

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP (ISG) FOR THE MAB PROGRAMME AND THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES OF UNESCO

Terms of Reference

The 21st session of the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, at its meeting held in the Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve of the Republic of Korea from 25 to 29 May 2009 decided to establish an International Support Group (ISG) as an ad hoc committee of the Council in accordance with the provisions of article V of the statutes and article V of the rules of procedure of the MAB-ICC.

ISG, under the guidance of its Chair and with the technical support of the Bureau of the ICC and the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, shall facilitate the work of the MAB Secretariat at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) to ensure the effective implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for 2008-2013 as adopted by the 20th session of the ICC convened from 4 to 8 February 2008 in Madrid, Spain, as well as to raise awareness and support for activities of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in UNESCO Member States. The role of the ISG shall be to inform UNESCO Member States of the decisions and priorities set by the Council to implement the MAB Programme, but not to modify Council decisions or take decisions on any new issues.

ISG is open to participation of representatives from all 34 ICC Member States as well as Observer Delegations that are Member States of UNESCO which are not represented in the Council interested in contributing towards the implementation of MAP. Meetings of the ISG, shall be convened by the MAB Secretariat in accordance with the Bureau of the Council at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris). The Secretariat shall propose a provisional agenda for each of the ISG meetings and make available relevant documents necessary for deliberating on the agenda items in English and French at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Discussions during the ISG meetings shall be conducted in English and French.

The costs of interpretation and translation of documents in English and French for the ISG meetings shall be borne by the MAB Secretariat. The group is open to participation of ICC and Observer Delegations.

The rules of procedure of the ISG shall remain as informal arrangements already tested as part of the work of the Informal Support Group established by the Bureau of the ICC in April 2008 and which met twice, on 16 July 2008 and 19 March 2009, prior to the 21st session of the ICC on 25-29 May 2009. The Chair of the ICC may request, however, in consultation with the Secretariat, Bureau of the ICC and any other ICC or Observer Delegate as necessary that a particular ISG meeting be chaired by a UNESCO Member State identified by him/herself and shall inform the Secretariat of the reasons for his decision in this regard.