

SC-20/Bureau 3
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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

2nd Skype meeting of the Bureau of the International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
Monday 6 April 2020, from 11:00 am to 12:10

Bureau members

Chair: Ms Enny Sudarmonowati (Group IV)

Vice-chairs:

Sweden (Group I) serving also as the Rapporteur: Ms Johanna Mac Taggart

Honduras (Group III): Mr Carlos Madariaga

Nigeria (Group V A): Mr Adepoju Olatunde Adeshola

Sudan (Group V B): Ms Salwa Mansour Abdel Hameed

Estonia (Group II): Mr Toomas Kokovkin (Absent)

UNESCO Secretariat :

ADG/SC, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle

MAB Secretariat:

Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, MAB Secretary

Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa

Ms Meriem Bouamrane

Ms Marie Prchalova

Mr Bandiougou Diawara

Ms Maria Rosa Cardenas Tomazic

Mr Peter Dogse

Ms Martha Vogel

Mr Yangbo Kim

Ms Sima Taheri-Gauter

Ms Patricia Ramé

Ms Sandrine Baron

UNESCO office in Abuja

Mr Yao Ydo

Ms Enang Efiom Moma

Mr Simone Grego

Ms Priscilla Apochi
Ms Magdalene Anene-maidoh
Mr Preci Osagie Aifuwa

1. The second meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB-ICC) was held through Skype for Business on 6 April 2020.

2. A total of five MAB Bureau Members attended the session: the Chair from Indonesia, representatives of Honduras, Sweden, Sudan and Nigeria. The representative of Estonia was missing. Nineteen participants from the UNESCO Secretariat attended the meeting including six colleagues of UNESCO office in Abuja.

3. The full list of participants is presented at the beginning of this report.

4. The meeting was opened by the MAB Secretary, Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, who gave the floor to ADG/SC, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle. She warmly welcomed the MAB Bureau but was sorry that she would not be able to continue to participate in the entire meeting as she was called to an urgent meeting with the Director-General on the Covid-19. She thanked the Bureau members for their work during this complicated situation.

Introduction by the Chair of the MAB-ICC

5. The meeting was chaired by Ms Enny Sudarmonowati who thanked the Bureau members and the MAB Secretariat for the organization of this second meeting and the preparation of the agenda. She recalled that the first meeting held on 23 March was mainly meant to decide on the postponement of the upcoming 32nd session of the MAB-ICC to be held in Abuja, Nigeria from 22 to 26 June 2020, in view of the current situation. The Chair stated that this second meeting is more structured with items on the agenda sent prior to the meeting by the MAB Secretariat.

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Bureau members of the MAB-ICC adopted the agenda of its second Skype meeting without modification.

7. Item 5 of the agenda was about the extension of deadline to receive the complementary information regarding the new Biosphere Reserves by 30 September 2020 instead of 22 May 2020 in order to be assessed by the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC in 2020. The Chair pointed out that as the decision on the postponement of the upcoming MAB-ICC has been made during the last meeting, it is reasonable to extend also the deadlines to submit the complementary information from countries. The same deadline for receiving the additional information shall be for the Periodic Review and Follow-up on MAB-ICC recommendations.

8. The MAB Secretary provided some more clarification about this item.

The MAB Secretariat received concerns from some Member States mentioning that they could not provide the requested information by the initial deadline of 22 May 2020, given the fact that the situation of confinement is still ongoing in their countries. Therefore, the recommendations emanating from the report of the IACBR will be amended by providing the new deadline for submission of additional information until 30 September 2020.

9. The Bureau members accepted the proposition without modification on the item 5 of the agenda.

10. Item 6 of the agenda was about the extension of deadline for Proposals for new Biosphere Reserves and Extensions/ Modifications/ Renaming to Biosphere Reserves by 15 December 2020 instead of 30 September 2020 in order to be assessed by the 33rd session of the MAB-ICC in 2021.

11. The MAB Secretary provided an explanation about this item. Some countries have ongoing applications for new Biosphere Reserves and they are currently finalizing their nomination files. This completion will require more time taking into consideration the confinement period. Therefore, it will be appropriate if the date of 15 December 2020 is proposed instead of 30 September 2020 for countries to benefit from another 2.5 months to complete their application.

12. The Bureau members accepted the proposition without modification on the item 6 of the agenda and after the proposition of Sweden, they all accepted to include this deadline also for the submission of Periodic Reviews.

13. Item 7 of the agenda was about the examination of options for postponement of the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC in 2020. Item 7a is the first option was to hold a virtual

32nd session of the MAB-ICC from Paris on 14 October 2020 in order to validate the new Biosphere Reserves and Young Scientists Awardees and postpone the Exit Strategy and the election of the new MAB-ICC Bureau. The second option is to hold the 33rd session of the MAB-ICC in June or July 2021 in Nigeria with new Biosphere Reserves and the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme.

14. Before the examination of this item by the Bureau members, the MAB Secretary provided some information about other UN meetings postponement.

Ms Meriem Bouamrane informed on the official postponement of IUCN congress, which will be held from 7 to 15 January 2021. The first meeting of CBD will be held in August 2020 whereas it should have been held in May 2020. This means a postponement of minimum 3 months. COP 15 will also be held after IUCN Congress in January 2021 without any specific date communicated yet.

15. The MAB Secretary provided an explanation about this item. He mentioned the communication received by MAB France stating that there are several new Biosphere Reserves proposals to be approved by the upcoming MAB-ICC. The fact that the June meeting will be postponed [goes without saying](#), as it is a global meeting and the end of confinement in Europe but also in other countries, must be taken into account. This will be a pity for the new Biosphere Reserves that are ready and completed, as the date of their official announcement is not yet known. This virtual MAB-ICC in October may be a good occasion for the announcement of the new Biosphere Reserves. At the same time postponing to a later date without having the new nominations will take away the positive part of the MAB-ICC.

16. Therefore, the proposal of the MAB Secretariat is to have a short MAB-ICC in one day, on 14 October to announce new nominations of Biosphere Reserves and also the Young Scientists Awardees. In this case only decisions without vote will take place. All other items, including, the Exit Strategy and Bureau elections will be postponed to the next MAB-ICC.

17. The proposal of MAB Secretariat with item 7.b is to keep the next physical MAB-ICC in Nigeria in June or July 2021 with the decision of new Biosphere Reserves, which have been received by 15 December 2020 and evaluated by the Advisory Committee early 2021. This 33rd MAB-ICC will be the occasion also to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of MAB-ICC including all topics as well as the election of a new Bureau, which will serve for only one year, as the UNESCO General Conference will elect new members (renewal of half) of the MAB-ICC in November 2021.

18. If Nigeria agrees to postpone the hosting of the upcoming 32nd session of the MAB-ICC, the 33rd Session of MAB-ICC could be held in Nigeria.

19. The director of UNESCO Office in Abuja, Mr Yao Ydo did not object to this proposal. However, he mentioned that the decision is with the Nigerian Government, especially with regards the budget and possible use of the funds during 2021.

20. The Chair mentioned that this issue is the first to be checked with the Nigerian Government as there is no problem from UNESCO HQs and UNESCO Office in Abuja. She asked Nigeria if there is no problem for the country to secure the funding.

21. Mr Adepoju Olatunde Adeshola said that the present situation is not clear. If the current situation of confinement is ended by the coming months, Nigeria will be able to host the MAB-ICC by end of September, October, November or even early December. As the Nigerian Government's commitment is only valid for one year, all options remain open before it is decided when the next MAB-ICC will take place.

22. The Nigeria Representative, therefore, stated that it was too early to decide and therefore proposed not to decide now and leave this decision.

23. Sweden thanked for this constructive meeting and this very good Plan B for the MAB-ICC. She suggested that it would be good to have a final deadline for when - at the latest - we have to decide if there should be a virtual meeting in October 2020. This deadline should be based on the time needed by the Secretariat to prepare the meeting (sending invitations, having the documents ready, etc). One should not wait for too long to make the decision, whether to have a virtual MAB-ICC or not, since all clear communication is good news in this strange world we are experiencing today. For instance Biosphere Reserves nominees are waiting for the good news such as their announcement.

24. The Chair asked Nigeria until when the country is able to host the meeting in 2020. Nigeria mentioned that it can be until mid-December 2020.

25. Sudan assured that the two options provided by the MAB Secretariat are fine but we cannot decide now as this depends on Nigeria.

26. Honduras mentioned that we should wait before taking our decision.

27. After discussion with the Bureau members in attendance and the information provided by the MAB Secretariat, it has been unanimously decided that the decision will be hold for the moment.

28. On item 8 about the update on Status of the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR), Ms Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa mentioned that Mr Petr Čupa is continuing to prepare the draft zero which will be received by the MAB Secretariat by 20 April 2020. The following table shows the steps of the development process:

Draft version	Ready for comments	Circulated for Revision (entity and period)	revised draft version	
0.0	20 April 2020 MAB Secretariat	MAB Secretariat April	Draft rev.1 ready by 30 April 2020	
Rev.1	4 May 2020 TGBR Working Group	TSG's + TGBR WG May	Draft Rev. 2 by 29 May 2020	
Rev. 2	1 June 2020	IABCR June	Draft Rev. 3 by 26 June 2020	
Rev. 3	29 June 2020	MAB Bureau July	31 July 2020	Draft Final for MAB ICC by 15 August 2020

29. The Bureau members accepted the proposition without objection on the item 8 of the agenda and noted that the report will be done by the MAB Secretariat by 15 August 2020.

30. On item 9, the Bureau members agreed that the next Skype meeting could be held on 27 April 2020 at 10 am CET (Paris time). A Skype invitation will be sent at a later stage. The MAB Secretary specified that by this time we should know more about the end of the confinement period and the continuation of the discussion on the postponement of the 32nd Session of MAB-ICC.

31. On item 10, Nigeria suggested that the MAB Secretariat should send a solidarity message to its networks. The MAB Secretary mentioned that the Director-General of UNESCO had published a general message on its institutional website, and that the Secretariat will prepare this solidarity message and post it to the MAB webpage, in social networks (e.g. Twitter) and communicate it to our Biosphere Reserve networks and UNESCO chairs. The Chair underlined the importance of posting this solidarity message in the MAB webpage.

32. On behalf of the ADG/SC, the MAB Secretary took the floor. He reiterated ADG/SC's thanks to all members of the MAB-ICC Bureau and the MAB Secretariat for the good progress made until now, and specially thanked Nigeria through Professor Adepoju Olatunde Adeshola for their generosity and their flexibility. Although the situation is slightly improving in Europe, the rest of the world is going through different phases. He stated that we have to pilot the situation and see how we can move forward. He reiterated that it is very important to organise the next MAB-ICC in Nigeria either in 2020 or in 2021. As Covid-19 is partly manmade, he announced that the upcoming MAB-ICC will have a reflexion on it, on how human deals with nature and that the next MAB-ICC there will be an item on the agenda about this Covid-19. For the first time, such a crisis is being handled worldwide, and a global solidarity is taking shape facing global challenges and UN was part of this global solidarity.

33. The Chair thanked everybody and closed the meeting.