. The main objective of the proposed site is to reduce pressure on the water and aquatic ecosystems and to link water policies to the management of land and biodiversity. One million people live along the two biogeographic regions.

80. The Council commended the authorities for the intensive communication and coordination processes, with strong involvement of local communities and decision makers through *inter alia* public forums and considered that the proposal should be shared in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as a source of inspiration.



### **La Selle, Haiti**

81. The Council welcomed the first submission of a biosphere reserve in Haiti. The proposed area includes a large number of different ecosystems (mountain, plain, tropical dry forest and coastal ecosystem) and protected areas like La Visite or Forêt-des-pins (with the endemic species, *Pinus occidentalis*). The area is located in the ecological continuum of the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enrique Biosphere Reserve of the Dominican Republic and contributes to the Caribbean Biological Corridor as an example of collaboration among countries. Four percent of the Haitian population lives in the biosphere reserve and the main economic activities are agroforestry, fishery, tourism and handicraft industry.

82. The Council commended the national authorities for this new nomination and suggested that the national authorities consider this as an opportunity to develop a transboundary biosphere reserve with the Dominican Republic and to use this new nomination as an important place to test local community involvement and resource use in the context of sustainable development.

### **Achanakmar-Amarkantak, India**

83. The Council commended the Indian authorities for the well prepared nomination. It recognized that this site of 383,551ha is located at the tri-junction of hill ranges, with topography ranging from high mountains, shallow valleys to plains. The moist deciduous forests constitute 63.19% of the area. There is a rich biodiversity of great conservation value at this site. Different types and methods of forest management are practiced in this site. Twenty-seven tribal and non-tribal communities inhabit 418 villages living on agriculture (including production of medicinal plants) and non-timber products carried out in the proposed buffer and transition areas. The Council also noted that ecological studies are applied for the improved management of the proposed site.

84. The Council noted that the Indian authorities provided a clear map with the boundaries. The whole map shows neighbouring countries and their protected areas around the proposed site. The Council also acknowledged the country's clarification of activities and coordination mechanism in the areas surrounding the proposed core area as well as the information about the distribution of population in the core and buffer areas and the management plan in the transition area together with the related legal documents.

### **Wakatobi, Indonesia**

85. The Council commended the Indonesian authorities for a well-prepared nomination. It recognized that this site's nomination including detailed data of biodiversity was supported by various stakeholders. The site has diverse ecosystems with many marine and coastal species of seagrass, coral reefs, fish used both for consumption and for sale, sea birds, turtles, cetaceans, and mangroves.

86. The proposed core area of this site is of great value in the protection of marine ecosystems as the habitats of various important plant and animal species. It also noted that the proposed multi-stakeholder cooperation and coordination is the key driver in developing a management plan and many other concrete actions.

87. The Council asked the Indonesian authorities to provide the printed zonation map showing the whole transition area with a clear explanation of each zone/area. In addition a management scheme is needed to solve the conflict between conservation of biodiversity and traditional sustainable use of natural resources such as mangrove trees and sea turtles by indigenous people.

### **Aya, Japan**

88. The Council welcomed this submission from Japan, which was the country's first new proposal after more than 30 years since the four already existing Japanese biosphere reserves had been designated in 1980. Situated in the eastern part of Japan's southern Kyushu Island, the overall site is noted for harboring one of the country's largest remaining lucidophyllous forests on the border of warm-temperate evergreen and broad-leaved temperate deciduous forests. The proposed total area is 14 580 ha and includes Aya Town in the transition zone with a population of 7 283 (as of 2010).

89. The Council noted that the proposed core area is made up of the preserved district of Aya Forestry Ecosystem Protected Area, and is included in the Kyushu Central Mountains Quasi National Park. The area has never been used for human activities and is the object of scientific studies on the structure, functioning and dynamics of the lucidophyllous forest. The transition zone is mainly used for organic agriculture, and Aya Town has been the first community in the country to develop a traditional recycling-oriented agricultural system since 1988. Ecotourism, including "forest therapy" (for healing purposes) and forest environmental education, is currently actively developed and would benefit from the biosphere reserve designation. The Council recommended that additional core zones be considered for inclusion in a future expansion of the biosphere reserve over the next two years based on conservation needs and including also headwater sources for the downstream areas through a consultative process with neighboring municipalities.

### **Korgalzhyn, Kazakhstan**

90. The Council was glad to note that this site was Kazakhstan's first ever proposal for the designation of a biosphere reserve in the country. Situated in the northern/central part of Kazakhstan, the site is a complex of freshwater and saline lakes embedded in the dry steppe zone of Eurasia making it an important wetland site for migratory water birds (including globally threatened species, among them the extremely rare Siberian white crane, the Dalmatian pelican, Pallas's fish eagle) under the RAMSAR Convention; Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve is also one of the clusters of the UNESCO World Heritage site "Saryarka – Steppes and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan". The total proposed area covers 1 603 171 ha. About 500 people live in the buffer zone and around 12 000 in the transition area.

91. The territory is characterized by elevated plains, hills, lake depressions and marked by an extreme-continental climate (with absolute temperatures ranging from -45°C to +41.5°C). Findings through a GEF/UNDP Wetlands Conservation Project (2004-2011, which also provided the basis for the zonation of the proposed biosphere reserve) revealed human emigration caused by overall environmental degradation (unsustainable use of water and biological resources, unsustainable "wild" tourism) and which is now addressed through a variety of pilot projects such as to foster sustainable pasture management, ecotourism, the creation of fishing and hunting farms, and the demonstration of alternative power sources. Scientific studies focus on large-scale complex geobotanic, floristic and faunistic research, including the monitoring of species, and socio-economic studies including demography and migration, agriculture, industry, fishing and hunting industries. The Council encouraged the national authorities to expand in the future the currently proposed 2km wide buffer zone into the transition zone where appropriate.

### **Tehuacán-Cuicatlán, Mexico**

92. The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposal. It was submitted for the first time in 2011. This reserve is located on an arid mountain and high lands system and has one of the highest biodiversity as well as higher plant and animal endemism both of wild and domesticated species in Mexico. It is the most emblematic of the old landscapes of

Mesoamerica. It is a very relevant area because it includes the original domestication sites for maize, cucumber, avocado and beans. Currently it has important mesoamerican cultural values and eight different ethnic groups. The most relevant ecosystem is a densely wooded expanse of arborescent cactus species (bosque de cactáceas columnares) and the tropical dry forest (selva baja caducifolia) which includes several numbers of endemic species in Mexico.

93. The Council highlighted the mechanism developed for local participation involvement and appreciates their efforts to improve the dialogue between academic and local knowledge. The Council noted with satisfaction that the new proposal is showing a good zonation system.

### **Bashkirskiy Ural, Russian Federation**

94. The Council welcomed this proposal located in the western slopes on southern Ural, for a total surface area of 345 700 ha. The proposed site is of very rich diversity, with a high variety of landscapes from gorges of mountain rivers, mountains steppes, meadows, floodplains to reservoirs. There are more than 1650 plant species, of which 44 are endemic and a list of over 2000 animal species. The interpenetration of flora and fauna from Europe and Siberia make it uniquely rich. The proposed site contains five different protected areas, including national parks and forestry districts. There are unique archaeological sites linked to culture and history of the Bashkir people as well as the cult cave of “Shulgan Tash” preserved since the Stone age. The total population resident is 14 957 with main activities being forestry and small scale farming and traditional bee keeping with the tourism increasing in importance (180, 000 visitors from May to September).

95. The Council noted that the conservation objective was very well documented, with clear vision, resources and legal and institutional support. The research and logistic function was also very well documented with research facilities, research staff and research stations as well as cooperation with universities, dated back since 100 years, mainly focusing on nature conservation.

96. The Council welcomed with satisfaction the additional information provided on the sustainable development function as well as the management plan proposed and the management structure to involve local stakeholders and small settlements. It also welcomed the signature of a research agreement between the Institute of Social-Economic studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences with the proposed site as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

### **The Island of Príncipe, Sao Tome and Principe**

97. The Council welcomed the first submission of a biosphere reserve in Sao Tome and Principe. The island of Príncipe is one of the three existing oceanic volcanic islands of the Gulf of Guinea and is geologically the oldest of the group. The area includes the entire emerged area of the island of Príncipe, its islets and Tinhosas islands. It is home to great biodiversity in terrestrial as well as in marine ecosystems, considering this area as an important place for the reproduction of sea turtles, seabirds and cetaceans. The main economic activities are agriculture, fishing and tourism. The Council congratulated the national authorities for this new nomination and encouraged the national authorities to consider this opportunity as a model for promoting an integrated eco-tourism development in similar islands and suggested the future creation of a larger marine and terrestrial buffer zone.

### **Ferlo, Senegal**

98. The Council welcomed this well-prepared proposal. It noted the Sahelien climate to the North of the site and sudan-sahelien climate to the South. The proposed site occupies a total

area of 2 058 214 ha. The great variety of habitat and vegetation makes this location very rich in biodiversity. The region hosts a rich fauna including redneck ostrich, gazelles and oryx.

99. The Council noted that the site has a research station which accommodates national and international institutions. The Committee acknowledged with appreciation the existence of the chart of responsibilities and the multi-stakeholder management committee including government and community representatives.

100. The Council encouraged the national authorities to increase conservation activities; if possible through establishing a corridor between the core areas of the Reserve Forest of Ferlo.

### **La Gomera, Spain**

101. The Council welcomed this submission and congratulated the national authorities for the high quality of the proposal. The proposed area is part of the Canary archipelago, situated in a central location surrounded by the Tenerife, La Palma and El Hierro islands. In the central part of the island, called "meseta", is located the Garajonay National Park. This park is also nominated as an UNESCO World Heritage site and encompasses laurisilva rainforest ecosystem. The landscape is characterised by terraces due to the practice of terrace farming.. The people have strong cultural values.

### **Las Ubiñas-La Mesa, Spain**

102. The Council welcomed this submission. The new proposal is located in the central zone of the Cantabrian Range. It encompasses an old growth forest, which maintains very pristine conditions and a high biodiversity. The area also has protected species such as the Cantabrian brown bears, woodpeckers as well as unique domestic species. It has a rich cultural heritage. The area is surrounded by other biosphere reserves: Bibia, Los Valles de Omaña y Luna, Alto Bernesga and Somiedo. This new nomination will be part of the concept to create a unified biosphere reserve called Gran Reserva de la Biosfera Cantábrica.

### **East Vättern Scarp landscape, Sweden**

103. The Council welcomed this proposal, Sweden's second largest cold water lake, the fifth largest lake in Europe with a total surface of 105 520 ha. This history of the site is well documented. Almost 40,000 people live in the area. The majority of the proposed biosphere reserve is dominated by agriculture and forest lands, with villages and settlements consisting of small farms and individual homes. There are several large scale farms and manors, as well as three urban areas.

104. The core areas consist of existing nature reserves, Natura 2000 sites and forest habitat protected areas and shorelines protected areas. The three functions are very well described as well as the comprehensive and extensive consultation process. The development of new technology is linked to the conservation objective to enhance bio cultural heritage. Involvement of the private sector, support to social entrepreneurship for sustainable use of meadows, grasslands, energy through demonstration areas are well documented and are considered as a pilot model. Adaptation and mitigation to climate change is one key objective of this proposed biosphere reserve, with many research activities described. The coordination structure and engagement process of the different stakeholders and group were commended, including the Biosphere Centre.

105. The Council highly commended the Swedish authorities for the quality of the proposal and encouraged the national authorities to share it within the WNBR as a model and source of inspiration and to closely monitor the sustainable development activities.

### **Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, United Kingdom**

106. The Council welcomed this proposal, located south-west of Glasgow. The proposal includes two former biosphere reserves which were not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The proposed total area is of 520 000 ha, composed of open field landscapes, lochs, moorlands, arable lands, pastures and afforested areas.

107. The proposed site has a very low human density with less than 100 000 inhabitants, and has suffered from post-industrial crisis with the closing of mining and textile industries. There are few cities with no more than 10 000 inhabitants. The biodiversity is very high with important bird population such as grouse, golden eagle and mountains hares. The core area is composed of various protected areas under the management and ownership of the Scottish National Heritage. The tourism demand is growing, with more than 850 000 visitors per year.

108. The zonation is based on the river drainage systems and is very functional with strong local support and adequate funding is provided from European leader projects. The Council commended the engagement of the local communities in the process. The Council welcomed with satisfaction the additional elements of clarification received vis a vis the development of the wind mill situation, as well as the trade off with tourism development. It also recommended to improve the research function and to seek cooperation with the EuroMAB working group on charter development.

### **West Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, Belarus/Poland/Ukraine**

109. The approval of this transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) nomination had been deferred by the 2008 Bureau until submission of an official agreement between the governmental authorities at the ministerial level attesting the proper functioning of this TBR. The Bureau took note of the willingness of the three countries, including that of Poland which had submitted a letter dated 4 February 2008 (Réf: 43/2008) to the Secretariat expressing its readiness to sign such an agreement with Belarus and Ukraine, and decided to approve this TBR after the agreement signed by the three Member States is received by the Secretariat and the content of the agreement is approved by the Bureau.

110. The trilateral agreement for the establishment of the West Polesie transboundary biosphere reserve has been submitted to the MAB Secretariat and its content approved by the Bureau therefore the Council approved this nomination.

### **Nominations deferred by The Council**

#### **Samothraki, Greece**

111. The Council welcomed this proposal which comprises the entire island of Samothraki located in the Aegean archipelago. The proposed total surface is 22 853 ha, mainly composed of mountains rising up to 1611 m with high endemic biodiversity. The very early human presence on the island since the prehistoric times created cultural landscapes and there are two archaeological protected sites. There are about 2 700 inhabitants whose means of livelihood are mainly agriculture, livestock rearing, fisheries and tourism. Tourism activities in the area peak between July and August with more than 40 000 visitors. These activities impact both the marine and terrestrial ecosystem. The Council noted with appreciation the efforts put in the nomination file as well as the focus on the development of tourism but highlighted that the following aspects were weak:

- The conservation function was not satisfactory as the core area is only protected through Natura 2000 status; the impact of tourism was not well documented especially with regards to the planned development of mountainous tourism in the core area
- Lack of a detailed management plan and information on the land tenure system;
- The lack of a clear coordination structure for the management of the proposed biosphere reserve;
- The need for more information on the and coordination with World Heritage site located in the village of Chora;
- The weakness of the research and logistic function.

112. Therefore the Council encouraged the authorities to resubmit the proposal in accordance with Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

### **Khangchendzonga, India**

113. The Council commended the India authorities for this proposal. It recognized that this site represented a land area which contains trans-Himalayan biota in the eastern part of Hindukush-Himalaya. The proposed site comprises unique geomorphological features of high mountains and peaks, glaciers and lakes, ranging from 1,220 m to over 8,550 m above sea level, with various ecosystems from sub-tropical to arctic. The Council also noted that this site encompasses unique environmental and cultural characteristics. Agriculture and animal husbandry is the main occupation for the local communities in the transition area who belong to different ethnic groups (including Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepalese). The native communities have various eco-development programmes. Various research organizations and NGOs are also carrying out research projects related to the biodiversity assessment and the conservation of endangered and endemic species of flora, including medicinal wild plants such as *Aconitum ferox* and *Aconitum heterophyllum*.

114. The Council, however, encouraged the Indian authorities to provide more information about a highway which is crossing the core area and to provide legal documents on the status of the core zone. Moreover, the Council requested the Indian authorities to provide additional information about the resident populations in the core and buffer zones and a detailed management plan pertaining in particular to the core area.

### **Tang-Sayyad, Iran**

115. The Council commended the Iranian Authorities for the sustainability programmes planned in the proposed site although the nomination was incomplete. The Council encouraged the authorities to present a new nomination file which consolidates all the information contained in the different previous nomination files, including the official endorsements from all the stakeholders. The Council advised the authorities to get technical support from the UNESCO regional office and the MAB Secretariat with respect to the nomination process.

### **Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), Republic of Korea**

116. The Advisory Committee considered this interesting proposal which is situated on the northern border of the territory of the Republic of Korea, and which spans the country from East to West. The Advisory Committee noted that the entire Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is a military buffer zone formed as a result of the Armistice Agreement on 27 July 1953, which

ended the Korean War (1950-53). In accordance with the Agreement, the DMZ is defined as 4km wide, with the Military Demarcation Line running through the middle of the entire Korean DMZ. The core area of the proposed biosphere reserve covers the southern half of the Korean DMZ, which is a 2km wide area between the Military Demarcation Line (in the north) and the Southern Limit Line (in the south), an area which is under the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command. In addition, the proposed core areas also cover several conservation areas in Gangwon Province of the Republic of Korea. The buffer zone of the proposed biosphere reserve covers a substantial part of the area between the Southern Limit Line and the Civilian Control Line in the south. The proposed transition areas are located south of the Civilian Control Line in the Republic of Korea's Gyeonggi and Gangwon provinces and are subject to various land-uses (farmlands, forests, urban areas and protected nature areas). The total surface area of the proposed site covers 297 913ha. Over 2 200 people live in the buffer zone and over 244 000 in the transition areas.

117. The Advisory Committee noted that the areas located between the Military Demarcation Line and the southern Civilian Control Line (core and buffer zones) have been protected from direct human interventions and economic activities for some 60 years entailing a unique natural process that restored once completely ruined areas to rich habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, thus underlining the conservation value of the proposed site. With regard to the proposed core zone under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Command, the Advisory Committee was informed by letter of the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea to the Secretary of the MAB Programme, dated 28 February 2012, that the United Nations Command (UNC) has expressed its neutrality as regards the international community's recognition of the proposed biosphere reserve and that it is not in a position to endorse or oppose the proposal from the Republic of Korea. The letter also informed that the UNC will be aware if the proposed biosphere reserve is realized and that it will continue to manage this part of the DMZ in accordance with the Korean War Armistice Agreement of 1953.

118. The Advisory Committee underlined the extraordinary conservation value of the core and buffer zones, which had been a *de facto* "no go" area for the past 60 years. Many abandoned agricultural lands have turned into wetlands through a natural recovery process being now the habitat of a variety of endangered species. As a vestige of the Korean War, the DMZ is considered as a symbol of peace drawing increasing numbers of tourists, in particular for historical and cultural reasons which is planned to be complemented by eco-touristic offers. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Republic of Korea Authorities consider extending the buffer and transition zones to Cheorwon County in Gangwon Province through a consultative and awareness raising process with the local residents regarding the potential benefits of the biosphere reserve designation and encouraged the Government of the Republic of Korea to step up its compensation efforts to foster sustainable development in particular in Cheorwon County.

119. The Bureau considered the proposal and noted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The Bureau noted that additional information has been received regarding ongoing community consultations to delineate buffer and transition zones in Cheorwon County. The Bureau further recommended that more discussion is needed on this nomination during the Council session.

120. After a long debate, the MAB ICC reached the consensus that the proposal for establishing a biosphere reserve in the DMZ (Republic of Korea) is deferred on the ground that the proposed biosphere reserve does not have complete zonation in the Cheorwon County and therefore does not meet the criteria in Article 4 of the Statutory Framework.

### **Gouritz, South Africa**

121. The Council welcomed the submission of this proposal and recognized the importance of this site for the conservation of biological diversity as well as its potential for sustainable

economic development of the local communities through eco-tourism.

122. However, the Council noted lack of involvement of the local people in the nomination process as well as the management of the proposed biosphere reserve. Also it noted lack of information to ensure the performance of the logistic/education function of the proposed site.

123. The Council encouraged the South African Authorities to re-submit a new proposal in conformity with Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. The revised proposal should bear the original signatures of the relevant authorities and stakeholders and also include clear information on the following:

- the involvement of local communities in the nomination process and their participation in the management of the biosphere reserve if approved;
- maps showing clearly the extent of the core areas, buffer and transition zones and
- a clearly outlined education/logistic functions of the proposed biosphere reserve.

### **Real Sitio de San Ildefonso, Spain**

124. The Council welcomed this submission and congratulated the national authorities for the quality of the proposal. The area is located in the province of Segovia. The mountain of Valsain constitutes an important woodland area in the country, and is of incalculable ecological, economic, aesthetic and social value. The Council noted the unusual zonation system as a first step of a process to include all the Guadarrama Range zone. However, the Council would like to obtain a clarification about the satellite buffer zone that is disconnected from the main biosphere reserve and consider the need for it to be part of the general structure.

### **Terres de l'Ebre, Spain**

125. This proposal includes the delta and the watershed of the Ebro River. The Ebro River is the largest river in Spain in terms of volume. It has a large number of different ecosystems from inland to the coastal area. The main part of productive land is used for cattle system.

126. One nuclear power plant with two reactors is located in the proposed biosphere reserve.

127. The Council reconsidered the proposal in the light of information provided by the Secretariat following a visit of the representatives of the Regional Government to UNESCO on 5 July 2012. The Council deferred this proposal and invited the Member State to revise the nomination to exclude the nuclear reactors from the nominated area and also to revise the proposed zonation to conform to the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

### **Extensions, renaming or changes in the zonation of Biosphere reserves approved by the Council**

#### **Fray Jorge Biosphere Reserve, Chile, Extension**

128. The Council welcomed this submission of the existing biosphere reserve. This new extension incorporates the transition zone that was not included during the nomination in 1977 and enlarges the buffer zone thus the biosphere reserve has more than doubled in size. The Council noted the strong local participatory method and congratulated the national authorities on adjusting this post-Seville site to conform to the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework requirements.



### **Réserve de biosphère des Iles et de la Mer d'Iroise Extension and renaming (former Iroise), France**

129. The Council commended this well-prepared proposal for the extension of Mer d'Iroise, which now includes a marine park and the island of Sein and is based on engagement and support from local communities with a clear vision for sustainable development supported by a charter. The total surface area is 99 149 ha, with 1324 inhabitants.

130. The Council is pleased to note that the extension of the site will strengthen the implementation of the objectives and the three main functions of the biosphere reserve. The Council requested for further information on the implementation of the coordination process and further encouraged cooperation with other marine and islands biosphere reserves.

131. The Council endorsed the extension and renaming of the former Iroise Biosphere Reserve into Biosphere de Reserve des Iles et de la Mer d'Iroise.

### **Doñana Biosphere Reserve, Spain, Extension**

132. The Council welcomed this submission for this biosphere reserve nominated in 1980. This extension incorporates the transition zone that was not included in the previous nomination and enlarges the buffer zone thus increasing the total area by more than three times. The Advisory Committee congratulated the national authorities for adjusting this post-Seville site to conform to the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework requirements.

133. The Council encouraged the authorities to promote the dialogue between stakeholders in the new extended area to achieve common agreement between conservation and sustainable development as an example of conflict resolutions.

134. The Council endorsed the extension of the Doñana Biosphere Reserve.

### **Sierra Nevada Biosphere Reserve, Spain, Re-zoning**

135. The Council welcomed the re-submission of this biosphere reserve nominated in 1986. This new submission is a re-zoning that incorporates the transition zone that was not included in the previous nomination. The Council noted the effort of the national authorities to adjust this post-Seville biosphere reserve to conform to the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework requirement and therefore endorsed the re-zoning of the Sierra Nevada Biosphere Reserve.

### **Withdrawal of sites**

136. The Chair informed the MAB-ICC that following periodic reviews and consultations with stakeholders, the United Kingdom has decided to withdraw the Moor House Upper Teesdale Biosphere Reserve (approved in 1976) from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as this site no longer meets the criteria set up by 1995 Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

137. Henceforth, as recommended by the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council at its 24th session, the total number of sites participating in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) will now be recorded on the basis of the number of biosphere reserves in each country. This number will include sites which are part of transboundary biosphere reserves, which will also be listed separately. With the addition of 20 new biosphere reserves including 2 transboundary biosphere reserves to the WNBR, 1 being withdrawn, 1 made up of two former biosphere reserves (Galloway and South Ayrshire BR), the WNBR is now composed

of 610 biosphere reserves in 117 countries including 12 transboundary biosphere reserves and the first sites in 3 new countries, namely Haiti, Kazakhstan and Sao Tome and Principe.

138. The Council recommended that high quality biosphere reserves nomination and periodic review reports be shared within the WNBR as a model and source of inspiration.

**XII.B) Progress report on review and updating of Biosphere Reserves Nomination form**

139. See decision para. XIII.B

**XIII. Periodic review of biosphere reserves**

**XIII.A) Periodic review reports received since the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of International Coordination Council**

140. The Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/7 and gave some indications on the periodic reviews received.

141. The Council then endorsed the periodic review recommendations formulated by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as stated below.

**Manu Biosphere Reserve, Peru**

142. The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report submitted by the Peruvian Authorities and acknowledged the efforts made since the last periodic review report submitted in 1999 in particular by the increase of the transition area. The Advisory Committee noted that the site fulfils the biosphere reserve criteria by including the three zones in the biosphere reserve that was not included during its nomination in 1977.

143. The Committee recognized the important support and technical information collected from the research center of this area and the involvement of the indigenous communities. The biosphere reserve is part of the Rural Development and Biodiversity Conservation of the Amazonian Biosphere Reserves project to improve the well-being of the local communities. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send a copy of the management plan of the biosphere reserve to the MAB secretariat by 31 May 2012.

**Huascarán Biosphere Reserve, Peru**

144. The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report submitted by the Peruvian Authorities and acknowledged the efforts made since the last periodic review report submitted in 1999 and the progress report in response to the recommendation in 2005. The biosphere reserve was nominated in 1977. It noted that the site continues to fulfil the biosphere reserve criteria in line with the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. The zonation system protects the core area very well and the use of the buffer and transition areas promote sustainable development activities.

145. The Advisory Committee noted their important effort to integrate the mining exploitation and decrease its impact on the biosphere reserve. It recommended excluding these activities from the core zone. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to put in place the action plan of the Huascarán working group and the application of the strategy of climate change to improve the management system of the biosphere reserve and the local participation.



**Noroeste Biosphere Reserve, Peru**

146. The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report submitted by the Peruvian Authorities and acknowledged the efforts made since the last periodic review report submitted in 1999. The Committee noted that the biosphere reserve does not have a transition area despite the clear delimitation of the core and buffer zones.

147. The authorities are encouraged to add a transition area which includes local settlements and the coastal area to the biosphere reserve. The transition area will connect the Cerros de Amotape National Park core area with Tumbes Mangroves National Sanctuary as a new proposed core area. The Advisory Committee requested a submission of an extension nomination application to fulfill the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

**Parque Atlántico Mar Chiquito Biosphere Reserve, Argentina**

148. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the periodic review by the Argentinean Authorities. The biosphere reserve was nominated in 1996.

149. The Committee highlighted the important ecological values of the site, its potential for meeting the biosphere reserve criteria and its location value by being close to Buenos Aires. The Advisory Committee welcomed the education programme developed in the area.

150. However, the Committee recommended the revision of the zonation system to include the marine area as transition zone. It stressed the importance to improve the description of species and landscape. The Advisory Committee noted that the biosphere reserve fulfils the criteria of the Seville Strategy.

**Omo Biosphere Reserve, Nigeria**

151. The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review report from the Nigerian Authorities. The committee also acknowledged the financial contribution of the federal and state government towards the management of the biosphere reserve.

152. The Committee also commended the authorities for the logistic and educational functions being realized in the biosphere reserve. Commendable among these activities are the trainings on the sustainable harvesting of fish and wildlife which discourages the use of chemicals and also the industrial training opportunities available to forestry, wildlife and biology students.

153. The authorities are encouraged to implement a more elaborate and substantial management and development plan for the biosphere reserve in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the local community. The authorities are also requested to provide a clearer map showing the core area, buffer and transition zones.

**Dinder Biosphere Reserve, Sudan**

154. Established along the border with Ethiopia, Dinder was declared a biosphere reserve in 1979 representing tropical savannah and grassland ecosystems. Dinder contains important habitats for terrestrial migratory species and its wetlands act as a refuge for a large number of migratory birds. Mammal populations have dwindled largely due to illegal hunting and farming.

155. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the report was rich in information regarding

habitats and species but that it lacked detailed information relating to the status and trends of the fauna and flora over the years. The report also lacked information on the management plan or management policy of Dinder as a biosphere reserve, including in relation to fire management, livestock grazing, as well as on the reserve's significance for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Additional information on these aspects was therefore requested together with a map showing the location of the biosphere reserve within Sudan accompanied by a section describing the major topographic features of the biosphere reserve.

156. The Advisory Committee also noted the quasi absence of research or monitoring programmes and the apparent lack of community participation in decision making processes or resource management. Further clarification on these issues was therefore also sought by the Committee which concluded that it would be advisable to request a resubmission of the entire report.

### **Wadi Allaqi Biosphere Reserve, Egypt**

157. Located in the South of Egypt close to Sudan, Wadi Allaqi was declared as a Biosphere Reserve in 1993. It is internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area. The ecosystem includes desert, mountain, wadi and wetland habitats, including the Elba mountain group. The biosphere reserve also includes Lake Nasser formed with the establishment of the Aswan High Dam. The establishment of the Lake Nasser and the reclamation of the shores have improved the status of species that used to be rare (Nile crocodile). Furthermore, the lake has proved to be an important location for wintering migratory birds.

158. The Director of Protected Areas department oversees management of the national network of protected areas including the Wadi Allaqi Biosphere Reserve which has 24 personnel, in addition to many researchers. Facilities include at least 4 research stations inside (3) and outside the biosphere reserve. There are between 700-800 Bedouins living within the biosphere reserve with others coming there to work but they do not live there. The main activities practiced by these groups are quarrying, fishing, and agriculture. The Bedouins almost exclusively live in the transition areas.

159. The Advisory Committee while welcoming the report, noted that it did not contain any zonation map and that the chapters in the report dealing with the status of ecosystems and habitats in the reserve was very general and lacked statistics on changes over time. Therefore, the Committee recommended that this missing information should be requested in order to complete the report.

### **Sahamalaza-Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve, Madagascar**

160. The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review report submitted by the Madagascar Authorities. The committee also recognized that this is the first report submitted for this site which was designated in 2001.

161. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to implement the following recommendations in order to better fulfil the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

- Improve the zonation of the biosphere reserve by clearly delineating the buffer and core zone.
- Support the integration of the management plans for the biosphere reserve into the regional Management and Development scheme.

- Traditional leaders should be encouraged to get involved in the management of the marine resources and mangroves in the biosphere reserve.
- To reinforce the participation of the local community and their leaders in the management of the entire biosphere reserve.

### **Mananara-Nord Biosphere Reserve, Madagascar**

162. The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review of the Mananara-Nord Biosphere Reserve which was designated in 1990.

163. The Committee requested that the authorities improve the data on the status and level of endemic species both flora and fauna in the biosphere reserve and submit it to the secretariat by 31 May 2012. The following recommendations were also made and the authorities are encouraged to implement them.

- Improve the zonation of the forests which have been transferred to the riverain communities to be contiguous with the National Park and also to ensure that the needs of the local people for firewood harvesting are managed in a sustainable way.
- Redefine clearly the buffer zone before the end of 2013.
- Reinforce the fight against illegal logging.
- Reinforce the laws governing the core area and build the capacity of the people managing the core area.
- Educate and build the capacity of the local community to better manage the resources in the biosphere reserve.

### **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, India**

164. The Advisory Committee welcomed this re-submitted report with new information on Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (designated in 2000). The Committee acknowledged that the site, located at the junction of three southern states of India, is one of the biodiversity hotspots for speciation in the tropics. The region harbours the largest known Indian population of two endangered species namely Nilgiri Tahr and the Lion-tailed Macaque. The core area is strictly protected from all developmental activities. The buffer zone is divided into a manipulation-forestry zone and tourism zone. Some development programmes with the involvement of local people for sustainable livelihood are welcomed.

165. Research, monitoring and public awareness and training programs have been well conducted in this site. The Management Committee at the local level plays an important role in coordination and examination of action plans.

166. The Committee noted that encroachment, illicit logging and poaching have negative impacts in the transition area. Forest fires, man-animal conflicts and invasive alien species are obstacles encountered at this site. The Advisory Committee invited the Indian MAB National Committee and the related institutes to provide technical support to help resolve the above issues. The Advisory Committee asked the Indian Authorities to provide more information about the rationale for the zonation system of this biosphere reserve.

### **Palawan Biosphere Reserve, Philippines**

167. The Advisory Committee welcomed this report on Palawan Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1990). The archipelagic biosphere reserve contains several islands including the main island of Palawan, with unique endemic flora and fauna species in many diversified

habitats including forests, grasslands, brush lands and wetlands. Most coral and mangrove species have been documented. The Committee noted that the Palawan Biosphere Reserve is legally recognized through Republic Act 7611. Institutional bodies and mechanisms are established to assist in the implementation of the law. The listening post and quick response system, the Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation System (EMES) and environmental information and education system were established in implementation of Act 7611.

168. The Committee encouraged the authorities to enhance forest management to avoid bad agricultural practices, logging, and illegal wildlife trade. It was further recommended to improve coastal and marine management and to increase research, training and exchange programmes. The biosphere reserve needs to seek technical support for the preservation of indigenous culture and the conservation and management of threatened species and their habitats.

169. The Committee discussed the necessity to include the Underground River World Heritage site and its buffer into the core area of this biosphere reserve. The management plan is based upon the Strategic Environmental Plan at provincial level enacted as a law in 1992. The committee asked the authorities to provide more information about the current zones and delineate clear demarcation of the zonation. The Committee recommended that new zonation system under the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve concept should be considered. Important habitats of coral, mangrove and marine animals should be identified first and those marine areas should be incorporated into the biosphere reserve. The Committee requested that the authorities provide a zonation map of the coastal and marine part.

#### **Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Cambodia**

170. The Advisory Committee welcomed this well-prepared report on Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (designated in 2001) which is one of the important wetlands for biodiversity conservation in Southeast Asia. The Advisory Committee endorsed the appropriate zonation of core area, buffer zone to transition area which not only encourages development and implementation of the management plan within the community fishing areas for improving local community livelihoods but also assures a refuge for a great variety of species that are extinct or highly threatened elsewhere.

171. The Committee encouraged the expansion of the existing system of fish sanctuaries and the implementation of spatially-based conservation measures. The established Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve Secretariat plays a positive role on coordinating all the stakeholders and facilitates more extensive communication, cooperation and enforcement of existing rules and regulations for establishing a learning laboratory for sustainability.

172. The Committee also recommended that some development programme and biodiversity research and monitoring activities should be conducted for the socio-economic development of local communities and the control of exotic species. The fishing lots and small scale fishery activities inside the core areas of the biosphere reserve should not be permitted.

173. The Committee asked the biosphere reserve authorities to provide full pictures and information on the existing core areas and their possible future plans.

#### **Baotianman Biosphere Reserve, China**

174. The Advisory Committee welcomed this well-prepared report on Baotianman Biosphere Reserve (designated in 2001), which had been prepared following an on-site periodic review seminar held from 16 to 18 June 2011, with more than 50 participants including experts, managers, stakeholders, local residents, representatives from other nature reserves, local

government as well as nature reserve administrative authorities.

175. The Advisory Committee endorsed remarkable achievements in the conservation of biodiversity and capacity building including research, trainings and education activities. The Committee also noted the detailed findings of the review seminar and invited the MAB Secretariat to inform the Chinese Authorities thereof. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee are to:

- Keep a protection-based priority in eco-tourism development.
- Cooperate with local authorities to strengthen coordination for tourism development. Improve the mechanism for community participation.
- Optimize management with the application of advanced technologies and research results.
- Manage the invasion of exotic species and control pollution in scenic spots.

### **Saihanwula Biosphere Reserve, China**

176. The Advisory Committee welcomed this well-prepared report on Saihanwula Biosphere Reserve (designated in 2001), which had been prepared following an on-site periodic review seminar held July 13-15, 2011, with more than 100 participants, including experts, manager, stakeholders, local residents, representatives from other nature reserves as well as nature reserve administrative authorities.

177. The Advisory Committee endorsed the remarkable results that have been achieved in the conservation of biodiversity and ecological restoration. The Committee also noted the detailed findings of the review seminar and invited the MAB secretariat to inform the Chinese Authorities thereof. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee are to:

- Keep the principle of protection-based development and cooperate closely with local authorities to strengthen administration and supervision for regulated management of tourism development.
- Improve the channels and mechanism for community participation to further community development, setting a model for harmonious development of the reserve and the community.
- Enhance support for the biosphere reserve and actively introduce scientific research talents for capacity building.

### **Dong Nai Biosphere Reserve, Viet Nam**

178. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report provided by the Vietnamese Authorities as well as the progress made since 2001. It noted the significant conservation of biodiversity through assisting the survival of the unmodified habitats and the suppression of hunting and other forms of disturbance. It also noted that the link between conservation, research and education programs is well developed in this site. Similarly, the link between conservation and sustainable development appears to be sufficiently revealed at the national scale through the creation of new jobs and sources of income for biosphere reserve inhabitants and the partnerships with business and private enterprise for sustainable development.

179. The Advisory Committee noted that the site meets the biosphere reserve criteria and recommended that the Vietnamese Authorities pay more attention to the link between conservation and sustainable development at the regional scale in conformity with the aspirations of the nomination form.



**Grosses Walsertal, Austria**

180. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information sent by the Austrian authorities, following the recommendation it made on the periodic review report examined at its seventeenth session. The Advisory Committee highly appreciated the detailed, comprehensive and concrete examples provided. The biodiversity conservation activities include measures implemented in the field of biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, biodiversity monitoring with farmers, establishment of agricultural partner businesses, meadows championships and butterfly monitoring programmes. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site is considered as a model site which practices should be shared within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Lac Saint Pierre, Canada**

181. The Advisory committee welcomed the report provided by the Canadian authorities. It welcomed the extension of the transition area to reinforce the sustainable development function and secure the involvement and commitment and engagement of local communities. The total surface of the transition area is now 6,346 km<sup>2</sup>. The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve is fulfilling the criteria of the Statutory framework. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site is considered as a model site which practices should be shared within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Long Point, Canada**

182. The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review report by the Canadian authorities. The Advisory Committee welcome the comprehensive report and the quality of the information provided, which addresses the recommendations issued by the Committee, following the report submitted in 2001. The Advisory Committee considers that the site fulfills the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It also noted that the site is planning to integrate an additional buffer zone and that there is a plan to extend the core areas. The Advisory Committee requested that the reconfiguration of the biosphere reserve should be further explained with a detailed zonation maps as soon as possible as well as that the authorities provides the document on 'Request for boundary expansion, recognition of additional core buffer and name change" mentioned in the report.

**Redberry Lake, Canada**

183. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the Canadian authorities. The Committee acknowledged the work being carried at the international level and the good cooperation with other biosphere reserves, as well as the progress made in terms of conservation and monitoring, development, research. The Advisory Committee considers that the site fulfills the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities continue the involvement of the farmers, and share practices on farming systems with an expanding organic food market as sustainable practices with the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

**Southwest Nova, Canada**

184. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the Canadian authorities. The site was designated in 2001. The Committee acknowledged the limited budget that was available for the site which explains the delay in the implementation of many activities. It noted the efforts made to address the governance structure, and the design of strategic plan and action plan. It

also noted the need to improve the communication with local communities and first nations to increase their awareness about the site and their involvement in its management.

185. The Advisory Committee requested an update in the next three years on the implementation of the 15 recommendations for future activities based on the findings of the review, as well as evidence on the engagement of the local communities in the process.

### **Bile Karpathy, Czech Republic**

186. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the Czech Republic authorities. The site was established in 1996 and is managed as a landscape protection area. The Protected Landscape Area is managing the whole biosphere reserve but it seems that there is a lack of coordination with the different stakeholders. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the quality of the management plan for the protected landscape areas and the information provided on these landscapes, with clear conservation objectives, and noted with satisfaction that the zonation is clear and functional. The Advisory Committee however considered that the site is partially meeting the criteria. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to pursue their efforts and recommended to improve the overall coordination of the site as well as the governance structure for a better coordination of the biosphere reserve. It also recommended to the national authorities to support participatory processes and to work with other sites in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for sharing experience and practices on work on sustainable development at the biosphere reserve level with different stakeholders including the private sector.

### **Krkonose/Karkonosze, Czech Republic Poland**

187. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the two countries. It acknowledged the quality of the joint report of this transboundary site designated in 1992. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the quality of the conservation work being done at both national parks levels in both countries with some prize received at the European level as well the quality of the work done on the effects of tourism on biodiversity and its implementation for reaching conservation objectives. The Advisory Committee noted that the main function was the conservation and that this function was well fulfilled by the national parks. It also acknowledged that the research and demonstration functions were strong but that the development function was weak as well as the transboundary biosphere reserve cooperation. The site is thus partially meeting the criteria, and the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities of both countries to pursue their efforts and recommended to improve the overall coordination of the site as well as the governance structure for a better coordination of the transboundary biosphere reserve. It also recommended to support participatory processes and to work with other sites in the WNBR for sharing experience and practices on work on sustainable development at the biosphere reserve level with different stakeholders including private sector.

### **Schaalsee, Germany**

188. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the German authorities. The Committee acknowledged that the site fully fulfils the biosphere reserve criteria of the Statutory Framework. Despite the relative small size of the site (30 900 ha), it acknowledged that it was one of the first to establish a strategy for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, via several projects which contribute to the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan. The potential for sustainable tourism is very high but it needs to be integrated within regional planning. The logistic function is to be emphasized with an environmental education programme for sustainable development developed through the Centre of Education. The socio economic and ecological monitoring is well established but need more staff resources for maintaining the

sustainability of the results over time. There is a potential to extend the site with an adjacent protected area, which could reinforce the role of the biosphere as regional unifying model for sustainable development in close cooperation with local communities. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as a good practice.

### **Vessertal-Thüringen Forest, Germany**

189. The Advisory Committee welcomed this second report from the German authorities. The site was established 1978. The Advisory Committee welcomed the well-prepared and comprehensive report submitted; the quality of the data provided and commended the participative and consultation process in the biosphere reserve. It acknowledged the efforts and progress made since the submission of the first periodic review in 2002. It considered that the site fully fulfils the biosphere reserve criteria of the Statutory Framework. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as a good practice.

### **Circeo, Italy**

190. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the Italian authorities. The site was designated in 1977 and is also a Ramsar site and was the first biosphere reserve in Italy. It is state forest with Mediterranean species. 20 people are living in this site. Tourism is one of the main activities. Research function is important but the Advisory committee noted the absence of a management plan. The Advisory Committee also noted that there is no functional zonation. The Advisory committee considered that the site was not fulfilling the criteria and requested to receive:

- a comprehensive zonation map, to enable the implementation of the three functions;
- information on the coordination structure that would secure the involvement of local people;
- a plan for tourism development.

191. The Committee requested all the above information by 2013 to meet target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan.

### **Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo, Italy**

192. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from the Italian authorities. The site was designated in 1977. Many tourists are visiting the area and it was the first site in Italy to provide access to disable people. The Advisory Committee welcomed the project for the extension of the biosphere reserve with three zones as well as the setting up of a coordination structure. The extended site will comprises 5 500 inhabitants. It also noted the involvement of local communities in the process. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to implement the proposed extension with the zonation presented and requested to received information on the implementation of the zonation as well as a the management plan for the whole area by end of 2013 to meet Target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan.

### **Waddensea Area, Netherlands**

193. The Advisory Committee welcomed this report from the Netherlands authorities for the site which was established in 1996. The Advisory Committee thanks the authorities for the

preliminary report and is looking forward receiving the comprehensive report in order for the Committee to evaluate if the site fulfills the criteria as soon as possible.

### **Barguzinsky, Russian Federation**

194. The Advisory Committee welcomed this report from the Russian Federation authorities. The site was designated in 1978. It took note of the plan for developing ecotourism to involve local communities but requested additional information on this development. It acknowledged the research facilities and research activities being carried out as well as the conservation measures. It also noted that the zonation is in place but that the site was partially fulfilling the criteria. It also noted that a transition area of 5 million hectares was delimited. The Advisory Committee requested that additional information was to be provided on the delimitation of this large transition area and management plan describing the activities in all three zones; to present a clear report on the status of biodiversity in all three zones; to provide more specific scientific research report for the biosphere reserve; to ensure the involvement of local people and communities in management, development of sustainable activities, nature and culture protection. It further requested information on the location and functioning of the oil pipeline as well as safety management plan linked to this pipeline in the three zones. It also requested a safety plan for avoiding ecological damages possibly caused by hazardous activities in the transition area. It finally requested the submission of the new zonation map with planned extension of buffer zones by the end of 2013 at the latest, in accordance with the Target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan.

### **Vodlozersky, Russian Federation**

195. The Advisory Committee welcomed this report from the Russian Federation authorities. The site was designated in 2001. The Advisory Committee noted that the site has three zones as well as a management strategy for 10 to 20 years. It acknowledged new working places for forest management. It also noted the lack of consultation and participation of local and regional authorities in the management and development of the area. It requested to provide information on monitoring programmes related to the development for chrome ores with location and assessment of impact and to provide information about dam on the Vama River, its construction and location. The Advisory Committee further requested to involve consultation and involvement of local and regional authorities in the management and development of the area. It requested the submission of all these documents by the end of 2013 at the latest, in accordance with the Target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan.

### **Golija-Studenica, Serbia**

196. The Advisory Committee welcomed this report from the Serbian authorities. It was designated in 2001. It noted that the zonation is in place and that that it overlaps with the national park. 7200 people living in the transition area engaged in forestry and agriculture. The main focus is nature conservation. The Committee noted that there is no management structure and plan for the overall biosphere reserve. It noted the lack of involvement of local communities and sustainable development vision and activities.

197. The Advisory Committee noted that the site is partially fulfilling the criteria and requested additional information related to the vision for sustainable development for the whole area and evidence of activities in cooperation with the local communities. It also encouraged cooperation with other sites in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

### **Entlebuch, Switzerland**

198. The Advisory Committee welcomed this very well documented and comprehensive second report from the Switzerland authorities. It considered that the site is fully fulfilling the three functions of the biosphere reserve and meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The site is 39446 ha. It also noted the efforts made to limit the increasing negative effects of agriculture as well as measures undertook to limit the urban extension and agricultural intensification, such as ecological compensation targeted at conserving precious ecological habitats at the country level. It also noted that tourism has increased from 40, 000 to 80,000 within ten years. It acknowledged that sustainable tourism is jointly marketed with the region, which ensures a harmonious development and an efficient exploitation of infrastructures and of economic opportunities. It also noted that monitoring was reinforced by several international projects at the landscape level including socio economic monitoring on tourism benefits. It also acknowledged the work of the “Académie de la biosphère” in education and public training, especially as regards youth, private sector and universities. It congratulated the authorities for their work as the site is a model for the whole country and strongly acknowledged the support and engagement of local citizens and communities. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site is considered as a model site which practices should be shared within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

### **Askaniya-Nova, Ukraine**

199. The Advisory Committee welcomed this second report from the Ukrainian authorities. The first report was done in 1998. The Advisory Committee congratulates the authorities for addressing the burning practices with the establishment of an internal fire-prevention team as well as the establishment of watch tower and noted with satisfaction that the situation has improved on the buffer zone. It encourages the main features of the management plan but noted that the zoning of the transition area is not clear on the map. It requested to send as soon as possible:

- a zonation map;
- a copy of the management plan when ready.

200. It also requested to clarify how the local communities will be involved in the whole process of zoning and management. It also encouraged cooperation with other sites in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves especially for socio-economic aspects. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the zonation map as well as a management plan for the whole area by end of 2013 to meet Target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan.

### **Chernomorskiy, Ukraine**

201. The Advisory Committee welcomed this second report from the Ukrainian authorities. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for addressing the zonation issue as per previous recommendation, and for providing better protection to some areas as well as for the design of the management plan. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the zonation map as well as a management plan for the whole area by end of 2013 to meet Target 13 of the Madrid Action Plan. It also requested to clarify how wind power will be taken into account in the management plan.

**General observations and remarks on Periodic reviews**

202. Several Member States took the floor to underline the importance of the periodic review process and the follow up of recommendations as well as the need to specify deadlines for a site to meet the Statutory Framework criteria. In this regard, they highlighted the importance of meeting the Madrid Action Plan deadline of 2013. A Member State requested more flexibility in the deadline for upgrading first generation sites as the bottom up approach and consensus process with stakeholders as well as zonation design imply long term processes. A Member State highlighted the need for adequate capacity building especially for monitoring activities to support countries in the process. A Member State requested the Secretariat to provide statistics on the number of countries that have not sent a periodic review report and /or have not sent any information on the implementation of the recommendation at its next Session. Two Observer States provided information on actions being taken to implement the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and endorsed by the MAB Council for their respective sites. France reiterated its interest to share experience and practices for the periodic review process and if appropriate to host a workshop. Two Member States mentioned the consultative role of the MAB National Committee vis à vis the decision of withdrawing a site.

203. The MAB Council requested the Secretariat to send a letter to all concerned countries (see also para. 61), with copy to UNESCO Permanent Delegations, asking them to inform the Secretariat before the next session of the MAB Council on their indicative plan for undertaking the periodic review process and/or upgrading the site to meet the Statutory Framework criteria along with a timeline. The letter will make reference to para 8 of Article 9 of the Statutory framework specifying the possibility for the Member State to withdraw its site while recalling the availability of the Secretariat to support the Member State in the process of submitting the periodic review and/or updating the site.

**XIII.B) Progress report on review and updating of Periodic review form**

204. The Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/14. Mr Robert Barbault, Chairman of French MAB national committee and Chairman of the working group on the updating of Nomination and Periodic review forms, recalled the objective, mandate and methodology used by the working group as requested by the MAB Council in 2010 at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session. He informed the Council that the working group aimed at facilitating the work of the managers. The periodic review form was updated, inspired by the form used by Canada so as to better assess and monitor the changes, progress and results in the biosphere reserve. The working group ensured to ask common questions and address common issues while respecting the diversity of the contexts and the sites. The working group attempted to ensure continuity between the nomination and periodic forms, to be more precise in the questions asked in order to obtain more accurate and detailed data, including indicators used by the site for key functions. Summary of main issues to be addressed by the site, including the sustainable development goal of the site was also added to the forms. Finally he mentioned that additions were made in both forms to increase visibility and communication of the site and of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

205. While several Member States congratulated Professor Barbault and the working group for the very detailed and comprehensive work achieved on both forms, they regretted that no communication was issued directly to the MAB National Committees to inform them that the updated forms were on line for comments since February 2012. The MAB Council therefore requested that the Secretariat sends electronically the updated forms both in track changes and in a clean version to the MAB National Committees and to UNESCO Delegates so they can provide comments by 30 October 2012 if they so wish.

206. The MAB ICC decided to delegate to the MAB Bureau the final approval of both forms once the additional comments received by Member States and MAB National Committees as of

the deadline of 30 October 2012 would be incorporated and inserted, so the updated forms could be used and replace the existing ones for nomination and periodic review report as of 1st January 2013.

#### **XIV. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management**

207. The Secretariat briefly introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/10 and informed the Council that it had received six files from six countries and that only five of these met the criteria for consideration. The Members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves recommended Ms Elizabeth Taylor, Marine biologist in the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, from Colombia, for her case study on "Improving sustainable development and coral reef conservation through community-based watershed management in the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve", as the winning candidate for the 2012 Michel Batisse Award to the Members of the outgoing Bureau of the MAB Council. This recommendation was transmitted electronically to all Members of the outgoing Bureau of the MAB-ICC in April 2012 who unanimously endorsed it.

208. Ms Taylor presented her case study on the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve and received her Award from the Chair of the MAB Council. Member States and Observers warmly congratulated Ms Taylor for her presentation and a Member State highlighted the need to better share the Michel Batisse case studies broadly as good and inspiring practices.

#### **XV. Biosphere Reserve Mapping**

209. The Secretariat introduced document SC-12/CONF.224/13 which describes mapping efforts taking place in the WNBR including the printed map which has been published regularly since 2008 and will next be released in 2013, the inclusion of the WNBR in the multi-touch mapping table in the Open UNESCO exhibit, and regional efforts in detailed zonation mapping. The Secretariat described their plan to develop a digital zonation map documenting the total area of each biosphere reserve with boundaries for each zone delineated, which they will compile through a new requirement for digital maps in the nomination form and periodic review and contact with individual sites.

210. The prototype of the AfriMAB interactive web-based GIS tool showing the zonation of biosphere reserves in Africa was presented. The map was developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with MAB National Committees and Biosphere Reserve managers who provided the data. Several applications were presented including the interface with google earth.

211. The ICC responded very positively to this proposal, highlighting the participatory way in which the mapping in Africa has been developed and praising the many connections which can be made to educational tools, policy making, and land-use planning. In particular, it was highlighted that there are two types of maps needed: an external tool of the WNBR which provides a picture of the network for educational purposes and an individual zonation tool for management and decision making. A connection to SMART Biosphere Initiative for developing educational tools with mapping was encouraged. The work of IberoMAB as well as that of EABRN Network to develop an atlas with many different maps with the support of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was highlighted.

212. Opportunities for expanding this work on various applications were proposed. The importance of establishing common nomenclature for mapping ecosystems on a regional level for biodiversity assessments was stressed by one delegate. Another delegate praised this progress as a powerful analytical tool which will allow the network to better understand connection and functionality for analysis of biogeographical regions. Further, the opportunity to use these maps to monitor sustainable development indicators such as zero net land

degradation was highlighted.

213. In the further development of this map, Member States requested that the Secretariat pay special attention to the background file and boundaries out of which the WNBR is mapped and to ensure an easily updatable user-friendly tool. Some speakers expressed concern that the requirements would be difficult for all biosphere reserves to meet and that workshops and capacity building on digital mapping would be needed. The Secretariat was encouraged to develop these maps with appropriate partners as well as other tools such as Google Maps, World Database of Protected Areas and the European Environment Agency's Eye on Earth project could be important institutions for collaboration. A working group on 'spatial data for biosphere reserves' was proposed to help the Secretariat develop this work in a strategic, staged manner. Finally, one Delegate recommended focussing mapping efforts on those post-Seville sites which are up-to-date on their periodic reviews.

214. The Secretariat highlighted that the existing clarifications and instructions on digital map requirements are currently included in the changes to both the nomination form and the periodic review included in the current ICC documents. The ICC requested that the Secretariat provide an update on the status of mapping in the WNBR and the progress on the current work at the next meeting of the ICC.

#### **XVI. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme**

215. The Council endorsed the twelve winners for the 2012 MAB Young Scientists Award, including the 2 awards for the two Special MAB Young Scientists Awards supported by the Austrian MAB National Committee as selected by the MAB Bureau. The winners and the topics of their research studies are:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Project title</b>
<b>Benin</b>	Mr KIKI, A. D. Martial	Managing conservation conflicts around Biosphere Reserve of Pendjari in Benin
<b>Sénégal</b>	Ms Hiraldo Lopez-alonso, Rocio	Opportunities and challenges to sustainable mangrove ecosystem governance in the sine – saloum delta biosphere reserve
<b>Egypt</b>	Ms Saeed, Nouran Mohamed	Impacts of Human-induced Disturbances on the Biodiversity of Omayed Biosphere Reserve-Egypt: Implications for Sustainable Planning and Management'
<b>Togo</b>	Mr Kemavo, Anoumou	Contribution a l'élaboration d'un plan directeur d'aménagement participatif de la réserve de biosphère d'Oti-Keran/Oti-Mandour
<b>Ukraine</b>	Ms Stryamets, Nataliya	Sustainable forest management within BR territories –Challenges and Opportunities
<b>Côte d' Ivoire</b>	Mr Djane, Kabran Aristide	Modélisation de la décision d'agir envers l'environnement de L'élève du primaire des villages de la zone de transition du Parc national de Tai en Côte d' Ivoire : les enjeux théoriques et sociaux
<b>Indonesia</b>	Ms Sabila Ajiningrum, Purity	Adaptation Strategy and Mitigation of Biological Resources Management of Local People in Lore Lindu Biosphere Reserve to Climate Change
<b>India</b>	Mr Kumar VM, Sathish	Population fluxes of commercially threatened sea cucumber species in Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve- for sustainable harvesting strategies to



		regularizing sea cucumber fishery
<b>Sénégal</b>	Ms N'diaye, Fatou	Mise en place d'une stratégie de bonne gouvernance de la gestion des ressources marines et côtières dans le contexte de la Réserve de Biosphère Transfrontière du Delta du Fleuve Sénégal : cas de l'Aire Marine Protégée de Saint-Louis (AMP Saint-Louis)
<b>Mali</b>	Ms Maïga, Guindo Zeïnabou	Etude sur les activités humaines autour de la mare des Crocodiles de Dianguiré (Reserve de biosphère de la boucle de Baoulé)
<b>Russia</b>	Ms Shatkovskaya, Alexandra	Ethno-landscape exposition "Forefathers' Path"
<b>Thailand</b>	Ms Prathep, Ancana	Seagrass bed as a Carbon Sink in Ranong Biosphere Reserve and Trang-Haad Chao Mai Marine National Park; an important role of seagrass

216. In 2012 75% of winners are females and 50% are from Africa. These results are in line with UNESCO priorities: Africa and Gender equality.

217. Some Delegates pointed out that the Bureau should give a greater consideration to the geographical distribution of the Award in order to ensure its visibility. The Secretariat should circulate the MAB Award announcement to National Commissions on 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 at the latest.

## **XVII. Date and venue of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB-ICC**

218. The council in principle agreed for a date in late May/early June, and requested the Secretariat to check with World Heritage Center and other UNESCO events with regard to a date and then to circulate possible options for date to Council members for approval. No clear offers have been received from member states yet with regard to hosting next year's MAB-ICC. Unless a clear offer is received latest by the end of the year, the next session of the MAB-ICC will be held at UNESCO Headquarters.

## **XVIII. Other matters**

219. Long term partnership between IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences) and UNESCO-MAB was mentioned by one Delegate. In this regards he welcomed the proposal from IUBS to use Biosphere Reserves as sites for the assessment of "biological consequences of global change" (current research programme of IUBS). A relevant report is expected at the next ICC session on results of such studies in EABR network.

220. One Observer mentioned that a close coordination and cooperation should be ensured between the MAB Secretariat and the MAB National Committees, especially regarding the visit of Secretariat staff to candidate BR sites. The Observer added that any advice on issues such as zonation to the MAB National Committees from the MAB Secretariate will be useful and taken with the highest consideration in order to assist them best play the role of supporting new candidate sites.

Member States paid tribute and gave a standing ovation to the Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr Ishwaran, for his outstanding contribution to the MAB Programme and to its

success. They underlined that Mr Ishwaran has contributed to strengthen cooperation between the different stakeholders of the MAB Programme. Prof. Choi, the outgoing Chair of the MAB ICC on behalf of the Council presented a plaque to Mr Ishwaran and wished him all the best for the future. The citation on the plaque states:

*“Award of Appreciation Presented to Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran Secretary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). In Recognition of His Valuable Contribution and Leadership for the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme for the last ten years, on behalf of MAB Member States.”*

221. Mr Ishwaran thanked the Council members and expressed the great pleasure he had working with UNESCO all these years.

222. The representative of the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences congratulated the Council for the excellent meeting and its important outcomes for the future of the MAB Programme. He acknowledged the values of the WNBR which concur with the objectives of the international community with regard to sustainable development. He also recalled that the future of the MAB Programme should be foreseen within the next UNESCO workplan and mid-term strategy. He informed the Council that Mr Thomas Schaaf will be the acting Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and that the recruitment process for a new Director for this Division will be initiated very soon. Mr Schaaf expressed his gratitude for this opportunity to act as the interim Director of the Division and the Secretary of the MAB Programme. He added that notwithstanding the current financial challenges facing the organization; he will do his best - together with all his colleagues in the MAB Secretariat - to ensure the smooth and successful continuation of the MAB Programme.

## **XIX. Adoption of the report**

223. Mr Sergio Guevara Sada, Rapporteur of the MAB ICC presented the draft report of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the ICC to the Member and Observer Delegates paragraph by paragraph. Modifications, additions and deletions introduced by the Delegations were noted, and in a few cases Member States submitted written texts to replace the wording in the draft report.

224. In reference to paragraph 9, the Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt suggested that UNESCO may also use the opportunity of its participation in the interagency processes linked to the development of SDGs to position MAB and WNBR as sources of evidence, knowledge, information and experience for articulating SDGs and determining indicators, benchmarks and monitoring processes for their attainment. In this regard UNESCO may consider promoting MAB and WNBR as principal platforms for sustainable development action in the follow-up to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD) which is due to come to a closure at the end of 2014. The end of the Decade Conference of UNDESD scheduled to be convened in Japan in late 2014 may be a forum where this possibility may be given adequate consideration by Member States. As the principal UNESCO platform for sustainable development beyond 2014, the programming and budgeting framework of MAB and WNBR must be reviewed in order to strengthen them appropriately so that Member States expectations could be met. Such an approach would be fully in line with the recommendations of the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference on MAB and WNBR as priority learning platforms for sustainable development.

225. In reference to agenda item VII. B (para 40 of the report) the delegate from Kenya made a submission on behalf of Kenya and AfriMAB. He apologized on behalf of the Chair of the Kenyan MAB national committee, who serves as the current Chairman of AfriMAB for his inability to be present at the MAB-ICC. He informed the Council that copies of the Kenya national report and AfriMAB are available outside the meeting for members to pick up and will also be submitted to the Secretariat to be made available on the MABnet.

226. In reference to paragraph 160 on the periodic review reporting of the Wadi Allaqi BR, the Chairman of the Egyptian National MAB Committee pointed out that (1) a zonation map of the Wadi Allaqi BR was included with its Nomination File and no change in its zonation occurred ever since, (2) that scores of scientific papers have been published on research carried out in WABR even before its inscription as a BR, up till now, but no synthesis has been made of their findings. Therefore, the recommendation should be a request for a compilation and a synthesis of the reports of such research findings. Changes over time can then be detected.

227. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed by ICC Member and Observer Delegations during the review of the report on 13 July 2012, the last day of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB-ICC held in UNESCO, Headquarters from 9 to 13 July 2012.

## **XX. Closure of the meeting**

228. Mr Ishwaran thanked the Chair and the Delegates for helping to facilitate the adoption of the report. He informed that the report with its amendments will be uploaded on the UNESCO MAB website for 2 weeks, i.e. until 27 July 2012, so that necessary changes, in particular regarding the list of participants, can be effected and invited all Council participants to inform the MAB Secretariat (preferably by e-mail: [n.raondry@unesco.org](mailto:n.raondry@unesco.org) with copy to: [m.ocloo@unesco.org](mailto:m.ocloo@unesco.org)) of any necessary changes. The report will then be finalized through the approval of the Rapporteur by the end of July 2012. Based on the report the important lists of decisions and recommendations will be isolated and circulated to all Council Members and Observer States.

229. The Chair stressed that she hoped all the decisions taken at this year's ICC will be given the highest consideration by stakeholders and partners at all levels. She thanked the Director-General, the MAB Secretariat, Council Delegates, Observers, the team of translators and the catering team. Finally, she thanked everyone for supporting her work as the Chair of this year's MAB-ICC.

230. Subsequently, the Chair declared the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB-ICC closed.

**Annex 1:**

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION /  
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE  
ET LA CULTURE**

**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme /  
Conseil international de coordination du Programme sur l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB)**

Twenty-four session / Vingt-quatrième session

**UNESCO, Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)**

9 -13 July 2012  
9 -13 juillet 2012

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/about-mab/icc/icc/24th-session-of-the-mab-council/>

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**Annex 2:**

**AGENDA of the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council**

1. Opening by the outgoing Chair of the ICC
2. Opening remarks of the Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO
3. Report by the outgoing Chair of the ICC
4. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur
5. Adoption of the agenda and timetable
6. Report by the Secretary of the MAB Programme
7. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States: regional and thematic MAB networks in the context of MAB
8. Regional and thematic MAB and biosphere reserve networks in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and the future of the MAB programme
9. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) – Improving data gathering, monitoring and systematic assessment
10. Support/study sites for the MAB Programme
11. MAB and WNBR – post Rio + 20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021
12. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)
  - A) Decisions concerning proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR
  - B) Progress report on the review and updating of for Biosphere reserves nomination forms
13. Periodic review of biosphere reserves
  - A) Periodic review reports received since the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of International Coordination Council
  - B) Progress report on the review and updating of nomination forms for Biosphere reserves
14. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserves Management
15. Biosphere Reserve mapping
16. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme
17. Date and venue of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB-ICC
18. Other matters
19. Adoption of the report
20. Closure of the session

**Annex 3:**

**International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme /  
Twenty-four session / Vingt-quatrieme session**

**UNESCO, Headquarters, Paris, Room XII (Fontenoy Building)**

9 -13 July 2012

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/about-mab/icc/icc/24th-session-of-the-mab-council/>

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE MAB PROGRAMME**

1. This report briefly reviews salient outcomes of activities undertaken by the Secretariat of the MAB Programme, with a particular emphasis on actions to implement decisions and recommendations of the 23rd session of the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB Programme held at Dresden, Germany, from 28 June to 1 July 2011. At the time when the Secretary of the MAB Programme will introduce this report to the ICC on 9 July 2012 he may add new information that becomes available during the intervening period.
2. The provisional agenda for the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB/ICC (9-13 July 2012, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris) covers a wide range of items. Detailed information pertaining to each of the agenda items have been made available for discussion by the ICC Members in the respective documents related to those agenda items. These documents will be introduced by MAB Secretariat staff at the time of each of the agenda item. Some of the agenda items, e.g. new nominations for biosphere reserves and extensions and name changes to biosphere reserves already in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), periodic review of biosphere reserves, MAB Young Scientists Research Grants Awards, will be studied by the Bureau of the ICC and recommendations and observations brought to the consideration of the ICC at the time of the discussion of the particular agenda item by the ICC.
3. This report concerns itself with those activities and events undertaken since the last session of the ICC that has strategic significance for the MAB Programme and its WNBR during the last two years of the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere reserves, i.e. 2012-2013, and for conceptualizing strategic directions for MAB and WNBR beyond 2013.
4. In 2011 MAB Commemorated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary; several activities were organized at the site, provincial, national, regional and global levels. The most significant international event of the 40<sup>th</sup> year commemorative activities was the international conference on "For life, for the future: biosphere reserves and climate change" hosted by the Government of Germany in Dresden during 27-28 June 2011 immediately preceding the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the ICC from 28 June to 1 July 2011 at the same venue as that of the conference. The "biosphere reserve day" organized on 3 November 2011 at the time of the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference attracted significant interest; the reception organized with products derived almost exclusively from biosphere reserves was acknowledged by many Delegates as a unique and a memorable event.
5. The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC adopted the Dresden Declaration on Biosphere Reserves and Climate Change that was an outcome of the International Conference that preceded it (see paragraph 3 above). The same session of the ICC also adopted, with necessary changes and amendments, the Statutes of the MAB/ICC as well as the Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR). Later in 2011, the

Executive Board of UNESCO adopted the Statutes of the IACBR and the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference adopted the Statutes of the MAB/ICC, respectively; in both cases the texts proposed by the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC were adopted without any further changes.

6. The 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference also adopted the Dresden Declaration as well as the recommendations of the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the MAB/ICC on the mid-term (2008-2010) evaluation of MAP for biosphere reserves. MAB and WNBR attracted significant support from UNESCO Member States as platforms for sustainable development, both within the context of the Rio + 20 Summit (20-22 June 2012) and activities to implement summit recommendations after the Summit at global, national and local levels. Following the General Conference's invitation to the Director General to highlight the work of MAB and WNBR in appropriate UNESCO events at the Rio + 20 Summit, the Director General drew attention to the importance of the 580 biosphere reserves in 114 countries as platforms for sustainable development learning and action at the side event on Education for Sustainable Development held in Rio on 21 June 2012. The 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference also invited the Member States as well as the MAB Secretariat to initiate the process of strategic thinking of MAB and WNBR futures beyond 2013, when the implementation of MAP for biosphere reserves (2008-2013) will come to an end. The General Conference requested that the Secretariat provide a report of progress achieved as well as an outline of the strategy beyond 2013 to its 37<sup>th</sup> session due to be convened during autumn of 2013.

7. Document SC-12/CONF.224/11 on MAB and WNBR - post Rio+20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021, to be discussed by the ICC under provisional agenda item 11 outlines a process for initiating the thinking towards the creation of a new strategic framework and an action plan for MAB and WNBR for the period 2014-2021; a time frame that is likely to coincide with the next medium-term strategic planning cycle of UNESCO as a whole. The document highlights the importance of several international events and their outcomes, including the final evaluation of MAP due in early 2014, post-Rio+20 Summit follow-up opportunities, assessment of performance to attain the MDGs due in 2015 and follow-up recommendations etc, as feeders into the strategic thinking process for the future of MAB and WNBR for the period 2014-2021. The document invites ICC to consider 2014-2015 as a time for learning from the evaluation of MAP for biosphere reserves (2008-2013) and other relevant international processes and the period between 2015 and 2021 for implementing a new plan of action to consolidate WNBR as the premier global network of places dedicated to sustainable development learning and practice.

8. The Chair of the German MAB National Committee has sent in written comments on the document referred to above in paragraph 5 and has expressed general agreement to its contents and directions for strategic development for MAB and WNBR proposed for 2014-2021. However, Mr. Martin Waldhausen, Chair of the German MAB National Committee has cautioned that results of the assessment of MDGs may not be available until 2016. He recommends that a core strategy for MAB and WNBR be ready by 2014 with possibilities for adaptation and modification as new knowledge and information become available during subsequent years. He observed that the current framework of MAP has been effective and should be retained for the preparation of a plan for 2014-2021. Some of the challenges and priorities identified in MAP for biosphere reserves (2008-2013), such as climate change, urbanization and ecosystem services, will continue to be of importance and relevance. The Chair of the German MAB National Committee agrees with the importance of biosphere reserves as implementation sites for sustainable development (see paragraph 11 of document SC-

12/CONF.224/11) and that UNESCO should actively advocate this vision. However, he has emphasized national action and bilateral cooperation among governments as the most important modalities for prioritizing biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development. National, provincial and local authorities have the prime responsibility for attaining global sustainable development goals and this can only be achieved through inter-sectoral action; biosphere reserves are supremely suited to promote intersectoral SD implementation and therefore authorities should work towards that goal in a much more robust, coordinated and intersectoral manner using their biosphere reserves. The mid-term evaluation (2008-2010) of MAP has also clearly highlighted the need for greater engagement of local, provincial and national authorities in the implementation of MAP. The fact that the Rio + 20 Summit has called for the replacement of MDGs by Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) creates a significant opportunity for National MAB Committees, provincial and local Governments and BR coordinators and stakeholders to advocate the use of biosphere reserves as learning sites and with a view to providing bottom-up inputs to the global thinking process for drawing up SDGs that is likely to be launched soon.

9. UNESCO may also use the opportunity of its participation in the interagency processes linked to the development of SDGs to position MAB and WNBR as sources of evidence, knowledge, information and experience for articulating SDGs and determining indicators, benchmarks and monitoring processes for their attainment. In this regard UNESCO may consider promoting MAB and WNBR as principal platforms for sustainable development action in the follow-up to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD) which is due to come to a closure at the end of 2014. The end of the Decade Conference of UNDESD scheduled to be convened in Japan in late 2014 may be a forum where this possibility may be given adequate consideration by Member States. As the principal UNESCO platform for sustainable development beyond 2014, the programming and budgeting framework of MAB and WNBR must be reviewed in order to strengthen them appropriately so that Member States expectations could be met. Such an approach would be fully in line with the recommendations of the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference on MAB and WNBR as priority learning platforms for sustainable development.

10. The expertise of the MAB regional and ecosystem networks must be channelled to meet this challenge of developing the WNBR as a global network of sustainable development learning sites. The ICC may give special thought on how these networks could be effectively mobilized to serve such a function when they discuss the role of networks in the implementation of MAP during 2012-2013 and in the future work of the MAB programme and its WNBR.

11. Despite severe financial constraints within UNESCO for programme implementation several MAB regional and ecosystem networks and partner institutions continue to implement notable actions within the framework of MAP for biosphere reserves. At the "Planet under Pressure" conference held in London (UK, March 2012), members of the mountain ecosystem network involved with the GLOCHAMORE and GLOCHAMOST initiatives organized a side event so as to provide scientific inputs for the Rio+20 Summit. The SUMAMAD Project is providing significant back-up support for biosphere reserve specialists in arid land ecosystems from all parts of the world. The IberoAmerican MAB and biosphere reserve network continues to promote collaboration among its members and, with the help of Spanish Government support specific projects in Latin America and the Caribbean and in parts of North and West Africa. In fact, the first biosphere reserve nomination from Haiti that the ICC will consider for inclusion in

the WNBR in 2012 is an outcome of a project supported by Spain and the IberoAmerican network. Following their commitments made at the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the ICC held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, and Spain joined hands to convene the first meeting of the global network of coastal and small island biosphere reserves for climate change and sustainable development in Menorca, Spain in February 2012. The future work of this network will be anchored via two hubs; one in Menorca, Spain focussing on sustainable development and the other in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea targeting climate change related initiatives. This new network has significant potential for strengthening the work of MAB in critical ecosystem and UNESCO needs to give special consideration to supporting the Network with appropriate staff and financial resources. The Swedish MAB National Committee hosted the EuroMAB network meeting immediately after the last ICC session, from 3 to 6 July 2011 in Lake Värnern Biosphere Reserve on the theme "Sharing sustainable Futures". A workshop on biosphere reserves and ecosystem services was co-organized by UNESCO/MAB and the Stockholm Resilience Center (SRC). Co-operation with SRC, Sweden with whom UNESCO signed an MOU in 2007 is beginning to be more regular and operational, within the context of PECS (Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society) jointly sponsored by ICSU and UNESCO. The MAB Secretariat is cooperating on a new research programme, entitled GLEAN– *Global Survey on Learning and Participation in Ecosystem Management of Biosphere Reserves* to investigate how stakeholder participation in ecosystem management is related to ecosystem change and learning in various contexts; experiences and outcomes generated in biosphere reserves will be sought after as part of this research programme. The terms of reference for the EuroMAB Network were adopted with 8 working groups established to enable EuroMAB members to work and interact in between meetings using the web-based platforms.

12. MAB Urban ecosystem activities have taken a significant turn for the better, largely as a consequence of the Urban Futures Initiative launched as an outcome of an international symposium jointly convened by MAB, SCOPE and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Shanghai, China, in October 2010. A new project with a contribution of US\$ 2,000,000 from the CHIC Corporation of China has been launched by UNESCO to experiment with integrated rural urbanization approaches in biosphere reserves. The European Commission, based on its experience with the work of the Covenant of Mayors for European Cities has found the Shanghai Declaration on MAB Urban Futures, particularly those dimensions relating to improving energy efficiency of urban ecosystem management, quite interesting and is seeking potential collaboration with the MAB Urban Futures initiative. A European Commission representative is expected to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the ICC on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July to make a statement to the Council Members of the Commission's interest in this regard. Several of the Canary Islands Biosphere Reserves of Spain that comprise whole island territories and have always considered the development of rural and urban zones in an integrated fashion have made significant progress in terms of experimenting with renewable sources of energy. For example the El Hierro Biosphere Reserve's 12000 residents became totally self-sufficient to meet their energy needs based on wind and hydro-power sources. This outcome directly supports the attainment of expected result no: 24 under MLA 6 of the UNESCO's biennial programme for 2012-2013 by demonstrating the use of renewable energy for sustainable development in a manner as to benefit biosphere reserve communities.

13. In line with UNESCO's Africa priority, several activities attempt to strengthen contributions of MAB and WNBR to sustainable development in Africa. AFRIMAB Member countries, in concordance with the provision of the AfriMAB Charter and

Statutes, are due to contribute 1000 USD per year to a special MAB account fund that will be used for AfriMAB activities. Four countries have already contributed and others are expected to follow. ERAIFT continues to build capacity for tropical forest and land resources management in Africa. There are currently 30 students pursuing their Ph.D. programmes in ERAIFT. The 6<sup>th</sup> cohort of 30 students recruited in February 2012 includes 5 female students. 27 African countries have benefited from ERAIFT training contributions thus far. Starting the next scholar year (2013), ERAIFT will become bilingual training institution (French/English) to fulfill its all-Africa potential. New curricula have been developed to address global challenges such as climate change. A high level meeting with the participation of Member States, donors and UNESCO senior team was held in March 2012 at UNESCO to discuss the future of ERAIFT. Member states and donors expressed their support to ERAIFT and acknowledged its excellent performance. Regarding the future of ERAIFT, an opportunity study to assess the relevance of the status of UNESCO category 1 institute has been undertaken and its findings circulated within ERAIFT country partners and relevant services of UNESCO. Given UNESCO's current financial constraints participants to the high level meeting encouraged the ERAIFT management to explore the UNESCO category 2 institutional status. As part of its international activities ERAIFT collaborated actively with the MAB Secretariat to organize the second meeting of South-South Cooperation for the Sustainable Development in Tropical Forest Resources in Sumatra, Indonesia with the participation of partners from Amazon, Congo and Indonesian institutions. Sri Lanka, Columbia and Australia also attended the Sumatra meeting; a cooperative research agenda is under preparation and will be discussed for adoption at the third meeting scheduled to be convened in Brazil in 2013.

14. The Director General's Climate Change Initiative foresees promoting biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites as pilot areas for UN-REDD and REDD+ projects and activities. Some biosphere reserves such as Sierra Gorda in Mexico have gained recognition in successfully developing REDD + projects and others such as Luki in DRC are interested to develop suitable activities. Sierra Gorda in particular was recently awarded the National Geographic's Buffet Prize for their efforts in relation to climate change mitigation and other activities that benefit local communities directly. Several private sector funds, e.g. Althelia Climate Fund, as well as organizations such as Wildlife Works (California, USA) have recognized biosphere reserves as significant opportunities for developing REDD and REDD+ projects. The MAB Secretariat is exploring ways and means of connecting these interests to site and national authorities to support appropriate project development activities.

15. MAB, on behalf of UNESCO and in co-operation with UNEP and other partners organized an Executive Committee meeting of the GRASP (Great Apes Survival Partnership). The second Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO-UNEP GRASP Partnership is due to be convened at UNESCO Headquarters in November 2012. The Executive Committee Meeting and the Council will be dedicated to giving GRASP fresh stimulus to use GRASP as an important tool for the conservation of tropical forest lands.

16. The MAB Secretariat notes with great sadness passing away, on 12 June 2012, of Professor Elinor Ostrom, the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize on Economics in 2009. She received it for her work on governance of the commons. Prof. Ostrom graced a meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 22 June 2011 when she launched a programme of collaboration with MAB on a research agenda that uses biosphere reserves and IFRI (International Forest Research Institute) sites to study the sustainability of socio-ecological systems. This research programme will continue, in cooperation with the University of Michigan, USA and other international partners.

17. The ICC is invited to consider this report which will be introduced to its Members on 9 July 2012 with any new information that is relevant and to make comments, recommendations and suggestions with regard to specific issues raised as well as in respect of the future of MAB and WNBR in the context of recent outcome of Rio + 20 Summit and other relevant events and activities.