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Twenty-sixth session

Jönköping, East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Sweden

10 - 13 June 2014

FINAL REPORT

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I. Introduction and Opening by the outgoing Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council

1. The twenty-sixth session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held in Jönköping, East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Sweden, from 10 to 13 June 2014.
2. A total of 140 participants included representatives of the following Members of the ICC as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th and 37th sessions: Algeria, Arab Republic of Egypt, Burkina Faso, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United Republic of Tanzania.
3. Observers from the following Member States were present: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Canada, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Italy, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Peru, Serbia, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and United States of America.
4. Representatives from the Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment (SCOPE), the Stockholm Resilience Center and Terra-Sana Environmental Consulting were present.
5. The full list of participants is presented as annex 1 to this report.
6. Prof Boshra Salem, the outgoing Chair of the MAB Council, officially opened the meeting. She welcomed all members of the MAB Council and Observer delegations. She thanked the host country Sweden, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, the University of Jönköping and the team from the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve for their warm welcome. She acknowledged that their efforts would contribute to the success of the meeting.

II. Opening Remarks

7. Mr Magnus Kindbom, Swedish State Secretary for Rural Affairs, welcomed all the delegates. He informed participants that Jönköping is the tenth largest municipality in Sweden. He mentioned that Jönköping has many nature reserves and most of its forests are protected. These forests are models of how one can live with and from natural resources without depleting them. He added that historically these forests were a source for the production of raw materials. He informed that during the past decade Sweden has established five biosphere reserves which are in good compliance to the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the Seville Strategy.
8. He added that creating opportunities for the youth and engaging them to shape their future is central to the goals of the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve. In view of this, initiatives with a focus on education like nature schools and incorporation of the biosphere reserve concept and sustainability in education have been launched. In closing, he wished participants a successful meeting.
9. Ms Anita Hansbo, the Vice Chancellor of Jönköping University, also welcomed participants to the University of Jönköping. She informed participants that the university prepares its students as global citizens to enable them develop conditions for cooperation and understanding between nations and also to help solve global future challenges and problems. She added that these visions go hand in hand with what UNESCO stands for and was pleased that the University had been chosen as the venue for the Twenty-sixth session of the MAB ICC.
10. Three University of Jönköping students made a statement on behalf of the other students who had volunteered to assist at the MAB ICC. They recalled their experiences as interns at the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve. They added that their experience had made them realize the importance of conveying the message of sustainability to young people. In closing, they thanked all participants and wished them a fruitful meeting.
11. The Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, through a video message welcomed all participants. She thanked the Swedish MAB National Committee and the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO for their leadership. She recalled the adoption of the "Exit Strategy" during last year's MAB ICC and was pleased that this has generated positive response from many Member States. She also mentioned last year's decision to develop a new MAB Strategy based on lessons learnt from the review of the Madrid Action Plan. She wished participants success in deliberation to craft a new vision for the future of MAB, including a new research agenda that will contribute to the Future Earth Initiative and the Intergovernmental Sciences Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). She added that biosphere reserves connect the dots between green societies, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and sustainable local development. In view of this, the MAB Programme and the WNBR stand at the heart of UNESCO's contribution to sustainable development and the shaping of an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. She concluded by wishing participants fruitful deliberations.

III. Report by outgoing Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council

12. In her report, Prof. Salem recalled the final evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) for Biosphere Reserves. She stated that the MAP has been a key document in the development of the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for the period 2008-2013. She stressed that she is convinced the MAP evaluation emphasizes the strength and wisdom contained in the MAP and that it has served the programme and network well.
13. She thanked all MAB National Committees and Focal Points, Biosphere Reserve Managers and network representatives for their contributions and inputs towards the success of the MAP evaluation process. She highlighted briefly some of the evaluation results, such as the evidence that several biosphere reserves function as learning and demonstration sites and that the majority of biosphere reserves systematically collaborate with different institutional actors. She added that cooperation, management and communication are consistently rated as the highest priority action areas for the future.
14. Prof. Salem also talked about the future MAB Strategy. She mentioned in particular that the volume and quantity of inputs received was impressive after the open invitation sent by the Secretariat in collaboration with the MAB Bureau and a Reference Group to all MAB National Committees and Focal Points, through a MAB Circular Letter requesting inputs and suggestions for the new MAB Strategy.
15. She acknowledged that the international community is faced with challenging issues that form the basis and rationale for the existence of MAB and the WNBR through a number of UN conventions, as well as in the context of the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals. In view of this, MAB and WNBR are more than ever challenged to deliver services that make a real difference to Member States and all stakeholders.
16. In terms of partnerships, she informed that MAB is developing or has developed mutually beneficial links with bodies and international programmes such as IPBES and Future Earth. She acknowledged the continuous effort of the MAB Programme in reaching out to young researchers through the MAB Young Scientist Awards. She added that through the Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management and the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, MAB recognizes the good efforts of already well-established institutions, researches and biosphere reserve managers. She informed participants that the MAB Programme's outreach and dissemination of information has improved significantly through the use of MABnet and the social media. She encouraged participants to use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate good and honest stories about MAB and the WNBR.
17. In her concluding remarks, she stated that though the future looks challenging there are also opportunities. Though expectations of MAB and the WNBR are high, she is confident that by working together the MAB Programme can deliver.

IV. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur

18. The Council elected its bureau as follows:

Chair: Mexico (Mr Sergio Guevara Sada)

Vice-Chairs:

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Mr Martin Price as Rapporteur)
- Ukraine
- Ghana
- Kazakhstan
- Arab Republic of Egypt

V. Adoption of the Agenda

19. A couple of delegates proposed that under agenda item 18, the issue of the self-assessment of the MAB Programme should be discussed. The Council subsequently adopted the agenda and time table.

VI. Report of the MAB Secretary

20. The Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr Han Qunli introduced document SC-14/CONF.226/4. He highlighted activities undertaken at the regional, national and international levels since the 25th Session of the MAB ICC.

21. In broadly highlighting the overall situation of the MAB Programme, he informed participants about the strong support the Programme has received from Member States, which has resulted in demonstrating and maintaining its relevance in UNESCO's new Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021). The MAB Programme has been assigned to implement one of the six Main Lines of Action under the Natural Sciences programme. He informed participants that the governing bodies of UNESCO have given ecological sciences and the MAB Programme about 79% of the total Regular Budget proposed, which has ensured the basis for the implementation of the MAB Programme. He also mentioned the current staffing situation in the field offices and at Headquarters.

22. In highlighting the added value of biosphere reserves, the Secretary presented two examples. The first was the Marais Audomarois Biosphere Reserve in the northern part of France, a very productive wetland recognized under the Ramsar Convention. This biosphere reserve includes the historical city of Saint Omer and its socio-economic activities include traditional vegetable production and a highly valued site for leisure and tourism. He also talked about the Gochang Biosphere Reserve located in the south-west of the Republic of Korea. It is composed of forests and wetlands and it is an important site for migratory birds. Economic activities in this site include vegetable and fruit farming, ecotourism and salt production.

23. The Secretary outlined the implementation of some decisions adopted at the 25th session of the MAB ICC. He informed participants that the Exit Strategy has been initiated and that it had generated some level of positive response from Member States. He added that this demonstrates the willingness of Member States to support the goal of ensuring the

credibility of the MAB Programme and the WNBR. He mentioned the evaluation of the MAP by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service. He assured delegates that an extensive presentation would be made by the representative from the Internal Oversight Service on the evaluation results.

24. The Secretary highlighted actions and activities undertaken such as the completion of the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands project. This project had run for 10 years with funding by the Flemish Government of Belgium. Beneficiary countries included: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia. He was pleased to inform participants about the first MAB Category II Center which was officially inaugurated in April 2014. This center will focus on scientific cooperation between the two shores and biosphere reserves of the Mediterranean. Other projects mentioned include the Barefoot Solar Engineer Programme in the Volcans Biosphere Reserve in Rwanda. This project concerns the use of renewable energy and solar panels in biosphere reserves in Africa. In addition, the Secretary talked about the Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve which links El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and is a significant tri-national transboundary biosphere reserve in Latin America. Due to the relevance of this designation not only to conservation values but also for local economic development for the three countries and communities concerned, Germany is providing a 11 million euros package to help promote this transboundary cooperation.
25. He recalled actions that had been undertaken by the various regional and thematic networks. Notable among these were the REDBIOS network meeting in Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe; the AfriMAB meeting in Ghana; EuroMAB meeting in Canada; EABRN meeting in Mongolia; a training course on Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve Management in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea; SeaBRnet meeting in Palawan Island Biosphere Reserve, Philippines and the SACAM meeting in Islamabad.
26. Several Member States congratulated the MAB Secretariat for the detailed report and the presentation made by the Secretary. They clearly underscored the need for projects, especially in relation to capacity building of MAB National Committees and managers of biosphere reserves, on the implementation of the new MAB Strategy and the Exit Strategy. A delegate called for capacity building in the Caribbean to ensure the successful implementation of the biosphere reserve concept in this region. One delegate requested that the Secretariat provide contact information on the staff in the UNESCO field offices for the purpose of collaboration at the field level.
27. The Secretariat was commended for the development of partnerships with organizations and initiatives such as Springer and Future Earth. One delegate requested that the Secretariat look into the possibility of negotiating with Springer to give Member States and other stakeholders free access to any publications which might result from an agreement with Springer.
28. A couple of delegates also talked about the need to support the creation of more transboundary biosphere reserves. The issue of climate change mitigation was highlighted by one delegate and the importance of biosphere reserves to work on renewable energy was mentioned.
29. The Secretary thanked delegates for their comments and questions and also for their continued support. He assured delegates that the Secretariat will take on board their

comments and work to address them in particular on the capacity building for the MAB programme at the national level.

VII. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States/ Regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB and discussion on collaborative thematic and research projects

30. The Chair of the MAB ICC invited Member States to highlight activities which they had implemented both at the national, regional and international level since the 25th session of the MAB ICC. Detailed reports submitted by Member States have been published on the MABnet and submissions that have been made during this session will be added. Oral presentations were made by Japan, France, Germany, Egypt, Malaysia, South Africa, Algeria, Thailand, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Republic of Korea, Tanzania, Estonia, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Israel, Mexico, Ghana, USA, Argentina, Italy, Austria, Canada Indonesia and Switzerland.
31. A number of delegates reported on the preparation of the periodic review reports for their biosphere reserves and proposals for new biosphere reserves. Reinforcement of some MAB National Committees was also mentioned, especially to include collaboration between biosphere reserve managers and research scientists, in line with the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development.
32. Several countries highlighted their activities with regard to their participation in the various thematic networks and on collaborations with other Member States. Germany reported on their capacity building workshops held for biosphere reserves from some African Member States. France reported on joint work with the German MAB National Committee on transboundary issues. Austria and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland informed participants about the biosphere reserves their respective countries had withdrawn from the WNBR due to their non-conformity to the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
33. Three networks - AfriMAB, EABRN and Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Network - gave overviews of their activities in the past year. They mentioned meetings and training organized by and for members of the network. AfriMAB also mentioned the sub-regional project Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves.

VIII. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP)

34. The UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Office introduced the results of the Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan. The methodology and limitations of the evaluation, some of the key findings and the recommendations were summarized. In addition, IOS indicated that the draft report of the evaluation is available online and any comments from delegates submitted by the end of June will be welcome and will be considered in the finalization of the report.
35. Following the introduction, delegates asked questions and made comments welcoming the work of IOS in cooperation with the MAB Bureau/Reference Group and the MAB Secretariat.

36. Germany stressed that their biosphere reserves appreciate the MAP and often refer to it in their activities. Noting that it is apparently not always necessarily clear to Member States what the benefits are of having biosphere reserves and of being part of the WNBR, Germany inquired about the finding in the MAP evaluation that several biosphere reserves are disconnected from the WNBR and what the reasons for this could be.
37. The UK commented that the response rate to the MAP survey was not very good, and asked whether it might be possible to look at the responses in conjunction with the responses to the periodic review in order to see which countries are active and those that are not. Thanking IOS for their good work, the UK said the evaluation had produced valuable insights, which would inform development of the new MAB Strategy.
38. Egypt suggested that the regional networks can perhaps help reinforce MAB and biosphere reserve in places where their visibility and engagement with processes like the MAP evaluation are low.
39. Estonia asked if there was a correlation between the age of the biosphere reserves and their response rates.
40. Israel commented that the MAP evaluation had resulted in an interesting and timely report and that it highlighted the need to consider the meaning of the network. Early in the MAB Programme, the network was more of a collection of sites representative of different ecosystems, today the WNBR is seen as a network where more active engagement and networking is sought.
41. IOS thanked the delegates for their pertinent questions and comments. IOS briefly commented on the issue of the value of the biosphere reserve designation at the local level and in terms of being part of a global network. In practice, the two levels reinforce each other. The other main issue that was raised is that a significant proportion of biosphere reserves and national committees are disconnected from the WNBR. IOS had explained in its presentation that there is an association between non-response and not being connected to the network. There are multiple reasons for non-response, including the importance of the biosphere reserve designation and/or the WNBR's activities for a particular biosphere reserve or MAB National Committee. There is probably also an association between non-response to the survey and non-compliance with the periodic review which can be verified. IOS did not look into the question of why some biosphere reserves or MAB National Committees are disconnected from the WNBR, this is a question that merits further inquiry.
42. IOS in its summary report to the upcoming session of UNESCO's Executive Board, will include the following statement:
« The MAB ICC in the development of the future action plan for the WNBR and the MAB Programme, which will emanate from its new strategy 2015-2025, will take into consideration the recommendations of the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan. »

IX. MAB and World Network of Biosphere Reserve - post Rio+20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021

43. The MAB Secretariat made a short introduction to document SC-14/CONF.226/7/REV that contained the 'zero' draft of the new MAB strategy together with a suggested timeframe and working method for its finalization. In the introduction, the MAB Secretariat extended its appreciation to all those MAB National Committees, Focal Points, regional networks and biosphere reserves that had made suggestions for strategic elements (all of which are available on the MABnet as a reference document for the 26th MAB ICC) that usefully could be included in the strategy, as well as to the MAB Bureau and the Reference Group for their collaboration in the preparation of the zero draft strategy.
44. Several delegates and observers took the floor. While encouraged by the richness of the submissions made as reflected in the zero draft, members of the Council were conscious of the need to prepare a short and well-focused strategy complemented by a more detailed action plan and noted that the zero draft included ample information for both such documents.
45. Japan emphasized the importance of including sustainable science in the next strategy, and pointed out that (1) the benefit of linking BRs with UNESCO Associated Schools, (2) the need to make a distinction among BRs, World Heritage Site and Global Geoparks, and (3) the necessity to study how to deal with secondary nature in BR should be also reflected in the next strategy.
46. France stressed the strong support in submissions towards the continued validity of the Seville Strategy and suggested it could be updated with complementary strategic elements, such as on ecological transitions of societies, ecosystem services and climate change. In order to enhance implementation, France stressed the importance of including the periodic review, branding and networking, transboundary cooperation and partnerships in the strategy.
47. Germany inquired about the level at which the new strategy would be examined and eventually approved in UNESCO (i.e. MAB ICC, UNESCO Executive Board, General Conference).
48. Egypt made the point that there has to be a clear and consistent differentiation between the vision and mission statements. Egypt suggested that the action plan could include a column with the financial resources required for implementing specific actions.
49. Hungary welcomed the proposed working methodology contained in section I of the document and the fact that the process so far had been transparent. Hungary proposed that the time frame for the new strategy usefully could be 2015-2025.
50. The Republic of Korea, while welcoming the zero draft, regretted not having received the MAB Circular Letter and therefore not being able to make a submission. The Republic of Korea stressed the importance of enhanced visibility of MAB and the WNB. The new strategy should not necessarily contain more than 5-6 strategic elements. Indicators from BRs could be used to help Member States implement relevant conventions. Research on sustainable development in BRs should be encouraged.

51. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland also endorsed the need for a succinct strategy text backed-up with a more detailed action plan that preferably would be 'populated' with concrete actions submitted through a bottom-up process. The MAB Secretariat could perhaps develop a template form to be distributed widely for this purpose. The UK emphasized the necessity that BRs should be what they are said to be and for the strategy to be in line with the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021. The UK also stressed the need for strong research elements and information on and networking among researchers active in and on BRs, including the social sciences. An international WNBR Conference in 2016 could perhaps have this as its focus.
52. Germany suggested that the MAB Secretariat could examine existing rosters of experts established by relevant conventions, programmes and bodies that could include information on individuals with BR expertise. Germany wondered if the potential partner organizations identified in the zero draft had been approached for this purpose, and offered to make connections with the IPBES, and expressed the wish that the main UNESCO contributions towards this typically would originate and be anchored at the UNESCO MAB Secretariat. Germany hoped that the first draft of the new strategy could be shared with all BRs so that they could make meaningful contributions.
53. Sweden supported the notion that the vision statement had to focus on what we like to do and achieve and not on what we are, and that there would be a shorter strategy and a more detailed action plan. Stressing the importance of an open and transparent process to develop the strategy, Sweden emphasized the important role of universities and research and the need to facilitate MAB and WNBR networking among them.
54. Estonia made the point that the strategy and the action plan should be understandable by those that are expected to implement them. In addition to a strategy and action plan, MAB should have a set of guidelines on implementation modalities.
55. Israel cautioned that MAB and the WNBR have to focus and cannot address everything for everybody, and that the WNBR should be true to its original mandate, i.e. that a relevant vision statement would focus on bottom-up conservation of nature motivated by local communities' awareness of the benefits of ecosystem services underpinned by biodiversity. References to issues like sustainable development and climate change would therefore not be necessary.
56. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines asked for clarification concerning the relationship between the Seville Strategy and the new strategy, notably if the new strategy would build on and form an addendum to the Seville Strategy. The new strategy would have to be clear and concise. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also wondered how the strategy development process would be financed, recalling that the MAB budget is so limited.
57. France recalled that during 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would be finalized and also hopefully the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris would witness important decisions. The adoption of a new MAB action plan in 2016 would be an appropriate schedule.

58. The USA thanked the MAB Secretariat for the document and appreciated the inputs made, and offered to participate actively in the future strategy development process. The USA supported the proposal that the strategy could be for the period 2015-2025.
59. Canada appreciated the opportunity to work with EuroMAB on a strategy submission and emphasized the importance of concise vision and mission statements. Canada also referred to an ongoing discussion in Canada on time-limited BR designations.
60. Côte d'Ivoire appreciated the document, stressing key points that should be well reflected in the strategy: dialogue and communication; equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in BRs; legal BR aspects; and sustainable financing.
61. Algeria welcomed the document, stressing that if MAB worked on supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and sustainable development it would remain true to its initial mandate. Algeria also stressed the importance of providing support to biosphere reserves so that they could become true sites of excellence.
62. The MAB Secretary recalled that sustainability science is included in the zero draft and is included in the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy, and that it would be good to give further attention to how to best implement the concept. In terms of level of adoption of the new strategy, the Secretary stated that the new strategy could be adopted by the MAB ICC that would then inform the UNESCO Executive Board about its content. In terms of timing, if the new strategy is adopted in 2015, it could be envisaged that the new action plan could be finalized in 2016 at a possible international WNBR conference, allowing for reference to the finalized SDGs.
63. In terms of potential partners, the Secretary would welcome partnerships with all those organizations included in the zero draft, and mentioned that he already had shared this with Future Earth for their information and possible feed-back. The Secretary agreed about the importance of a new MAB research agenda as well as the need for guidelines, or operational manual. He said the new strategy would build on the Seville Strategy, not replace or amend it. The Seville Strategy had been adopted for the long-term, the new strategy, like the MAP, was for the mid-term.
64. In discussing the future process and timeline, the Council supported the proposals contained in the document suggesting that the MAB Bureau together with 6 experts would form the Strategy Group. The MAB Secretariat would draft terms of reference for the Strategy Group and for the selection of the 6 experts.
65. It was agreed that the new MAB Strategy should be ready for adoption at the 27th MAB ICC in 2015. For this purpose, the ICC agreed that following the deliberations at the 26th MAB ICC on the zero draft strategy, the MAB Secretariat should produce a more condensed draft which brings together common statements made by the ICC and takes into account the findings of the evaluation of the MAP and distributes this to the Strategy Group (i.e. MAB Bureau with 6 Experts).
66. A two-day working meeting will be organized by the MAB Secretariat in October-November 2014 in order to prepare the first draft of the new strategy that should be widely circulated for consultation and comment in November-December 2014. Subsequently, an iterative process, which will take place through electronic communication, including through the

MABnet, to engage all MAB stakeholders, including the regional and thematic networks, will produce several drafts. The almost-final version of the strategy should be ready in time for final review and adoption at the 27th session of the MAB ICC.

67. The Secretary noted that the MAB budget included limited but sufficient funds for this purpose.

X. Proposal for new biosphere reserves and the extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR

68. Some discussions took place during this agenda item. Several delegates pointed out certain discrepancies between recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and the Bureau and comments and inputs were made with regard to the process of evaluating proposals.
69. The procedure of approving proposals and the meaning of each type of recommendation was clarified. The Secretary of the MAB programme explained that a deferral was not a negative decision but it is rather an opportunity for the country to improve their proposal in line with the technical recommendations. It was also recalled that the Bureau (which is elected by the Council) as well as the Advisory Committee provide recommendations to the Council which then take final decisions. Some delegates commended the professionalism, the expertise and dedication of the members of the Advisory Committee who thoroughly review all proposals on a tight schedule.
70. While it was recognized that the Bureau has authority to make recommendations which can be in contradiction with those of the Advisory Committee, it was proposed that in such cases, the Bureau should inform the concerned country before announcing the recommendation to the Council. Therefore it was proposed that the timeframe of future sessions of the Bureau and Council be modified, so that the Bureau may examine proposals prior to the Council meeting and any recommendations of the Bureau that are different from those of the Advisory Committee will be included in the documents to be provided to the Council. Some countries raised the issue of the short deadlines between the time the Secretariat notifies them of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the deadline for submission of the requested information for the next session of the ICC. It was also stressed that additional information provided beyond the deadline stated in letters sent by the Secretariat, and especially during the Council session, will not be considered by the Bureau or the Council. As countries often need more time to respond to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, it was proposed that it should meet as soon as possible after the deadline for countries to submit proposals (30 September). With regard to the request from some delegates to access nomination and periodic review files online, other delegates said that it might be difficult for some delegations to have access to them due to the huge amount of documents involved. Other delegates proposed that, at future sessions of the Council, the Secretariat should provide computers containing all proposals and periodic reviews, as well as hard copies, for delegates to consult.
71. Taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (17 to 20 March 2014) and the Council's further deliberations thereon on 10 to 12 June, 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:

Nominations approved

72. **Valdés (Argentina).** The Council took note of this nomination from Argentina. The proposed site encompasses the Patagonian Steppe, Hill Plains and Plateaus and Argentine Sea eco-regions. It is home to significant biodiversity, including highly fragile terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the conservation of which is crucial for addressing the vulnerabilities of key species. Both the Patagonian steppe eco-region and the Argentine Sea have been recognized as important sites and inscribed on WWF's Global 200 list. The marine coastal areas are suitable habitats for the feeding and reproduction of many bird and marine mammal species. Particular bodies of water, such as the Golfo Nuevo and San José, function as crucial sites for the reproduction of species like the southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*).
73. The Valdés Biosphere Reserve will incorporate the Peninsula Valdés Natural Protected Area, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999; San Jose and Playa Fracaso, nominated Ramsar sites in 2012; the El Doradillo municipal protected area and the natural protected areas of Punta Loma and Punta León. According to the 2010 National Census, 214,196 inhabitants in the Viedma and Rawson departments will benefit from the creation of this biosphere reserve. The most important economic activities in the region are livestock rearing, tourism, fisheries, industry (aluminium, porphyry), the port and, more recently, wind power generation.
74. The Advisory Committee had pointed out that there was no marine transition area and only a very small terrestrial transition area. The Advisory Committee had further noted that there was no clear composition of the management council for the biosphere reserve. Lastly, the Advisory Committee had noted that only a small-scale map of the biosphere reserve had been provided.
75. The council examined the additional information provided by the national authorities with regard to the zonation and the composition of the management council. The Council also acknowledged the submission of a larger scale map by the national authorities. The Council concluded that the information provided was satisfactory and **approved** the site.
76. **Mt. Chilbo (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).** The Council took note of this site which covers a total surface area of 50,340 ha consisting of 2,930ha as core area, 26,500ha as buffer zone and 20,910ha as transition area. The site was formed in the eastern coast of the Korea Peninsula by fault movement and volcanic eruption during the period of the late Neogene and the early Quaternary. It is of great significance in biodiversity conservation for its distribution of 16 species of plants endemic to Korea and 30 species of nationally and globally threatened plants and animals. This site is described as a very important storehouse of genetic diversity with 132 species of medical herbs, 67 species of wild vegetables, 16 species of wild fruits, and notably a specialty mushroom *Tricholoma matsutake* (pine mushroom, highly priced due to its distinct spicy-aromatic odour) which is of great economic and scientific value.

77. Tourism in the buffer zone and agriculture and fishery in the transition area are the main economic activities in the proposed biosphere reserve. It has 160 tourist attraction sites and has a developed infrastructure for tourism and handles myriad visitors every year. The site's potential to develop and implement an ecotourism industry is mentioned in the nomination file. Many historical remains and relics have been well preserved in the site: for example, Kaesim temple built in 826 and about 11 natural monuments. It is envisaged that this and other assets which attract people to the site will help it fully implement the function of logistic support through the promotion of public awareness on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. It is reported that plans are underway to create a demonstration site for conservation and suitable development in the transition area and organize regular field training and lectures for land management staff.
78. Local community and public authorities' participation is described. However, no cultural and social impact assessment has been conducted yet. The Council noted that no management policy or plan for the biosphere reserve has been established. The Council **approved** the site and recommended that a proposed management plan for the biosphere reserve be developed and submitted one year from the notification of approval.
79. **Bosque Seco (Ecuador).** The Council welcomed the proposed biosphere reserve by Ecuador. The area is located in south-western Ecuador, and covers approximately 501,040ha of which 317,600ha comprises dry forests and scrub similar to that of the Noroeste Biosphere Reserve in Peru. The dry forests located within the proposed biosphere reserve are the most extensive and best preserved in the country. Their rarity makes them a conservation priority as 97% of dry forest ecosystems are on the verge of extinction. The proposed biosphere reserve is also home to one of the highest concentrations of endemic birds in South America. Fifty-one species have been identified in addition to fifteen endemic species of trees and shrubs, and three endemic species of mammals. The area has been classified as the Tumbesino Endemism Centre and forms part of the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot. It also includes a significant population of flagship species, such as the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) and mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata*).
80. The proposed area covers eight counties in the provinces of Loja and El Oro, inhabited by 106,000 people. The main economic activities are livestock rearing and agriculture (coffee, fruit and corn). Numerous manifestations of culture and identity are expressed through regional productive systems (e.g. bordered systems, livestock management and albarradas) and local crafts. The area also encompasses more than 100 heritage sites, including the Puyango Petrified Forest – the largest of its kind in the world – and the city of Catacocha, an Ecuadorian national heritage site. The proposed biosphere reserve would guarantee ecosystem services of water regulation for the Catamayo-Chira and Puyango Tumbes bi-national basins.
81. The Council concluded that this proposal meets the criteria for biosphere reserves and **approved** the site. The Council stated that there is a great potential to create a transboundary biosphere reserve with Peru.
82. **Mont-Viso Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (France/Italy).** The Council acknowledged the receipt of the signed political agreement between the two countries to establish the Mont-Viso transboundary biosphere reserve, as a follow up of the recommendation of the 25th session of the MAB ICC.

83. The Council **approved** the site and recommended that this proposal be used as a model for transboundary biosphere reserve proposals.
84. **Minami-Alps (Japan)**. The total surface area for this site is 302,474ha consisting of 24,970 ha as core area, 72,389 ha as buffer zone and 205,115 ha as transition area. This site is formed from the Mountain area, enclosed on two sides by the south-flowing Fuji and Tenryu Rivers.
85. It includes the Koma Mountains, the Akaishi Mountains (hereafter termed the “Minami Alps”) and the Ina Mountains. Recorded plants growing at altitudes above 800 meters in the Minami Alps include 138 families and 1,635 species of tracheophytes, 51 families and 248 species of mosses, and 15 families and 98 species of lichens. The flora of the Minami Alps is characterized by a relict distribution of plants that migrated south along the Japanese archipelago in the Ice Age when it was connected by land to the continent. The fauna in this area include 15 families and 39 species of mammals, 35 families and 102 species of birds, 4 families and 9 species of reptiles, 4 families and 9 species of amphibians, 4 families and 10 species of fish, 16 families and 45 species of shellfish, and 179 families and 2,871 species of insects.
86. The great mountains, which are the main attraction of the Minami Alps, have hindered interactions among the areas in the Minami-Alps foothills, and so, as a shared asset of these mountains, interactions among the regions will be expanded, protection and sustainable use of this superb natural environment will be fostered jointly, and an attractive region will be created which draws on the natural beauty of the Minami Alps.
87. The Council acknowledged the good quality of the proposal. The Council **approved** the site and encouraged the national authorities to elaborate sustainable development programmes in order to enhance the objectives of the biosphere reserve.
88. **Ak-Zhayik (Kazakhstan)**. The Council welcomed this nomination from Kazakhstan. The proposed site mainly occupies wetlands of the Ural River delta and adjacent territories along the Caspian Sea coast, which are located on one of the largest bird migration routes, stretching from Eurasia across the Caspian and Black Seas to Eastern Africa. The total area is 396,346ha consisting of 36,577ha as core area, 129,769ha as buffer zone and 230,000ha as transition area. The proposed area is included in the Ramsar Convention's List of wetlands of international importance and is a concentration site for more than 240 migrating bird species, about 110 of which are waterbirds, including 18 specially protected species. Besides, this area is a nesting site for about 70 waterbirds, eight of which are specially protected natural objects. It is also a haven for a rare bird – Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelicanus crispus*, VU) – with a population of more than 600 nesting pairs (12% of the global population).
89. The proposed site is located on the lands of Makhambet district and Atyrau city of Atyrau oblast. The population of its 11 settlements is more than 17,000 people, 98% Kazakh and 2% Russian, Tatar and other ethnicities; the population density is 23 people per km². The economic orientation of the region is fishery and animal stock production. The area has productive landscapes that are good for cattle breeding as well as fisheries and hunting.
90. The Council acknowledged the submission of a management plan covering the transition area and emphasizing sustainable development, and **approved** the site. The national

authorities are encouraged to consider merging the two clusters by creating an ecological corridor between them.

91. **Katon-Karagay (Kazakhstan).** The proposed Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve is situated in the upper part of Bukhtarma, Belaya Berel and Chyornaya Berel Rivers, including the southern slopes of Listvyaga and Katunskiy Ridges (with the eastern summit of Belukha mountain), ridges of Bukhtarma river's left bank: Sarymsakty, Tarbagatay (Southern Altai part) and Southern Altai. The northern section includes part of the Katunskiy Ridge at altitudes ranging from 2000m to 4506m (Belukha Mountain); the southern part stretches from 850m (Bukhtarma River Valley) to 3487m (Southern Altai Ridge). The abundance of meadow herbs and flowers comprises more than 1000 species of higher vascular plants, as well as mosses, lichens and fungi. The total surface area amounts to 1,631,940 ha consisting of 126,432 ha as core area; 855,508 ha as buffer zone and 650,000 ha as transition area.
92. Local people, living in the transition area of the proposed biosphere reserve, mainly breed cattle, sheep, deer, horses and Siberian stags. Plant production is an additional activity, mainly for fodder, perennial and annual herbs and cereal fodder cultures (barley, oats) for feeding cows, Siberian stags, horses and sheep in winter. Private farms dominate the cattle-breeding sector of the region. The majority of those farms have small numbers of animals – less than 40 sheep. In the structure of land use the largest agricultural territories are located in Belovskiy rural district (39.6%), slightly smaller in Korobikhinskiy (14.5%) and Belkaragay (12.2%) rural districts, and the smallest in Urylskiy, Zhambylskiy, Chernovinskiy, Katon- Karagayskiy rural districts (7.9 to 9%).
93. The Council acknowledged the development of a comprehensive and detailed management plan that is inclusive of the core area, buffer zone and transition area. The Council **approved** the site.
94. **Crocker Range (Malaysia).** The proposed site covers an area of 350,584 ha and it is located in the south of Mount Kinabalu (a World Heritage Site) in Sabah. Some 144,492 ha make up the core area, which consists of 139,919 ha of Crocker Range Park (CRP) and three forest reserves totalling 4,573 ha that are legally protected. An area of 60,313 ha is demarcated as the buffer zone and 145,779 ha for the transition area. The core area as described in the nomination form is covered by natural vegetation which is ecologically connected. Limited studies on flora have been conducted; however, six permanent plots dedicated to ecological monitoring have been established and more than 300 plant species had been recorded as of August 2011.
95. Two endemic *Rafflesia* sp. are found in the Crocker Range. A total of 737 plant species have been recorded in the Trus Madi in the eastern vicinity of the Crocker Range. With regard to fauna, the number of species recorded in CRP and its surrounding area includes: 101 mammals, 259 birds, 47 reptiles, 63 amphibians, 42 freshwater fishes. CRP is also a habitat for some endangered species, e.g. orangutan, sun bear and clouded leopard. The development and logistic function of this proposed biosphere reserve was clearly described. Community and local authority participation and involvement in the design and management of a biosphere reserve were also described. The issue of the existence of a local community in the core area was mentioned and described as contentious. The authorities, however, believe that sustainable human activities are important even within parks; therefore, the Enactment has been modified to accommodate the community in the

CRP with some conditions (Section 59(1)(g), Park Enactment 1984, Amendment 2007). A local non-statutory regulation called the “Tagal system” is used as a “cultural tool” to practice sustainable fishing. Approximately 76 villages (19% of all the villages) in the proposed site are currently practicing the Tagal system and this non-statutory regulation has been incorporated into the Sabah Inland Fisheries and Agriculture Enactment 2003.

96. The Council commended the national authorities for a well-prepared nomination and **approved** the site. The Council noted the importance of this site for biodiversity conservation. The Council congratulated the national authorities for extensively involving the local communities in the nomination process for this site. They are encouraged to continue monitoring the activities of the inhabitants in the core area to ensure that the conservation functions are not compromised.
97. **Brighton and Lewes Downs (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).** The Council welcomed this proposal by United Kingdom, the first in a new part of the State since 1977, which is located in the south-eastern coast of England and includes the city of Brighton. The proposed site covers an area of 38,921 ha. It comprises part of the South Downs National Park and is home to 371,500 permanent inhabitants. Chalkdown land makes up the principal terrestrial landscape of the area, with a coastline dominated by impressive chalk cliffs in the east and an urbanized plain in the west. The Council recognized the ecological value of this site which supports more than 200 species that are on international conservation lists (IUCN and EC CITES) and more than one thousand locally rare species. Due to its variety of rare wildlife habitats, rich heritage and proximity to London, tourism is a particularly important sector with up to 12 million visitors per year. Other economic activities are farming and commercial sea fishing.
98. The Council commended the efforts made to promote sustainable development in the area as well as the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders from different backgrounds and knowledge in its management and particularly highlighted the active work of The Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership encouraging local cooperation with initiatives like the ‘HERE HERE’ campaign. This partnership was created specifically to apply for the status of UNESCO biosphere reserve and is composed of an extensive spectrum of public, educational, community, voluntary and private sector organizations.
99. The Council acknowledged the high quality of this proposal and **approved** the site.
100. **Bioma Pampa - Quebradas del Norte (Uruguay).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposal by the Uruguayan authorities. The proposed Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 110,882 ha and comprises a mosaic of different ecosystems. They include a primary forest with subtropical jungle, which represents the southernmost vestige of the ‘Atlantic Forest’ environment. The pampa biome is rich in temperate grasslands and is an important nesting area for many bird species. At present, however, only 0.7% of the grasslands are protected and the ecosystem faces significant threats to its conservation.
101. Rare species of amphibians and reptiles in the area include the Uruguayan frog (*Hyla uruguayana*), the Devincenzi Toad (*Melanophryniscus devincenzii*) and the South American rattlesnake (*Crotalus durissus terrificus*). The proposed biosphere reserve is also inhabited by a small number of people living in settlements of ten to fifty houses amid a rural environment. The villagers are predominantly smallholder farmers who engage in

agricultural activities. Socio-cultural development of the proposed biosphere reserve will be linked to the promotion and enhancement of gaucho traditions.

102. The Council **approved** the site and requested the following from the national authorities:
 - Submission of a map with more detailed zonation
 - Provision of a management plan one year from the notification of the approval
 - Consider greater coordination with the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve.
103. The Council added that there was a great potential to create a transboundary biosphere reserve with the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve in Brazil.
104. **Ohrid-Prespa (Republic of Albania/The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).** The Council welcomed this proposal for a transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) by Albania and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, located in the Ohrid and Prespa regions. The landscape of the proposed transboundary area is a combination of water bodies (the Ohrid and Prespa Lakes) and surrounding mountain reliefs while flat areas border the external limits of the territories (stretching across three countries: Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece). With a total surface area of 446,244 ha and an estimated total of 455,000 inhabitants, the proposed area includes part of Lake Ohrid and its surroundings in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that is currently inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as part of Lake Ohrid in Albania which is currently being considered as a possible extension of the existing natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region World Heritage Site.
105. The Council acknowledged the strong involvement of local institutions during the nomination process and welcomed the plan to establish a platform for exchanging experiences of protected areas between experts, practitioners and the local population. The Council noted with appreciation the decision to adopt a two-step approach in the transboundary biosphere reserve nomination process, “leaving the doors open” to Greece to join at its earliest convenience.
106. The Council **approved** this nomination as the first phase of a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, and further encouraged the countries to continue the dialogue with Greece, in order to consider as a second phase the watershed TBR between the three countries, as the watershed and ecosystem management approach it would benefit all countries sharing this ecosystem to cooperate and work together.
107. **Sila (Italy).** The Council welcomed the resubmission of this proposal, which was deferred in 2013. It recognized that the site contains a wide variety of natural environments and habitats and, due to its morphological and geographical characteristics, hosts approximately 1,000 types of vascular plants and over 210 species of vertebrates. It is a hotspot of great importance for the Mediterranean Biogeographical Region, selected by IUCN and WWF as a global centre of plant diversity. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in Calabria, in southern Italy, and comprises 357,294 ha, including 71 municipalities, with almost 230,000 permanent residents. Agriculture has been the traditional activity but, recently, nature tourism has been playing a fundamental role in the local economy, with more than 500,000 visitors per year.
108. The Council commended the initiatives to involve stakeholders during the nomination preparatory phase as well as the creation of the partnership assembly. The Council acknowledged the progress made in terms of harmonization of existing planning tools, the

development of a Long Term Economic and Social Plan of Sila National Park and contiguous area (PPES) and the implementation of the MaB-Sila Observatory.

109. The Council acknowledged receipt of additional information requested by the Advisory Committee and congratulated the Italian authorities for the quality of the information communicated. The Council **approved** the site.
110. **Tadami (Japan).** The Council welcomed this proposal which encompasses a site with a total area of 78,032ha consisting of 3,557ha as core area, 51,333ha as buffer zone and 23,142ha as transition area. The site is located at the eastern edge of the Echigo Mountains, the western edge of Fukushima Prefecture, and the southern part of the Tohoku region in Honshu. Geographically, it consists of high relief mountains of more than 600m, middle relief mountains of 400-600m, low relief mountains of 200m-400m, a gravel plateau and the floodplains of the Tadami River and Ina River basins.
111. In terms of flora, 140 families and 1,109 species of tracheophytes are confirmed in Tadami Town which is about 96% of the proposed site. Records for fauna in about 96% of the site include 15 families and 32 species of Mammals, 44 families and 145 species of birds, 6 families and 13 species of Amphibians and 4 families and 10 species of reptiles. More than 2,000 insect species are confirmed.
112. In 2007, Tadami Town announced an initiative "The Capital of Mother Nature," targeting local residents to re-recognize the value of the large natural environment of the Tadami area, as the inheritance of the next generation. This announcement was publicized both inside and outside the town, and Tadami Town is working on implementing each proposed measure.
113. The Council acknowledged the revised zonation received in response to the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and **approved** the site.

Nominations deferred

114. **General recommendation for Algeria.** The Council welcomed the nomination of Belezma Biosphere Reserve, Tlemcen Biosphere Reserve and Theniet El Had Biosphere Reserve. The Council commended the country's effort in preparing these three dossiers. Having examined these nominations, the Council strongly recommended that the Algerian authorities review the concordance of their national parks with biosphere reserves, especially with regard to the zonation. The authorities are encouraged to seek support from the MAB Secretariat and the UNESCO Cairo Office to organize a capacity-building workshop on biosphere reserves and improve their nomination files.
115. **Belezma (Algeria).** The Council welcomed this proposal covering the existing Belezma National Park situated in the province of Batna on the slopes of the Belezma mountain range. Covering some 26,250 ha, Belezma is host to a rich flora and fauna, several species of which are endemic and/or threatened, and provide opportunities for traditional land use, tourism and recreation. However, the Council concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Statutory Framework.

116. Therefore, the Council **deferred** the proposal and recommended that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:
- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
 - Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation;
 - Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the site should be provided;
 - A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system.
117. **Tlemcen Mountains (Algeria).** The Council welcomed this proposal covering the existing Tlemcen National Park situated in the Tlemcen Province, encompassing rich biodiversity, valuable archeological sites, cultural landmarks and caves receiving large numbers of visitors. However, the Council concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Statutory Framework.
118. Therefore, the Council **deferred** the proposal and recommended that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:
- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
 - Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation;
 - Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the site should be provided;
 - A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system, with special emphasis on the tourism sector.
119. **Theniet El Had (Algeria).** The Council welcomed this proposal covering the existing Theniet El Had National Park situated in the Ouarsenis mountain range located in the west central Atlas of Algeria. This site includes several plants of regional or national and international interest. However, the Council concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Statutory Framework.
120. Therefore, the Council **deferred** the proposal and recommended that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:
- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
 - Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation, as well as in terms of biophysical, geological and vegetation data;
 - Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the site should be provided;
 - A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system.

121. **Hanma National Nature Reserve (China).** The proposed site covers a total surface area of 107,348 ha, which consists of a core area of 46,510 ha, a buffer zone of 37,250 ha and a transition area of 23,588 ha. This site located in Inner Mongolia is described as the core part of the Taiga distributed in China. The natural vegetation is intact, owing to very limited interaction with humankind. The cold temperate coniferous forest is the best preserved forest type in China and is of high scientific value. The vegetation plays a significant role in protecting water resources, performing water purification, maintaining the ecological safety (balance/equilibrium) in the Heilongjiang area and along the Jiliuhe River, as well as supporting the rare wildlife.
122. Forest products from this site, such as bilberry, blueberry and other wild fruit, contribute to the socio-economic development of the communities in the area. With the development of tourism, Hanma Nature Reserve has been searching for a path to build tourism as the pillar industry. The authorities believe that the development of ecological tourism in Hanma Nature Reserve will be beneficial not only economically but also environmentally and socially. By way of logistic support, it is planned that the proposed site will cooperate with universities, colleges and research institutions to study jointly the structural functions and succession process of forest ecological systems and wetland ecosystems at the proposed site. Another aim of the logistic support is to help determine a practical plan for the reasonable development and sustainable utilization on the premise that the various ecological system structures are not damaged.
123. The Council examined the additional information provided by the national authorities. It also noted that the local community participation has been demonstrated. However it observed that its zonation scheme, especially concerning the functions of the buffer and the transition zone needs further improvement in accordance with the zonation criteria prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council therefore **deferred** this proposal and strongly encouraged the authorities to submit a new proposal which addresses the issues above.
124. **Samothraki (Greece).** The Council welcomed the re-submission of this proposal, which was deferred in 2012. The proposed site is located within the Aegean Sea and comprises the entire island of Samothraki, with a total surface area of 22,853 ha. The site is a mountainous island with its highest peak culminating at 1,611m above sea level, making it the second-highest island in the Aegean Sea. The mountainous terrain creates a variety of habitats that host a large number of species thanks to two distinct microclimates: a northern side that is more humid with related vegetation cover and a drier southern side with a typical Mediterranean climate. The human presence on the island since prehistoric times has created cultural landscapes and left many monuments of international interest on the island, making it a highly valued tourist destination nowadays. The main activities of the total permanent population of 2,860 are agriculture, settlements and trade. The Council expressed its appreciation of the involvement of local associations in designing the proposed site.
125. However, the Council considered that the zonation still does not meet the criteria, with the legal status of the core area still being unclear and the governance and funding of the proposed area yet to be defined. The Council therefore **deferred** the proposal. It further encouraged the Greek authorities to address these issues and work on the zonation, governance and budgetary aspects and to seek support from the MAB Secretariat and the EuroMAB Regional Network.

126. **Po Delta (Italy).** The Council welcomed this nomination proposal located in northern Italy, which comprises 139,398 ha, covering 16 municipalities populated by 120,000 inhabitants. The proposed area is a plain produced by the Po River's action and recent human activities. The proposed area is the only delta in Italy, created by the confluence of the main branches of the river; coastal dune systems and sand formations, lagoons, fishing ponds, marshes, fossil dunes, canals and coastal pine forests, vast brackish wetlands and cultivated lands dominated by rice farming. These landscapes provide a unique identity and an extremely significant heritage of biodiversity due to their range of habitats. The proposed Po Delta Biosphere Reserve is an important tourist destination. Together with agriculture and fish farming, tourism is the main economic activity of local communities. The Council noted with appreciation the efforts to involve local stakeholders in the consultation process.
127. However, the Council considered that the status and management of the core area needed clarifying and that the decision-making process within the Institutional Coordination Board was unclear, even though the board was supported by Thematic Technical Roundtables. It further noted that the governance structure was very complex and did not seem manageable; nor had any common vision for the proposed area been defined. The added value of the proposed biosphere reserve was not clear, as most of the actions included in the Action Plan referred to existing, binding management plans (Natura 2000, Environmental Plan of the Veneto Regional Po Delta Park, Area Plan of Po Delta "Piano d'Area – Regione Veneto"). Concerning research projects, the Council considered that the social science studies in the whole area were missing, especially taking into account the fact that most of the proposed area was composed of farming systems. Lastly, the Council noted the lack of information on water management issues and challenges, as well as the lack of discussion on water quality, despite the fact that the proposed biosphere reserve area is mainly composed of wetlands or irrigated cultivated lands.
128. The Council therefore deferred the proposal and strongly encouraged the authorities to submit a new proposal which addresses the issues above.
129. **Ledro Alps and Judicaria (Italy).** The Council welcomed this proposal by the Italian authorities. The proposed area is located in the Trento region in northern Italy, between the Dolomite World Heritage Site and the famous Lake Garda, with a total surface area of 47,427 ha. The site is representative of the southern slopes of the central-eastern Alps, comprising different habitats (Alpine meadows, forest, grasslands, moorlands) alternating with traditional crops. Its strategic location contributes to a rich and varied biodiversity and to creating a corridor running north-south across the Alps, establishing territorial continuity between protected areas from the Po valley to the northern Alps. The proposed area includes two settlements around Lake Ledro and Lake Carera recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is also a high valued tourist destination, with tourism representing the main source of income for a permanent population of 15,845. The Council acknowledged the existence of a research network and the numerous promotional and communication efforts carried out in the proposed area; it did, however, note with concerns the petition transmitted to the UNESCO MAB Secretariat by numerous citizens of the municipalities and cities in the proposed area.

130. The Council questioned the relevance of the zonation, including the protection status of the core areas, and also the role of the transition area as an ecological corridor between the two core areas. It also considered that the main scientific research described focused on conservation aspects and that there seemed to be conflicts with the hunters in the proposed area. It also noted that there was no clear description of the governance and decision-making system of the proposed site, nor any comprehensive information on how the governance would work. It also questioned how tourism would be managed and how the new plan for the park would be integrated in the proposed site.
131. The Council therefore **deferred** the proposal and encouraged the Italian authorities to address the above issues and to engage in full consultation with local stakeholders, in order to get full support for the designation of the proposed area as a biosphere reserve.
132. **Aksu-Zhabagly (Kazakhstan)**. This proposed site is located in the Western end of Talasskiy Alatau and Southern part of Karatau in Western Tien Shan. The total area of the site is 357,734ha. The core area is 131,934ha, the buffer zone 25,800ha and the transition area is 200,000ha. It has 48% of the total diversity of birds in the region, 72.5% of vertebrates, 221 out of 254 fungi species, 63 out of 80 moss species and 15 out of 17 of the vegetation types and 114 out of 180 plant formations of the Western Tien Shan.
133. The major land use of the region is agriculture. There are several crops growing on agricultural land: on the rain-fed area – cereal cultures (wheat and barley); on irrigated arable lands – forage cultures (corn, clover, alfalfa). Local people usually breed cattle, sheep (South-Kazakh Merino), goats, horses (trotters and Donskaya breed) and poultry (chicken and turkey). At present, the territory of the buffer zone is visited by scientists and amateurs interested in flora and fauna, as well as ordinary sightseers. In accordance with ten routes for scientific and educational tourism, visitors move through the reserve on trails and roads, and for the rest-stops they use previously constructed field bases and traditional camping sites. Currently, the potential of eco-tourism for educational purposes is still insufficiently developed, although Aksu Zhabagly is one of the famous tourist spots for birdwatchers from all over the world.
134. The authorities provided additional information as requested by the Advisory Committee. The Council **deferred** the proposal and requested the authorities to resubmit a proposal with the core zone entirely surrounded by a buffer zone. It also requested the following:
- Enlarging the buffer zone to protect the core area.
 - Undertaking activities that would enhance sustainable development functions of the site.
 - Exploring the possibility of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with the neighbouring countries.
135. **Inlay Lake (Myanmar)**. The Council welcomed this first biosphere reserve nomination in Myanmar. Covering a total area of 561,199ha the site is situated in Taunggyi District, Southern Shan State. The core area is 29,178 ha, the buffer zone covers 114,041 ha and the transition area is 417,980 ha. The Inlay Lake wetland ecosystem is home to 267 species of birds, out of which 82 are wetland birds, 43 species of freshwater fishes, otters and turtles. In addition, fresh water fish from the inland wetland constitute the major protein food source of the people of Inlay.

136. In addition to its ecological importance, Inlay Lake is also unique for the socio-cultural aspects of local inhabitants, in the way they have adapted their lifestyle and livelihoods to their biophysical environment. Most of them earn their income by traditional methods of hydroponic farming, fishing and shifting cultivation. The farmers practice one of the most famous types of agriculture in the world, floating island agriculture, locally called "Yechan", which is a form of hydroponic farming.
137. Inlay Lake and its watershed provides several ecosystem services on which local people depend directly or indirectly; they include: clean air, clean water, cooler climate, tranquility and serenity, fish stocks, ecotourism resources and tourism destinations, part of water supply system for hydropower plant, sustainable livelihoods and community support. There is a significant population of people (60,000) residing in the core area of the proposed Inlay Lake Biosphere Reserve.
138. The Council noted with concern the significant human population in the core area. The Council pointed out that with regards to the specification of a core area, the number of inhabitants should be kept to a minimum. Therefore, the Council requested the authorities to reclassify inhabited core areas under buffer zone category whenever possible. The Council recommended limiting the visitation of tourists to this area in order to maintain its conservation and protection objectives. The Council further urged the authorities to strictly maintain the livelihood activities of the population within the core area, if any, at the traditional level.
139. The council **deferred** the proposal and strongly encouraged the authorities to resubmit a proposal in accordance with its recommendations.
140. **Karakoram Pamir (Pakistan)**. This proposed site is characterized by steep and jagged peaks, glaciers stretching for miles, alpine meadows and pastures, scattered patches of coniferous and birch forests, lush green high valleys and deep narrow gorges. It contains the largest ice mass outside the poles in the form of the world's longest glacier system, including 40 large and many small glaciers. Among the famous glaciers of Karakoram are Siachen, Batura, Baltoro, Biafo, Hisper, Hoper, Kuksil, Yazghil, Momhil and Malanguti.
141. It covers a total surface area of 2,569,000 ha of which 1,132,700 ha occupy the core area, 671,800 ha the buffer zone and 764,800 ha the transition area. The rich biodiversity of the typical mountain ecosystem of Karakoram Range is of immense socio-ecological significance and value for biodiversity conservation on local, national, regional and global scales. Biologically, the area falls in the Central Asian phytogeographical region, with over 400 flora species ranging from endemic herbs and *Poa* sp. grasses to coniferous forests. Among the fauna species, mammals are of great importance and the proposed biosphere reserve area is known to have significant populations of 33 globally important mammalian species including species which are threatened and/or endemic to the Karakoram region.
142. The Council noted the submission of this nomination and acknowledged the continuous effort of Pakistan to increase the number of its biosphere reserves. Whilst appreciating its rich fauna and flora and immense socio-ecological significance and value for biodiversity conservation at all levels, the Council found that the northern and eastern sides of the core area were not surrounded by a buffer zone and a transition area, contrary to the recommendations of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In addition, the management plan for the two national parks forming the core

area may not be tailored for the core area of the proposed biosphere reserve. The Council recommended that the management plan of the proposed biosphere reserve consider integrating the management of these three zones.

143. The Council therefore **deferred** the proposal and requested the authorities to submit a new proposal which addresses the issues above.
144. **Daghestansky (Russian Federation)**. The Council welcomed this submission, which is located in Daghestan Republic and comprises 207,600 ha. The proposed site is composed of two clusters: Kizlyar Bay and Sarykum Barchans, containing rich biodiversity in marine, coastal, desert-steppe and arid foothill ecosystems. The Council acknowledged that this area contained one of the largest migratory routes of birds in Eurasia, as well as large number of flora and fauna species. The total permanent population living in the proposed biosphere reserve is 1,200 whose main activities are agriculture, stock-raising and fishing.
145. The Council considered that the proposed zonation with the two clusters was inadequate for fulfilling the criteria and ensuring proper functioning of the proposed biosphere reserve. The Council therefore **deferred** the proposal and encouraged the Russian authorities to resubmit a proposal with a zonation that could join the two clusters and including evidence of the implementation of scientific research in management, education and awareness-raising, as well as evidence of the participatory process and governance for the entire area.
146. **Mura-Drava-Danube (Serbia)**. The Council welcomed this submission from Serbia, as a part of the future proposal of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve spanning five countries: Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia, and which constitutes a second step after the designation in 2012 of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve shared by Hungary and Croatia. The proposed site is located in the northwestern part of Serbia and comprises 176,635 ha. Situated mainly in recent and historical alluvial zones of the central Danube plain, the proposed biosphere reserve is a mosaic composed mainly of remnants of historic floodplains and human-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlements. The floodplain includes alluvial forests, marshes, reed beds, freshwater habitats, alluvial wetlands, as well as flood-protected forests with significantly changed hydrology dynamics. The area of the proposed biosphere reserve is home to 147,405 inhabitants located in 26 settlements with main activities are agriculture, forestry and industry.
147. The Council commended the Serbian authorities for the quality of the proposal. The Council acknowledged that the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve proposal is an initiative from the five countries which signed a ministerial declaration in 2011, stating that nothing in the Declaration or its subsequent document shall prejudice in any manner the delimitation between the State signatories.
148. The Council took note of the discussion on national boundaries being held at the international level between Croatia and Serbia. The Council considered that the transboundary biosphere reserve was a unique tool for translating the mission and vision of the MAB Programme into a cooperation programme which promotes peace, scientific exchange and shared ecosystem management. The Council strongly encouraged the scientific and technical cooperation in the field between the five countries to continue and

the coordinating council established by the five countries to hold regular meetings. It also acknowledged support from WWF in the nomination process.

149. The Council acknowledged receipt of the information provided by the Serbian authorities upon request of the advisory committee on the role of the scientific panel within the coordinating council of the proposed biosphere reserve and how the various projects and research outcomes will be integrated in the functioning of the proposed biosphere reserve.
150. The Council **deferred** the proposal and requested resubmission of a proposal using the transboundary biosphere reserve nomination form and including the joint zonation map for the entire future transboundary biosphere reserve, agreed by all five countries.
151. **Gouritz Cluster (South Africa)**. The Council welcomed this very well prepared and documented proposal of a relatively large cluster biosphere reserve (3 184 723.5 ha). The Council acknowledged its uniqueness at the global level as it is the only place in the world where three recognized biodiversity hotspots (Fynbos, Succulent Karoo and Maputoland-Tongoland-Albany) converge. The area also includes a coastal/marine component (0.1% of core area) which serves as a nursery for marine species. It encompasses three units of a UNESCO World Heritage site.
152. The biosphere reserve nomination process which started in 2005 has been highly participative. The proposed biosphere reserve is facing deep rooted socio-economic challenges (high unemployment, wide-spread poverty, sprawling informal settlements with inadequate services, rising HIV and crime rates) that the biosphere reserve will contribute to solve in building grassroots models of pro-poor enterprise and employment development connected to biodiversity.
153. The number of formal and published research that has been conducted in the Gouritz region in recent years is growing. The proposed biosphere reserve will have a vital role to play in the compilation of a database and set up of a monitoring system. Environmental awareness raising and training activities targeting schools, communities and associations have been implemented throughout the years. The governance structure has been established since the last submission, but more information is needed.
154. The Council acknowledged receipt of satisfactory additional information with regards to the sustainable financing scheme and the governance structure as recommended by the Advisory Committee. However, the Council noted that the very complex zonation pattern does not conform to the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
155. The Council therefore **deferred** the proposal and strongly encouraged the authorities to re-submit a proposal with a functional zonation pattern that conformed to the requirements of the Statutory Framework.
156. **Magaliesberg (South Africa)**. The Council welcomed the re-submission of this very consistent and well-documented proposal covering an area located between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg in the east and Rustenburg in the west. This area is endowed with scenic beauty, unique natural features, rich natural and cultural heritage value, significant biodiversity and archaeological interest. The proposed biosphere reserve encompasses the Cradle of Humankind, which is part of a World Heritage site with 4 million years of history.

157. The proposed site's primary activities are agriculture, mining and tourism. It is adjacent to major urban infrastructure, the impacts of which will be reduced through the biosphere reserve management plan. The Council noted with appreciation that the consultation process for delimiting the biosphere reserve's contours has been completed since the last submission.
158. The Council acknowledged with appreciation the additional information provided with regards to its previous recommendation with regards to the Pelinbada area. The Council congratulated the authorities for revising the zonation which now excludes Pelinbada nuclear center and the surrounding area from the biosphere reserve proposal.
159. However, there has been no update of the zonation pattern of buffer and transition zone of the proposed biosphere reserve. Therefore, the Council **deferred** the proposal. The Council strongly encouraged the authorities to resubmit a proposal with an improved zonation pattern with regard to the core areas and buffer zones, in order to fulfill the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
160. **Macizo de Anaga (Spain)**. The Council acknowledged this nomination by Spain. This site is located in the northeastern part of Tenerife, Canary Islands. It represents the island's oldest geological formation with a peak of 1,024 m. This area is an ecological unit separated from the rest of the island. It features a diverse geographical space that ranges from urban areas located on the coast to the summit. In terms of environmental value, its remarkable cultural uniqueness is of local, regional, national and international interest.
161. The proposal is an example of collaboration, primarily between different municipal governing bodies (Cabildo Insular de Tenerife, the councils of the three municipalities of the Canary Islands and Sustainable Holy Cross Foundation). In addition, the proposal has also been supported by a local community. However, the Advisory Committee strongly recommended that the marine and coastal areas be included in this biosphere reserve proposal to highlight the connection between marine/coastal and inland ecosystems. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee requested the submission of the official approval by the national authorities.
162. The national authorities did not submit the additional information recommended by the Advisory Committee. The Council therefore decided to **defer** the proposal. The Council strongly encouraged a resubmission of the proposal with an official approval by the national authorities.

Nomination rejected

163. **Corridor Milan – Ticino (Italy)**. The Council acknowledged this proposal, which is located in the southwestern plain surrounding the city of Milan in northern Italy. The total surface area proposed is 15,755 ha, mainly composed of cultivated fields intercalated with farmhouses, typical of the Po Valley landscape. The extended cultivated plains mixed with traditional farmhouses, urban nuclei and woodlands represent the main features of the landscape. The network of canals and springs is also a fascinating human-made system that today presents a cultural landscape rich in biodiversity. There are about 130,000 permanent inhabitants, whose livelihoods depend mainly on the industrial and services sectors.

164. The Council noted with appreciation that the proposed biosphere reserve management aimed to reduce the urbanization process and develop ecotourism and sustainable farming systems. The proposed biosphere reserve would constitute an example of the implementation of sustainable development applied to an agro-ecosystem. However the Council considered that the lack of legal protection status of the core area, the insufficient justification of the buffer zone and transition area delineation, the absence of stakeholder involvement, and the deficiency in the governance concept and decision-making process weakened the overall project.
165. Therefore, the Council considered that the site does not meet the Statutory Framework criteria and **rejected** the proposal.
166. The Council recommended that the Italian authorities investigate whether other designations, such as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems of the FAO, may fit better with their aims.

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

167. **Laguna Oca del Río Paraguay Biosphere Reserve (Argentina), extension and renaming.** The Council acknowledged the extension proposal from Argentina. This proposal follows recommendations made by the International Coordinating Council in 2000 to extend the core area, buffer zone and transition area, as their present dimensions do not allow the area to fulfill the three functions of a biosphere reserve.
168. The proposed new area will integrate the city of Formosa, the Laguna de Herradura and the Riacho Salado as far as Mision Laishi, through a biodiversity and cultural corridor named 'The Way of Water', which will pass through the Paraguay River and its tributaries. The total area will be extended from around 12,000 ha to 61,763.39 ha. The proposed new name for the biosphere reserve is Laguna Oca y Herraduras del Río Paraguay.
169. The Council **approved** the extension and the new name. The Council requested that the national authorities:
- Submit clearer maps about the current extent of the zones and the proposed extension.
 - Re-evaluate the importance of the buffer zone along the river as an element connecting different landscapes and contributing to maintaining biodiversity and ecological restoration in the urban, rural and natural environments.
 - Elaborate a management plan for the modified biosphere reserve.
170. **Rhön Biosphere Reserve (Germany), extension.** The Council welcomed this extension to the site designated in 1991, submitted by the German authorities. As part of the German central upland range, the Rhön Biosphere Reserve comprises an upland region formed as a result of volcanic activity in the Tertiary period. With the extension of 58,113 ha, the biosphere reserve will comprise a total surface area of 243,323 ha (with an altitudinal gradient of 770 m between approximately 180 m and 950 m above mean sea level). Its uniqueness and beauty results in a diversity of landscapes, hosting endemic species such as Rhönquellschnecke (*Bythinella compressa*), the wild cat (*Felis silvestris*), black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) and red kite (*Milvus milvus*). As of October 2010, the

biosphere reserve had a population of 135,285, the majority of whom live in rural settlements.

171. The Council congratulated the German authorities for the well-prepared proposal for extension and considered that the extension meets the Statutory Framework criteria. Therefore, the Council **approved** the extension.
172. **Shiga Highland Biosphere Reserve (Japan), extension.** The Council noted the submission of the extension application for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1980. The size of the core area is the same as when this biosphere reserve was first designated; the buffer zone covers 17,569 ha, which is an increment of 58%, and the new delineated transition area 12,021 ha.
173. The Council commended the national authorities for demarcating a transition area for the site and **approved** the extension. The Council requested the national authorities to submit a revised management plan covering the expanded site.
174. **La Mancha Húmeda Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension.** The site encompasses a gently rolling plain located between 600 m and 700 m above sea level, rich in Tertiary deposits and scattered with a great number of wetlands arising from the seasonal flooding of rivers and from the numerous upwellings of the Manchego aquifer in the depressions, known in the area as “eyes”.
175. The Council welcomed this extension proposal from Spain. This biosphere reserve was designated in 1980 and in 2002 submitted a periodic review. After the assessment of that periodic review, it was concluded that this biosphere reserve was not fully functioning according to the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and that it suffered from overexploitation of water resources. The Council was of the opinion that the integrated approach of a biosphere reserve was nevertheless the best way to combat the threats to water resources and also recommended that the Spanish authorities improve the overall management plan for the whole biosphere reserve, in order to integrate conservation and sustainable use, paying particular attention to sustainable use of water resources and the development of a coordinating structure to bring all stakeholders together.
176. The extension enlarges considerably the transition area and includes some readjustment to the buffer zones and core areas, increasing the size of the biosphere reserve from 25,000ha to 418,087ha. This extension proposal and re-zoning are a significant improvement, as they will provide disconnected wetland areas with better protection. Moreover, their designation as core areas surrounded by buffer zones is encompassed by a transition area integrating areas set aside for urban development. The Council **approved** this extension and recommended that the transition area should be expanded in the south-east part of the site.
177. **Montseny Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension.** The Council acknowledged the proposal for the extension of the Montseny Biosphere Reserve in Spain. This site is a first-generation biosphere reserve that was designated in 1978. The extended core area and buffer zones follow the zonation of the National Park Montseny revised in 2008. The extension incorporates also the transition areas not previously included. The Council noted that this extension proposal is a follow-up to two previous periodic reviews, the last

one received in 2011. In 2011, the Council encouraged the national authorities to provide additional information on the management plan for the biosphere reserve and its implementation. This detailed proposal for extension describes the harmonization process of the different management structures and plans in line with previous recommendations. Additionally, the extension has been made in close consultation with local communities and with the municipality's support.

178. The council acknowledged receipt of the official approval by the national authorities and the identification of the biosphere reserve's management authorities, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, and **approved** the extension.

Withdrawal of sites

179. The Chair informed the MAB ICC that, following periodic reviews and consultations with stakeholders, two countries decided to withdraw sites from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as these sites do not meet the criteria stated in Article 4 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
180. United Kingdom has withdrawn the North Norfolk Coast Biosphere Reserve (approved in 1976) and Austria has withdrawn Gossenköllersee Biosphere reserve (approved in 1977) and Gurgler Kamm Biosphere reserve (approved in 1977) from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
181. With 13 new biosphere reserves including 2 transboundary biosphere reserves being added to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), and 3 being withdrawn, the WNBR is now composed of 631 Biosphere Reserves including 14 transboundary biosphere reserves in 119 countries and the first sites in two new members of the WNBR, Albania and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

XI. Update on the Exit Strategy

182. The Secretariat introduced this item by recalling the decision of the MAB ICC taken during its 25th session in 2013. She recalled that the main objective was to improve the credibility and the quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. She indicated that the Exit Strategy concerns 266 sites in 76 countries. She reported on the implementation of step 1 and step 2 of the Exit Strategy for the sites that had never submitted a periodic review report nor replied to recommendations received by the MAB ICC (Category A). The Secretariat had sent 41 letters to 41 countries for sites which have never submitted a periodic review report and 14 letters to 14 countries for sites which never replied to recommendations. The Secretariat sent 17 letters as the first reminder for the countries which did not reply. The Secretariat also sent 43 letters to 43 countries that need to send a report by the end of 2015 to demonstrate that the site meets the criteria (Category B). She provided indications on the regional distribution and recalled the clear timeline. She also mentioned the support available, if necessary, from the MAB Secretariat and the UNESCO regional offices as well as the regional Networks.
183. Every Member State that took the floor expressed support towards the implementation of the Exit Strategy, its very detailed process and timeline and thanked the Secretariat for the

work achieved so far. Questions were raised on the link between the Exit Strategy and the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan, specifically as regards the reason of non-response from some countries and the disconnect between some sites and the WNBR as mentioned in the evaluation report. It was recalled that each step of the Exit Strategy explicitly states that the different stakeholders will be informed and contacted, including the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the UNESCO national commission and the MAB national committee. The Secretariat also indicated that it is in close contact with the UNESCO Delegations to ensure that the Exit Strategy process is known and that information is transmitted to the appropriate contacts. Some delegates commented on the very limited time (30 months) for the Exit Strategy process from the time that the first letter is sent from the MAB Secretariat. They requested some flexibility and adaptability linked to specific social and cultural contexts and for Member States that demonstrate good will and commitment towards meeting the criteria. Some delegates recalled that the Statutory Framework was approved in 1996 and the Madrid Action Plan in 2008 and that these represent a long-term commitment by all countries participating in the MAB programme. It was agreed that the time frame described in the Exit Strategy should not be modified at this stage. It was also agreed that the MAB ICC would review the progress made on the Exit Strategy at its next meeting, based on periodic reviews and other information provided by countries. As regards questions on the kind of support that the MAB Secretariat could provide, the MAB Secretariat as well as colleagues in the UNESCO regional offices are available to assist countries and sites with technical support and expertise.

XII. Periodic review of biosphere reserves and follow-up of recommendations

184. The Secretariat introduced the item by indicating that 88 periodic review reports were examined by the Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves at its last session as well as 41 follow-up reports. This considerable amount of work is unusual and is related to the replies from countries to the letters sent by the MAB Secretariat for the implementation of the Exit Strategy. 43 periodic review reports which had been examined were direct replies from the countries contacted.
185. The Secretariat reminded the delegates that the periodic review is a self-evaluation process and that the Advisory Committee made its recommendations on the basis of the information provided by the countries. She also mentioned that many countries used the updated forms for periodic review, including the transboundary periodic review form, which facilitated the evaluation of the criteria for the concerned site. In this context she paid tribute to Robert Barbault, former Chair of the French MAB National Committee, who chaired the working group for updating the nomination and periodic review forms, and sadly passed away last December 2013. She informed the Delegates that the Advisory Committee at its last session ensured that each recommendation stated clearly whether a site does or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework, within the context of the Exit Strategy.
186. The rapporteur of the MAB ICC Bureau then presented the results of the deliberations of the Bureau which showed the recommendations by category highlighted in different colours in the tables of annex 1 and 2 of the document to facilitate the discussions. These categories included: a) sites which meet the criteria, to be formally recognized by the Council, according to paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework; b) sites which

do not meet the criteria, so that further measures are required (paragraph 5 of Article 9 of the Statutory Framework); c) and three sites for which the MAB ICC Bureau did not agree with the Advisory Committee recommendations and proposed a revised text for endorsement by the MAB Council. Two recommendations were for sites which are in the process of finalizing their reports and/or updating their sites.

187. The Council formally recognized the sites that fulfill the criteria of the Statutory Framework. Several countries took the floor after the adoption of recommendations regarding specific sites which the Council identified as not meeting the criteria, in order to express their concerns and clarify some elements. Concerns included the tight deadlines for submitting additional information and clarification regarding the receipt of the letter from the Secretariat transmitting the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. All countries indicated their commitment to meet the criteria and the need for some flexibility in the application of the criteria according to specific contexts and the complexity of legal and governance issues. One Observer Delegation expressed its disagreement with the some recommendations made for some of its sites.
188. It was recalled that the deadline for submission of reports to demonstrate that a site meets the criteria in Article 4 of the Statutory Framework was common to all and that the date was the 30 September 2015 as per the implementation of the Exit Strategy. It was also confirmed that the periodic review is an interactive dialogue process and that countries are encouraged to send to the MAB Secretariat any additional information and clarifications they find necessary, so that this can be shared with the Advisory Committee so that they can effectively assess the site and consider any specific constraints. It was also recalled that the Secretariat is available to help countries in the implementation of the recommendation. Egypt offered its support to assist any country within the ArabMAB network with technical support needed in the periodic review process.

Tassili n'Ajjer Biosphere Reserve (Algeria)

189. The Council welcomed the periodic review report from the Tassili n'Ajjer Biosphere Reserve, established in 1986. This biosphere reserve is located in the southeastern part of the Algerian Sahara. While being important for biodiversity conservation, the reserve is particularly well known for its archaeological, historical, cultural and geological features - the reason for its designation as a national park and World Heritage site. Ancient rock engravings and cave paintings of large fauna such as hippopotamus and buffalo are of international importance and tourism is an important source of income.
190. While recognizing all the good work undertaken over the years in the biosphere reserve, the Council concluded that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework. In order to meet these criteria, the Algerian authorities are invited to consider enlarging the biosphere reserve to extend it beyond the national park, with clearly a delimited buffer zone and transition area. A map should clearly indicate the three zones comprising the biosphere reserve. The extended biosphere reserve should have an integrated biosphere reserve management plan involving local communities and the private sector that would seek synergies among the reserve's various conservation designations. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Chr ea Biosphere Reserve (Algeria)

191. The Council welcomed the periodic review report from the Chr ea Biosphere Reserve, established in 2002. Located some 50 km southwest of the capital, Algiers, in the Atlas Mountains, the reserve plays a key role as a water reservoir for urban areas, in addition to hosting several rare and endangered ecosystems specific to the northern Atlas Mountains. Superimposed on the Chr ea National Park, the Chr ea Biosphere Reserve is also host to a diversity of cultures (Arab, Andalusian and Berber cultures).
192. While recognizing the good work undertaken over the years in the Chr ea Biosphere Reserve, as outlined in the periodic review, the Council concluded that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework. In order to meet these criteria, the Algerian authorities are invited to consider enlarging the biosphere reserve to extend it beyond the national park, with clearly a delimited buffer zone and transition area. A map should clearly indicate the three zones of the biosphere reserve. The extended biosphere reserve should have an integrated biosphere reserve management plan involving local communities and the private sector. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Riacho Teuquito Biosphere Reserve (Argentina)

193. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the "Riacho" Teuquito Biosphere Reserve, established in 2000. The biosphere reserve has followed an Indirect Control System, through the operational management areas and the reporting of the national park administration in the core area. The biosphere reserve has been successful in obtaining cooperation and support from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Ibero-American Model Forest Network, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and other programmes. Integral Management and Sustainable Development are applied to reduce social, economic, and environmental degradation in the Great American Chaco.
194. The Council noted that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the national authorities elaborate a management plan that integrates the landscape of the core area, buffer zone and transition area (Chaco and riparian vegetation) with that of the agricultural areas and the commercial forestry. The Council also recommended that a fixed budget for the activities of the biosphere reserve be secured and that its coordinators be defined.

Las Yungas Biosphere Reserve (Argentina)

195. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the Las Yungas Biosphere Reserve, established in 2002. The Council noted with satisfaction that the review process had included different actors: municipalities, provincial and national governments, indigenous representatives, universities, NGOs, private sector. It commended the national authorities for the activities undertaken, which were in concordance with the Seville Strategy (1995), and contributed to the implementation of Madrid Action Plan (2008–2013), and the IberoMAB Action Plan (2010-2020). It also appreciated that the biosphere reserve collaborates with the Noroeste Biosphere Reserve (Argentina) and Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).
196. The Council concluded that the Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities

implement the necessary actions and provide the following information to the Secretariat by 30 September 2015:

- Elaborate a Management Plan for the entire reserve.
- Define a buffer zone and transition area for Barilu.
- Define a buffer zone or a transition area to protect the core area of Potrero de Yala.
- Integrate a landscape vision for the three zones (core area, buffer zone and transition area) permitting the identification of adequate measures to conserve the biological and cultural diversity of natural, agricultural and urban sites.

W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Burkina Faso/Benin/Niger)

197. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of W transboundary Biosphere Reserve, established in 2002. It noted with appreciation that this comprehensive report, based on the outcome of a national multistakeholder consultation process, had been jointly elaborated by the administrative authorities in charge of the respective protected areas in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. The Council acknowledged the international, regional and national cooperation framework, which provides substantial financial and human resources as well as scientific collaboration for the functioning of the transboundary biosphere reserve. However, the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms should be foreseen to ensure sustainability of the results of the current international support.

198. The Council acknowledged the proposed extension of the buffer zone from 99,500ha to 409,000ha. The Council congratulated the authorities for the establishment of transboundary joint patrol staff teams under one single command, which improves the conservation function of the biosphere reserve. It also noted the various programmes benefitting the population (green job creation, infrastructure, benefit-sharing scheme) and the establishment of a development Council for the biosphere reserve. In addition to biological studies, cultural and archaeological aspects are the subject of extensive work.

199. However, the Council considered that the integration of the three functions at transboundary level still needed improvement for the recommendations of Pamplona on transboundary biosphere reserves to be applied. Therefore, it recommended that the authorities:

- Establish a coordinating structure representative of various administrations and the scientific community, as well as the authorities in charge of the protected areas, representatives of local communities, NGOs, interested and affected groups, including youth, and of the private sector, with a permanent secretariat and a budget to cover running costs of the structure.
- Finalize the updated management plan at transboundary level and forward a copy to the MAB Secretariat.

200. These elements should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

201. The Council welcomed the second periodic review report of this biosphere reserve, designated in 1990. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

202. The Council requested that the biosphere reserve refrain from modifying the status of the “escarpment protection” areas from the buffer zone to core area until the legal status of

this latter new core area was secured in 2015. Concerning the transition area, the Council recommended that the biosphere reserve consider the possibility of extending its boundaries beyond the present Niagara Escarpment Park area, in order to explore cooperation with adjacent watershed authorities. The Council further recommended that the Canadian authorities:

- Promote the sustainable development function of the biosphere reserve based on a more balanced vision between human needs and nature conservation;
- Clarify the leadership in term of sustainable development planning;
- Encourage stakeholders to work together more collaboratively;
- Develop a collaborative network of municipalities, private businesses, public agencies, first-nation communities, NGOs and landowners;
- Increase collaboration with other Canadian biosphere reserves but also with biosphere reserves in other countries, especially those in the EuroMAB Network;
- Promote understanding of the function of biosphere reserves to neighboring local communities and institutions in charge of development and nature conservation.

203. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Dalai Lake Biosphere Reserve (China)

204. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report on Dalai Lake Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 2002. The Council commended the national authorities for their commitment to managing this biosphere reserve, as demonstrated through the consistent dedication of funds to ensuring its management. The major economic activities in this biosphere reserve are animal husbandry and fishing. However, fish-farming has declined in the area, whereas ecotourism has increased. The Council noted the reduction in the human population in the area and requested that the national authorities explain this decrease. The Council also recommended that the local communities participate actively in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Council commended the authorities for a well-documented periodic review report.

205. The Council concluded that this area meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Wudalianchi Biosphere Reserve (China)

206. The Council welcomed this periodic review report for the Wudalianchi biosphere reserve, which was designated in 2003. This biosphere reserve is located in the northeastern part of China, very close to Russia. The site is part of the Global Geoparks Network. The Council commended the national authorities for improving the management and coordination of the biosphere reserve. It noted the setting-up of the Wudalianchi Scenic Spot Management Committee, which is responsible for planning, protection, monitoring, scientific research, tourism, development, construction and management of the reserve. It also noted that a coordination committee had been set up in 2006 which consists of representatives of all stakeholders. The Council also noted the relocation of the human settlements from the core area and buffer zones to the transition area. The major economic activities in the transition area are mineral water production, ecotourism and green agriculture.

207. The Council commended the authorities for a well-prepared periodic review report. It concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Yading Biosphere Reserve (China)

208. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 2003. The Council acknowledged the well-prepared report, which was done through extensive consultations with scientists, local practitioners and local communities. The Council noted the increment in the rate of ecotourism. The national authorities are commended for completing the biosphere reserve's management plan in 2005.
209. The Council was pleased to note that, over the ten years since the reserve was established, there had been no forest fires, no significant accident causing environmental pollution or any serious disturbance to resources within the reserve; rare animals and endangered plants have been protected effectively, such as gnus, leopards, dwarf musk deer, serows, lesser pandas, black bears, gorals, samba deer and Sichuan deer. In addition, the ecosystems have remained stable, with a significant increase in vegetation cover.
210. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the local population participate in decision-making processes with regard to managing the biosphere reserve.

Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve (Czech Republic)

211. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2003. The Council commended the Czech authorities for the very well-prepared periodic report. The Council took note of the fact that the site was managed by a stakeholder-based NGO, the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, which is a public benefit company. It welcomed this innovative stakeholder-based biosphere reserve management structure with direct participation and balanced decision-making.
212. It noted with appreciation the cooperation among various stakeholders, based on partnerships. It also welcomed the various projects targeted towards biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, tourism promotion and habitat restoration. The Council also acknowledged the intensive networking and sharing of knowledge and experiences with other biosphere reserves at international level.
213. Among the successful projects, the Council noted the interactive web page, the establishment and restoration of biocentres and a territorial system of ecological stability, as well as projects for the "Elimination of Environmental Burdens" which may be shared with other biosphere reserves.
214. The Council acknowledged the change in the surface area of the biosphere reserve, due to the use of modernized GIS technology, and noted that the zonation was in place and that the biosphere reserve was in the process of improving zonation as part of an international project for information exchange.
215. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

216. The Council encouraged cooperation with other biosphere reserves that are also multi international designated sites. It also recommended initiating future research to include socio-economic studies and tourism impact assessments. The Council recommended that Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve be used as a model stakeholder-based management structure.

Mount Paektu Biosphere Reserve (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

217. The Council welcomed this second periodic report on the Mount Paektu Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1989. Mt Paektu Biosphere Reserve is located on the Paektu lava land surrounding Mt Paektu in the northern part of the country. As a volcanic landscape, it is ecologically characterized by the clear vertical distribution of alpine and forest ecosystems and its destruction is characterized by volcanic eruptions and processes allowing for restoration, soil formation and natural ecosystem processes.
218. The Council noted that the first periodic review was submitted in 2001. The Council commended the efforts of the authorities in addressing past recommendations from the MAB ICC and acknowledged the submission of a work plan for the biosphere reserve. The authorities are requested to elaborate a comprehensive management plan and to improve local community participation.
219. The Council concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the authorities to increase scientific cooperation and educational activities.

Archipel de la Guadeloupe Biosphere Reserve (France)

220. The Council welcomed this first periodic report for the Archipel de la Guadeloupe Biosphere Reserve since its establishment in 1992. The site comprises terrestrial and marine areas and has the same borders as the National Park of Guadeloupe. The Council acknowledged the extension of the biosphere reserve, which now includes a core area of 21,850 ha, a buffer zone of 94 065 ha supporting the conservation function and a transition area of 130,000 ha.
221. The governing body is composed of 21 municipalities, a regional council, county council and state departments. It is supported by a Scientific Council and a Social and Economic Council which advise and guide it concerning conservation and development-related issues within the framework of a Territory Charter. The latter is the result of a long in-depth consultative process and aims to reconcile tourism, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
222. On the basis of the information received, the Council concluded that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but recommended that the authorities implement the following:
- Finalize the update of the management plan for the biosphere reserve and send a copy to the Secretariat for consideration at the next Council meeting;
 - Improve and pursue the involvement of local actors (citizens, tour operators) in managing the reserve;
 - Develop a tool to measure the effectiveness of annual management and report to the governing bodies of the biosphere reserve;

- Foster the visibility of the biosphere reserve within and beyond the limits of the National Park of Guadeloupe;
- Explore the conditions for the future extension of the transition area to include the few remaining counties, in order to apply a sustainable development approach to the entire island territory.

Rhön Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

223. The Council welcomed the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1991. It noted with satisfaction the implementation of the recommendations issued in 2004 by the International Co-ordinating Council, including the revision of the zonation; the continuous work on updating the framework concept with broad public participation; the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan, through intensive cooperation within the Rhön Regional Working Group (ARGE Rhön) and the Biosphere Reserve's Advisory Board; the establishment and continued expansion of the Rhön label as a regional brand, in cooperation with the tourism sector; and the positive developments in the agriculture industry as regards organic farming and efforts promoting sustainable nature conservation.
224. The Council supported the German MAB National Committee's recommendation encouraging greater involvement in the biosphere reserve's related agenda by the other Land government departments, in addition to the three lead Ministries of the Environment.
225. The Council requested further clarification of the influence of the military training facility Wildflecken, located in the buffer zone and core area, in terms of access and the possible environmental impact on the biosphere reserve.
226. The Council commended the German authorities for the high quality of the periodic review report and considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It further encouraged the authorities to share this periodic review report as a model for the WNBR and to make it available on the UNESCO-MAB website. It also welcomed the extension of the site.

Pfälzerwald/Vosges Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

227. The Council welcomed this second periodic review of Pfälzerwald biosphere reserve (established in 1992) as the German part of Pfälzerwald / Vosges du Nord Transboundary Biosphere Reserve established between France and Germany in 1998.
228. The biosphere reserve is characterized by intensive viticulture, economic forestry, hunting and conservation of outstanding natural areas for recreation which are promoting sustainable practices. The sound spatial management of urbanization, infrastructure and tourism facilities is remarkable. The biosphere reserve implements a strong education, training and environmental awareness programme, with special topics being proposed targeting children and young people. Research programmes are implemented in partnership with universities and research institutions.
229. The Council considered that the Pfälzerwald Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council looks forward to receiving the complete zonation of the transboundary biosphere reserve with its transboundary periodic review report.

South-East Rügen Biosphere Reserve (Germany)

230. The Council welcomed this second periodic review of South-East Rügen, established in 1991. The Council acknowledged the governance structure of the biosphere reserve and commended the sustainable tourism model put in place, the practice-oriented research and the implementation of the Education for Sustainable Development programme targeting children and youth.
231. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council suggested to the authorities that they improve the representation of civil society and the local community on the advisory board and take the opportunity of extending the core area up to 600 ha to elaborate and update the biosphere reserve's management plan.

Samaria Biosphere Reserve (Greece)

232. The Council welcomed this second periodic review report for Samaria Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1981. The Council noted with appreciation the actions taken to address the recommendation of the first report with regard to the zonation, the governance structure and research and monitoring. The Council acknowledged the extension of the core area (4,387ha to 4,887ha) and the addition of a buffer zone of 15,768 ha and a transition area of 37,829ha. However, there was still room for improvement and thus the Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the authorities:
- Revise the zonation in order to protect the core area entirely by a buffer zone;
 - Send to the Secretariat a copy of the revised management plan with a zonation in concordance with the criteria set by the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve;
 - Consider the participation of representatives of local communities and the private sector in the coordination and management structure of the biosphere reserve;
 - Finalize the establishment of a research and monitoring programme for the habitats and landscapes of the biosphere reserve.
233. It requested that all these elements be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

General recommendation for Hungary

234. The Council welcomed the voluntary reports and acknowledged the work done, which was well prepared and structured, describing the process for improving the functioning of Aggtelek Biosphere Reserve (designated 1979), Lake Fertő Biosphere Reserve (designated 1979), Hortobágy Biosphere Reserve (designated 1979), Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (designated 1979) and Pilis Biosphere Reserve (designated 1980).
235. The Council took note of the fact that the zonation of the five biosphere reserves was in the process of modification and that zonation already existed for the national parks. The Council also took note of the zonation map received for the Hungarian part of the Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2012.
236. It also noted that there was a national monitoring programme in place in all these biosphere reserves in relation to nature protection and conservation measures, that efforts had been made to support farming through the High Nature Value (HNV) Areas

programme of the European Union's Agri-environmental Scheme and there were good educational and training programmes.

237. However, the Council considered that the explanation and methodology that led to the new zonation system was unclear and needed further explanation, especially as regards the IUCN reference to zones A, B, C.
238. Therefore, the Council recommended that, for each site, the Hungarian authorities:
- Review the zonation and ensure that it meets the Statutory Framework criteria to enable implementation of the three functions. Special emphasis needed placing on joining clusters, providing connectivity between zones and making the transition area an appropriate size.
 - Prepare a management plan according to the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework;
 - Involve local communities in management, conservation and establish partnerships with stakeholders.

Aggtelek Biosphere Reserve (Hungary)

239. The Council welcomed the voluntary report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended that the authorities improve the zonation, in order to meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework and to fulfill the three functions. The Council also recommended that the authorities design a management structure to make the reserve more inclusive of stakeholders and to ensure the direct participation of stakeholders in managing the biosphere reserve. Lastly, they recommended that the authorities develop a management plan in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework.

Lake Fertő Biosphere Reserve (Hungary)

240. The Council welcomed the voluntary report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it recommended that the site further develop the participatory process for engaging communities in the area's management. It also welcomed the cooperation with Austria and further encouraged the authorities to explore a collaborative approach to lake ecosystem management, as well as the possibility of establishing a transboundary biosphere reserve.

Hortobágy Biosphere Reserve (Hungary)

241. The Council welcomed the voluntary report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It encouraged the authorities to pursue the participatory approach to coordinating and managing the biosphere reserve. It also requested that the management plan be finalized in accordance with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework.

Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (Hungary)

242. The Council welcomed the voluntary report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 1979. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requested that the authorities provide a zonation map and explore the possibilities for connecting the patches of the biosphere

reserve in order to unite the different clusters into one entity. It also requested that a management plan for the entire area be designed, once the new zonation is in place.

Pilis Biosphere Reserve (Hungary)

243. The Council welcomed the voluntary report of this biosphere reserve designated in 1980. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It further encouraged the authorities to work on the zonation and to provide a zonation map with clear boundaries for the biosphere reserve. It also requested that the authorities provide a management plan and suggested they conduct assessments of the impact of tourism on the area and explain better how tourism was managed in the area.

North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve (Ireland)

244. The Council welcomed the draft of this first periodic review of North Bull Island Biosphere Reserve, established in 1981. The Council welcomed the inclusive participatory approach put in place to extending the area and strongly encouraged the authorities to implement these changes and the extension, in order for the site to have an appropriate zonation that fulfilled the three functions and meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requested that the Irish authorities finalize the periodic review report and submit it by the end of September 2014. It encouraged the development of a more inclusive management structure, based on the direct involvement of wider range of stakeholders in the planning and management of the proposed biosphere reserve.

Islands of Tuscany Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

245. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report on this biosphere reserve, designated in 2003. The Council considered that the zonation was unclear and does not reflect delineations that enabled it to fulfill the functions of a biosphere reserve. It also noted that no management plan had been prepared for the biosphere reserve, only a Park Plan adopted by national law, and that the ecosystem services were not properly explained.

246. The Council also considered inadequate the participation of local communities in management, research activities, the sustainable development project and monitoring activities and regretted that it could not find any evidence of stakeholders' involvement in joint projects. It also noted that communication was lacking on the strategy and targeted public awareness-raising actions. It further noted the absence of evaluation of the impact of tourism on the area and could find no evidence of monitoring, nor any information on how the biosphere reserve was involved in the supervision and regulation of tourism. It also noted that research was oriented towards conservation schemes implemented in the national park. There was no evidence how research findings were implicated in fostering sustainable development.

247. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Within the context of the implementation of the exit strategy, the Council considered that evidence concerning all the missing elements described above needed to be provided by 30 September 2015.

Dana Biosphere Reserve (Jordan)

248. The Council welcomed the periodic review report of the Dana Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1998, the biosphere reserve encompasses four biogeographic zones and

seven vegetation types with a rich flora and fauna. Whereas, traditionally, people in the area lived a nomadic lifestyle, and some still do, the majority are settled in villages around the reserve. With 40,000 visitors per year, tourism is an important income and job generator for the reserve. The scientific research programme managed at central level (Royal Society for Conservation of Nature - RSCN) includes ecological monitoring and more applied research, including on socio-economic factors, as well as archeological research. The RSCN also has an environmental education programme targeting schoolchildren and cooperatives around the reserve.

249. The management plan has been developed in accordance with the IUCN criteria and is valid for five years. RSCN is the only authority managing the biosphere reserve. The Council concluded that the Dana Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Committee invited the Jordanian authorities to seek to involve further local communities, civil society - including the private sector - in the region to become closer partners in the coordination and management structures of the biosphere reserve. Lastly, the Council also recommended that the many good experiences gained in the Dana Biosphere Reserve be shared with other biosphere reserves in the region and with the WNBR at large.

Mt Mulanje Biosphere Reserve (Malawi)

250. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of Mt Mulanje Biosphere Reserve, established in 2000. Mt Mulanje is a Priority One Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) within the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot; it has the highest endemic terrestrial biodiversity in Malawi and the second highest in the region after the Chimanimani Mountains (Zimbabwe). The three zones of the biosphere reserve are protected under the Forestry Act (1996) as part of the Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve.
251. The Committee appreciated the effort of authorities to conserve biodiversity, to promote research and education and to control illegal activities within the biosphere reserve. It also acknowledged with appreciation the existence of the Mt Mulanje Conservation Trust (MMCT), which is a sustainable source of income that supports the biosphere reserve concept. Indeed, the Committee noted that, beyond the boundaries of the current biosphere reserve (which has no residents inside), MMCT had a specific agenda to assist many development activities with local community groups based upon opportunities of interest, local skills, natural resources availability and innovative payment schemes for ecosystem services to foster conservation.
252. However, the Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, despite a strong conservation function, good activities related to the logistic function and some promising development functions. There is an obvious need to expand the biosphere reserve area to enable a larger transition area that encompasses the neighboring community villages where a variety of sustainable development activities have been facilitated over the past decade. The Committee was confident that the authorities were on the way to meeting the zonation criteria and encouraged the authorities to go ahead. The Committee also noted the biosphere reserve authority's willingness to improve the participation of local stakeholders. The Council recommended that the authorities:
- Review the zonation of the Biosphere Reserve, in order to incorporate the above-mentioned expansion requirement.

- Take advantage of the Coordination structure (MMCT) as a basis for establishing a multistakeholder management structure for the future enlarged biosphere reserve.
- Assess the pros and cons of the various possibilities for (i) enlarging the transition area and (ii) reclassifying the Chambe basin transition area as the buffer zone and seeking its legal protection
- Clarify the social and economic impact of the biosphere reserve
- Provide information on how local communities and settlements will be involved in the different projects and in the management of the future enlarged biosphere reserve.

253. The Council strongly encouraged the biosphere reserve to use the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to share experience and practices and requested that it receive all information related to the above-mentioned clarifications by 30 September 2014. The Council strongly suggests exploring the possibility of adding a transboundary extension to the Milange area of Mozambique. For this purpose, the Committee recommends (i) developing a collaborative process with the Mozambique authorities and (ii) requesting the MAB Secretariat's support and that of the South African MAB colleagues in implementing the process.

Alto Golfo de California y El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve (former Alto Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve) (Mexico)

254. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the Alto Golfo de California y El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve. This biosphere was established in 1993 as El Pinacate, Gran Desierto de Altar y Alto Golfo de California. It was then extended in 1995 and renamed Alto Golfo de California. Given its relevance and the need to maintain the identity of both areas, the proposed new name is Alto Golfo de California y El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve.

255. A core area of this biosphere reserve was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2013. The biosphere reserve has regular fiscal funds and has received support from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and from the Natural Protected Areas Fund (FANP). A project on conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity in the Gulf of California was started jointly with Germany in 2013.

256. The Council welcomed the renaming of this biosphere reserve and concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

257. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve, established in 1995. Part of this biosphere reserve was also designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005. The biosphere reserve has carried out different campaigns relating to sustainable fishing, sustainable tourism, waste management and the eradication of invasive species. A climate change strategy is being defined and monitoring campaigns for sea lions, brown pelicans, sea turtles and whale sharks are being carried out. Since 2012, the island has been part of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

258. The Council acknowledged the excellent management of this biosphere reserve. However, it was concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are therefore

requested to define better the buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) for all the islands and the coast, and to engage more with the local population.

Sierra La Laguna Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

259. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the Sierra La Laguna Biosphere Reserve, established in 2003. The Council noted with satisfaction the great work done in this biosphere reserve in the last ten years and the important scientific work done in the reserve, in order to have a better knowledge of the mountain ecosystems, the effect of human activities on vegetation and the current and potential use of the natural resources of the area. Part of the area was designated a Ramsar site in 2008.
260. The Council also noted with satisfaction that, after ten years, the management plan will be evaluated, in order to improve it. The Council congratulated the authorities for implementing a Global Environmental Facility-funded project to improve the quality life of farmers.
261. The Council considered that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Waddensea Area Biosphere Reserve (the Netherlands)

262. The Council welcomed the second periodic review report of this biosphere reserve designated in 1986. It recognized the importance of the site for wetlands and acknowledged the active participation of the site as a World Heritage site. However, it noted that no appropriate zonation of the site was in place. In addition, it was difficult to evaluate how the site was indeed managed as a biosphere reserve, since the governance seemed complex. Moreover, the connection amongst the various regulations and institutions was unclear. Lastly, it noted that there were some military activities in the area but lacked details on the possible impact.
263. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In the context of the implementation of the exit strategy, the Council considered that all missing elements described above should be evidenced and provided by 30 September 2015, using the new periodic review form.

Lal Suhanra Biosphere Reserve (Pakistan)

264. The Council acknowledged the submission of this second periodic review report for the Lal Suhanra Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1977. The Committee was concerned by the absence of a resident population and a dedicated management team for this biosphere reserve. The non-existence of a management plan for the site since its designation as a biosphere reserve was also noted.
265. The Council noted that this periodic review was prepared using the services of a consultant who relied on literature rather than current information on the ground.
266. The Council acknowledged the importance of this site for biodiversity conservation. However, it was concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The authorities are therefore requested to:
- Inform the MAB Secretariat whether there is a resident population in the biosphere reserve and, if, describe its involvement in managing the site.

- Submit a map with proper zonation.
- Provide clarification of the zonation of the biosphere reserve in relation to the national park.
- Elaborate a clear management plan and provide information on the biosphere reserve's management team.

267. The requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Puerto Galera Biosphere Reserve (Philippines)

268. The Council welcomed the periodic review submission for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1977. Economic activities include aquaculture, quarrying of marble and gold mining. The resident population in the biosphere reserve amounts to approximately 20,000.

269. The Council noted that the zonation of this site does not conform to the zonation system prescribed for biosphere reserves and that it focused only on the marine protected areas. The Council also pointed out that there were different acts regulating the different zones of the biosphere reserve and that the available management plan only concerned the marine protected areas, not the entire biosphere reserve. Although the conservation function was being met, the development and logistic functions were not being fulfilled.

270. The Council acknowledged the importance of this site for biodiversity conservation. However, it concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In order to meet the criteria, it is recommended that the authorities implement the following:

- Re-zone the area to conform to the zonation criteria for biosphere reserves.
- Provide information on the management structure for the biosphere reserve, as well as a management plan.

271. Having implemented the necessary action, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

272. The Council encouraged the authorities to seek technical support from other biosphere reserve experts in the Philippines, the Southeast Asian Biosphere Reserve Network and the MAB Secretariat.

Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

273. The Council welcomed the third periodic review of Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve, established in 1976 and extended in 2005. This report also comes in response to the recommendations made in 2013. The Council recognized the high biodiversity value of Bialowieza Biosphere Reserve and its importance within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Council noted with concern that the 2013 recommendations had not been addressed and therefore considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

274. Therefore, the Council strongly recommended that the authorities:

- Establish an institution with a coordinating function for the entire biosphere reserve that will involve participation of stakeholders and inhabitants;
- Provide a copy of the biosphere management plan or a detailed outline thereof;

- Describe activities related to the biosphere reserve and how the recommendations on the management plan of the previous periodic review have been taken into account;
- Clarify how the development and logistic functions of the biosphere reserve would be strengthened.

275. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Puszcza Kampinowska Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

276. The Council welcomed the second periodic review report of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2000, as a follow-up to the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013. It welcomed the information on how the Puszcza Kampinowska Biosphere Reserve was involved in international activities and how consultations with local communities were held on matters regarding the national park. The Council acknowledged the commitment from the Puszcza Kampinowska Biosphere Reserve to address the issues raised in the previous recommendations.

277. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it encouraged the authorities to prepare, in cooperation with local stakeholders, a management plan for the biosphere reserve that would be broader than the national park management plan; it also recommended that the local authorities build on existing local community-based institutions and local action groups, as well as the private sector, to ensure the participation of these stakeholders in the activities of the area promoting sustainable development and in the management of the biosphere reserve.

Luknajno Lake Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

278. The Council welcomed this second periodic review report for the biosphere reserve, designated in 1976. The Council noted that the biosphere reserve has only core area and buffer zones and that the activities described are mainly focused on nature conservation. It also acknowledged that the area is of very small size (14 km²) with a very low population. While the conservation and logistics functions are fully implemented, the development function is rather weak and local public participation in the biosphere reserve management or partnership network for the overall governance of the biosphere reserve has not been concluded. All activities are conducted in relation to the Luknajno Lake Nature Reserve. The Council further noted that there is a vision for the creation of a larger biosphere reserve in the area.

279. The Council therefore considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Given the high biodiversity of Luknajno Lake, the Council encouraged the authorities to consider a possible future proposal for a new biosphere reserve that would be larger, with Luknajno Lake as part of the core area and which would fully comply with the Statutory Framework criteria.

Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland/Slovakia)

280. The Council welcomed the first joint periodic review report for this transboundary biosphere reserve, established in 1993. It acknowledged the efforts made by both countries in preparing this joint report using the updated transboundary periodic review

form. It also considered that both sites were working mainly on conservation aspects and mainly fulfilling the mission of national parks.

281. The Council also noted that several joint projects were focusing on conservation, such as the common strategies for the conservation of large carnivores, including creating a Tatra management unit of cross-border populations of large carnivores; the standardization of protocols for dead animals and collecting samples for further study. It also noted activities related to education, curricula for young people on both sides of the border, as well as the joint organization of conferences.
282. However, the Council noted that there was no clear evidence of cooperation as regards the sustainable development function. The Council considered that this transboundary site addresses the Pamplona recommendations but recommended the following:
- That the authorities provide clarification on changes in human population;
 - That the authorities provide a joint management plan in accordance with the Seville Strategy and Pamplona recommendations for the transboundary biosphere reserve, using a participatory process and in close cooperation with local communities and strategic partners, including the private sector;
 - That the authorities ensure the proper involvement of local people in management and activities fostering sustainable development;
 - That the authorities of both countries provide their national periodic review forms at the same time as the joint transboundary periodic review form.
283. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.
284. The Council also requested that the MAB Secretariat contact the Slovak MAB National Committee concerning a letter that has been received which is challenging some information contained in the periodic review form.

East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland/Slovakia/Ukraine)

285. The Council welcomed the first joint periodic review report for this transboundary biosphere reserve, established in 1998. It acknowledged with satisfaction that a cooperation agreement had been prepared, that there were prospects for joint future activities and that effort had been made towards fostering development. It also took note of the information provided on scientific research, confirming the large amount of research studies done in the area in flora and fauna, but also the lack of social studies.
286. The Council welcomed the information that local participation had started during the preparation of the periodic review form. The Council pointed out that there was still no management plan for the entire area and that no person/group or entity had yet been appointed coordinator of the transboundary biosphere reserve.
287. The Council concluded that the transboundary biosphere reserve was not addressing the Pamplona recommendations for transboundary biosphere reserves and recommended the three national authorities to:
- Establish a coordination structure for the transboundary biosphere reserve to facilitate activities public awareness-raising activities, partners and projects among all six entities involved in the transboundary biosphere reserve;

- Operationalize the cooperation agreement and extend it to activities fostering development, encourage local involvement in joint actions and projects, including tourism management;
- Promote some applied research projects to address local issues related to tourism, culture conservation and promotion, as well as local knowledge conservation;
- Prepare programmes and activities enabling the active participation of local communities;
- Implement joint initiatives listed in the joint periodic review.

288. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Paul do Boquilobo Biosphere Reserve (Portugal)

289. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for the Paul do Boquilobo Biosphere Reserve. The total surface area comes to 55, 400 ha. This biosphere reserve was designated in 1981 and enlarged in 2005 to include a transition area. The Committee noted, however, that the map provided did not include a transition area. There is also no human population in the transition area.

290. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In order to meet the criteria, it is recommended that the authorities implement the following recommendations:

- Provide a map with proper zonation.
- Provide information on the governance of the biosphere reserve.
- Provide information on the involvement of local people in management and in decision-making processes concerning the biosphere reserve.

291. The requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Nerussa-Desnyanskoye Polesye Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

292. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2001. The Council noted that, whereas the conservation function was fully implemented, the logistics function was weak and the development function non-existent. It also noted that the activities and management described in the report focused mainly on the Bryansk Forest State Nature Reserve. The Council further pointed out that there was no overall management plan for the biosphere reserve, no participation of local communities in the biosphere reserve management and no vision for the biosphere reserve. The Council could not find appropriate measures to address these weaknesses and problems. The Council therefore concluded that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

293. The Council requested that the authorities provide the following documents and clarifications by 30 September 2015:

- Resubmit the periodic review on the updated periodic review form;
- Design a management plan for the overall biosphere reserve with clear proposals for action to enhance the logistic and development functions;
- Design a mechanism for the biosphere reserve coordination body that would include local communities in management through participation;
- Provide an explanation for the absence of a buffer zone around the Skripkinsky core area;

- Clarify how the various projects and research outcomes are integrated in the functioning of the biosphere reserve.

Far East Marine Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

294. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2003. The Council noted that, whereas the conservation function and the logistic function (namely research) were of a very high standard, the development function was weak, partly due to the absence of any settlements on the reserve. It was also noted that participatory management, which includes local stakeholders in the biosphere reserve, was also non-existent.
295. The Council therefore considered that, whereas the site was doing excellent work in the fields of nature protection and research, it does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Within the context of the implementation of the exit strategy, the Council recommended submission concerning all missing elements described above by 30 September 2015.

Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

296. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve, established in 2001. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, through a strong conservation function and good logistics with improving education, despite a weaker development function.
297. The Council noted with appreciation that the biosphere reserve authorities planned to improve the work of the biosphere reserve by involving a certain number of partners, civic organizations, educational departments and entrepreneurs, who would collaborate on activities related to environmental education and the development of tourism at the site. Also noted was the will to get local authorities interested in engaging with the local community in the biosphere reserve in events, actions and festivities and the provision of environmental education and tourist services.
298. The Council recommended that the authorities:
- Provide an updated zonation map;
 - Clarify how the development and logistic functions of the biosphere reserve will be strengthened;
 - Provide information about the representation and consultation of local communities and their participation in the life of the biosphere reserve through proposals for a more participative and inclusive approach to biosphere reserve management and provide supporting evidence of the creation of a supervisory board, as indicated in the report, in which stakeholders and inhabitants of the closest municipal districts could be represented.
299. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Commander Islands Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

300. The Council welcomed the periodic review from this biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It noted that the conservation function was

being implemented, as well as the logistic function; however, it considered that the development function, despite a sparse population, should be strengthened.

301. The Council noted with satisfaction the focus on work with indigenous communities and encouraged the authorities to promote participatory approaches in decision-making processes further. It also welcomed the dissemination of information on the biosphere reserve (e.g. the use of resources is beneficial) but encouraged the direct involvement of local communities in the joint management plan and the preparation of a strategy for sustainable use of natural resources.
302. The Council recommended that the authorities:
- Integrate all the workplans in an integrated biosphere reserve management plan with the involvement of stakeholders in all processes;
 - Document examples of projects completed in the biosphere reserve;
 - Design a more inclusive biosphere reserve management structure, based on the model of the existing Commander Islands Nature and Biosphere Reserve Scientific and Technical Council, composed of representatives of the indigenous population and the district authorities.
303. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Katunsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

304. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 2000. It noted with satisfaction the implemented changes, especially those in the field of participative management and coordination of the biosphere reserve through the establishment of the multistakeholder Public Council of Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve. The work focusing on sustainable development and in helping to create alternative sources of income for local communities and to reduce the human impact on the environment was also noted with high satisfaction, as this work could serve as a model for other biosphere reserves.
305. The Council commended the representatives of the Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve for the high quality of the periodic review report. It considered, however, that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the zonation be revised, with the buffer zones surrounding entirely the core areas. This revision should reach the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Nizhegorodskoe Zavolzhye Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

306. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of Nizhegorodskoy Zavolzhye Reserve, established in 2002. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The site has a strong conservation function but considerably weak logistics and development functions. It was noted that there was no permanent or temporary population living in the biosphere reserve and that the biosphere reserve only interacted with settlements, some of them fairly large, beyond its borders. However, the Council noted with appreciation the efforts made by the biosphere reserve authority to include stakeholders in the process of participatory management, even though this concerned special occasions or temporary working groups.

307. The Council requested that the authorities:
- Consider extending the biosphere reserve to include settlements and their populations, as already suggested in the periodic review.
 - Propose establishing an institution with a coordinating function for the entire biosphere reserve that would involve stakeholders and inhabitants on a permanent basis.
 - Design a comprehensive management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.
 - Clarify how the development and logistic functions of the biosphere reserve will be strengthened.
 - Clarify how the various projects and research outcomes are integrated in the functioning of the biosphere reserve.
308. The Council strongly encouraged the biosphere reserve to use the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to share experience and practices and requested that the Secretariat receive all information related to the above-mentioned clarifications by 30 September 2015.

Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve (Slovenia)

309. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve, established in 2003. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, having a strong conservation function and a good logistics function but a weak development function. The Council took note of the biosphere reserve authority's willingness to improve the participation of local stakeholders in the process of elaborating a management plan.
310. The Council recommended that the Slovenian authorities:
- Clarify how the development and logistic functions of the biosphere reserve will be improved
 - Clarify the social and ecological impacts of tourism development (i.e. ski resort);
 - Provide the management plan for the Triglav National Park once validated;
 - Provide information on how local communities and municipalities are involved in the different projects and management of the biosphere reserve.
311. The Council strongly encouraged the biosphere reserve to use the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for sharing experience and practices and requested to receive all information requested above by 30 September 2015.

La Palma Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

312. This biosphere reserve had been originally designated as El Canal y Los Tiles in 1983 then extended in 1998. The entire island was included as a biosphere reserve in 2002 which was renamed La Palma, including marine areas. This revision also provides an adjustment to the zonation to include the new protected areas that were declared when it was first designated as a biosphere reserve. The Council congratulated the local authorities for the detailed information provided and for the continued adaptation of the biosphere reserve concept to the local situation. It serves as a model of participatory management. The Council noted that more information was also provided in the 2013-2022 Biosphere Reserve Action Plan entitled *From protected area to area of protection*.

313. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and provided a model for insular biosphere reserves.

Monfragüe Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

314. This biosphere reserve was designated in 2003. During that session, the Council had requested that further information be provided on the protected status of the core area and buffer zone lying within the biosphere reserve but which are not part of the national park. In line with this request, the Council noted that in 2007, almost the whole core area and buffer zone of the biosphere reserve was given the status of a National Park by the authorities. The national authorities also elaborated an action plan for the entire biosphere reserve which integrates the national park management plan and other protected areas, such as those within Natura 2000, all of which are reflected in the zonation. The Monfragüe Biosphere Reserve is also engaged in achieving the MAB objectives in collaboration with local communities.

315. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Picos de Europa Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

316. The Council welcomed the periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2003. This biosphere reserve conforms to the surface area of the Picos de Europa National Park. They share a common management structure and action plan. This partnership helps the biosphere reserve to achieve its objectives. The biosphere reserve is also part of the Asturian Biosphere Reserve network, which is a platform for tourism promotion and local income generation. The Council suggested that the local authorities extend the area of the biosphere reserve and encouraged them to explore this possibility. This would include more urban areas in the biosphere reserve, as already proposed in the periodic report. This suggestion follows the recommendation of the Council in 2003.

317. The Council concluded that this Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Terras do Miño Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

318. The Council welcomed the first periodic review of his biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. During that session, the Council had requested clarification of the protected core areas. The biosphere reserve has several categories of protected area like the Natura 2000 sites and regional ones that ensure the protection of the core areas. Since 2011, its management structure and action plan have been developed in consultation with local communities; this helps guarantee the active functioning of the biosphere reserve. Activities in education and communication are being implemented to promote the area's environmental and cultural values. The Council also noted the peculiarity of the zoning system, which is complementary with the Cantabrian mountain chain.

319. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requested more information on the unification process of the biosphere reserves of the Cantabrian mountain chain.

Valles del Leza, Jubera, Cidacos y Alhama Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

320. This biosphere reserve had been designated in 2003. During that session, the Council had requested confirmation of this proposal's endorsement by the appropriate local representatives and more information on the establishment and role of the management board of the biosphere reserve.
321. In line with this request, the Council noted that the biosphere reserve had a proposed action plan for 2014-2023 that is coordinated by the manager of the biosphere reserve. The biosphere reserve is an active member of the Spanish Biosphere Reserve Network, in particular as concerns the "label" thematic working group, which is an example of its activities promoting cooperation. It is also working on educational and communication programmes to engage local authorities and communities.
322. The Council acknowledged the zoning proposal to readjust the borders of the biosphere reserve to integrate some communities in the transition area. It welcomed this initiative as an example of local community involvement. It also suggested standardizing the name of the biosphere reserve to avoid confusion.
323. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the national authorities implement the following:
- Standardize the name of the biosphere reserve.

Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

324. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. During that session, the Council had recommended that the biosphere reserve:
- Develop an integrated management plan for the entire area, paying attention to improving the level of participation of all stakeholders;
 - Step up environmental education in areas other than the three national parks located in the biosphere reserve; and
 - Explore cooperation related to the study and management of Dehesas cultural landscapes in other parts of Spain and Portugal.
325. In line with this request, the Council noted the use of a management plan to coordinate the biosphere reserve in the three natural parks (Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche, Sierra Norte de Sevilla, Sierra de Hornachuelos). These plans ensure the participation of local communities surrounding the natural parks and promote environmental education. The Council encouraged the authorities to continue working on the completion of a biosphere reserve management plan and noted that the designation of a coordinator of the Dehesas de Sierra Morena Biosphere Reserve had been initiated. This biosphere reserve is a member of the Andalusia regional committee of biosphere reserves and therefore benefits from the experiences of other biosphere reserves in this part of Spain.
326. The Council concluded that this Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council encouraged the national authorities to:
- Finalize the management plan specifically for the biosphere reserve.
 - Pay attention to monitoring the regulation of hunting activities, in order to ensure an ecological equilibrium.

Valle de Laciana Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

327. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2003. It is managed by the “Fundacion de la Laciana Reserva de Biosfera”. In spite of its slow start, in 2008/2009 an action plan was established for it to promote activities on conservation of the cultural and natural values, sustainable development, communication, research and management. The Council also noted the creation of the Association of Castilla y Leon Biosphere Reserves in 2012 (that includes four of the eight biosphere reserves from this province). However, some challenges exist with regard to mining, forest fires and the preservation of the habitat for bears. The Council encouraged the biosphere reserve authorities to continue pursuing their activities.
328. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and urged the national authorities to take the following actions:
- To elaborate a management plan;
 - To integrate the transition area (cities and mines) with the buffer zone;
 - To promote the research and inventory of biodiversity;
 - To promote ecological restoration of the environment near the carbon mines;
 - To create a plan to guarantee the connectivity in the landscape.

Muniellos Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

329. The Council welcomed the periodic review of this biosphere reserve designated in 2000 and extended in 2003 following the proposed Gran Cantabrica Biosphere Reserve designated by the autonomous provinces. This biosphere reserve also fits the delineation of the Fuentes de Narcea, Degaña e Ibias Natural Park. They share a common management structure and action plan. The biosphere reserve is part of the Asturian Biosphere Reserve network, which is a platform for promoting tourism and local income generation, in line with the previous Gran Cantabrica concept. However, the similar naming of the Muniellos Biosphere Reserve and the Reserva Natural Integral de Muniellos (for conservation issues only) has created some confusion. In addition, the Council noted a potential zoning conflict with the authorization for mineral extraction, hunting areas and the biosphere reserve limits. The Council encouraged the local authorities to consider the possibility of extending the area of the biosphere reserve and including more urban areas, as proposed in this periodic report.
330. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the national authorities to consider revising the zonation of the biosphere reserve, in order to increase the protection of the western part of the core area.

Kanneliya-Dediyagala-Nakiyadeniya Biosphere Reserve (Sri Lanka)

331. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report of the biosphere reserve, designated in 2004. This biosphere reserve has been active with respect to the three biosphere reserve functions. The Council noted the proposed changes in the zonation: to extend the core area, buffer zone and transition area with the aim of incorporating an adjacent forest area.
332. The Committee concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves Biosphere Reserves and approved the

proposed extension. The Committee encouraged the national authorities to consider connecting this biosphere reserve with the Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve.

Hurulu Biosphere Reserve (Sri Lanka)

333. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Hurulu Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. The original total surface area was 25,500ha without a transition area. The new total surface area will be 69,641ha, comprised of 512ha of core area, 40,670ha of buffer zone and 28,459ha of transition area. For the first 30 years following its designation, the authorities could not undertake any significant activities in the biosphere reserve owing to civil unrest in the area. The current human population in the area is 14,654.

334. The Council commended the authorities for this well-prepared report. The Council concluded that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and approved the proposed extension. The Council encourages the authorities to consider increasing the size of the core area.

Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve (Sri Lanka)

335. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1978. It is the largest rainforest in Sri Lanka. The first periodic review report for this site was submitted in 2003. The Committee noted that the authorities had implemented well the MAB ICC's past recommendations.

336. At the time of its designation, this site only had a core area of 11,187ha. Currently, there is a buffer zone of 16,316ha and a transition area of 2,087ha, which were demarcated in 2014, in addition to a core area of 11,427ha. The Council congratulated the national authorities for this improved zonation. There are permanent local communities living in the biosphere reserve who are actively involved in managing the site.

337. The Council concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and approved the proposed extension. The Council recommended that the national authorities consider re-zoning to avoid direct contact between the core and transition areas, especially in the location indicated as Lankagama on the zonation map.

Huay Tak Teak Biosphere Reserve (Thailand)

338. The Council welcomed this second periodic review of the Huay Tak Teak Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1977. The committee commended the authorities for setting up a coordinating centre in 2012 which is responsible for facilitating collaboration among various stakeholders.

339. The Council concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended greater involvement by the local government and community in managing the biosphere reserve, a task which should not be restricted to the central government only. The governance structure also needs improving, with a detailed management plan.

340. The Council noted an error in the legend of the map (the buffer zone had been given as the transition area). The authorities are, therefore, requested to send the MAB Secretariat

a new zonation map with the correct legend and a detailed management plan by 30 September 2015.

Ranong Biosphere Reserve (Thailand)

341. The Council welcomed this second periodic review report for the Ranong Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1997. Mangroves constitute the predominant ecosystem of this biosphere reserve. The site remains largely unchanged and the mangrove forest conditions are reported to have improved considerably. The Council noted that the zonation was the same as when the biosphere reserve was designated. The Council also acknowledged the information provided on the management structure of the biosphere reserve and local stakeholder participation.
342. The Council concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council was concerned, however, that local communities had very little knowledge about the biosphere reserve concept. The authorities are, therefore, encouraged to embark on building awareness and educating local communities about biosphere reserves. The authorities are requested to submit a comprehensive management plan taking into consideration local community participation.

Askania nova Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)

343. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1983. The first periodic review report was done in 1998. The total area remains the same. It is also a Ramsar site. The predominant ecosystem is lowland steppe.
344. Economic activities in the buffer zone include agriculture and sheep-grazing. Animal husbandry and agriculture are practiced in the transition area which has seven villages. There is a dedicated management team and a functional management plan. The Council noted that an updated map had not been submitted together with the periodic review report, despite being required on the form.
345. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested that the national authorities submit a report including an updated map showing the zonation clearly by 30 September 2015.

Chernomorskiy (Black Sea) Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)

346. The Council welcomed this fourth periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, designated in 1984. The Council welcomed this report as a follow-up on the implementation status of the 2012 recommendations made by the MAB ICC.
347. The Council took note with satisfaction of the information provided and the measures taken on the ground to create a new zonation and to improve management of the entire biosphere reserve. However, the Council considered that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The terrestrial core area is not surrounded by a buffer zone. The committee requested that the authorities provide a new zoning, enlarging the transition area to encompass farmland, and creating a buffer zone around the terrestrial core area.

348. In addition, the Council took note of the management policy aimed at preserving the typical and unique socio-ecological system, as well as the study of change processes. It requested that the Ukrainian authorities provide additional information on: (i) the involvement of local communities in the coordination council and how they participate in the decision-making process; (ii) how research studies contributed to management design and implementation; (iii) the conservation status of rare species within the biosphere reserve and on the regional scale; (iv) how wind power was taken into account in the management plan.
349. The Council requested that the MAB Secretariat be provided with the afore-mentioned information by 30 September 2015 at the latest.

Shatskyi Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)

350. The Council welcomed the periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The total surface area, as reported in this periodic review report, comes to 48,977 ha. However, it is not clear whether this was before or after the reported extension of the biosphere reserve in 2011. Nor is it clear whether the MAB Secretariat has been informed of this extension.
351. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and Council requested that the national authorities submit a report and an updated map with clear zonation and clarify the reported extension by 30 September 2015.

Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)

352. The Council welcomed the periodic review of this biosphere reserve, designated in 1992. The Council commended the national authorities for this second submission of a periodic review report for this site since its designation. The ecosystem is characterized by foothill oak-groves, mountain beech, mixed and spruce forests, pine-alder alpine elfin woodland, subalpine and alpine meadows and upland rocky-lichen landscapes.
353. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The national authorities are requested to clarify how, where and why the extension mentioned in the periodic review report occurred. The national authorities are also requested to review the zonation of the biosphere reserve, in accordance with the criteria prescribed by the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.
354. The Council encouraged the authorities to submit a transboundary biosphere reserve nomination together with Romania.

General recommendation for United States of America

355. The Council welcomed the positive and unprecedented response of the US biosphere reserve authorities to the MAB Secretariat's request to submit periodic review reports for the relevant biosphere reserves under US jurisdiction. The Council acknowledged the significance of this action in demonstrating the US authorities' commitment to promoting the goals and objectives of MAB and the concept of biosphere reserves within their country.

356. In this spirit, the Council wished to reiterate further the importance of ensuring that biosphere reserves are designated, structured and managed in order to fulfill the interconnected objectives of reconciling biodiversity conservation with its sustainable use while also supporting initiatives to advance research, scientific cooperation and education. To this end, the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves are the primary reference for all biosphere reserves.
357. Accordingly, while noting with great appreciation the progress made by many US biosphere reserves that have submitted periodic review reports, particularly with regard to their important contribution to conservation, promotion of education, research and science, the Council wished to express its concern at the lack of emphasis given to fostering sustainable development with the participation and involvement of local communities in the current frameworks and structures of the majority of the US biosphere reserves for which periodic review reports have been received.
358. In light of the foregoing, and in line with the exit strategy it had adopted, the Council recommended that a further review be considered by the authorities, in order to:
- Incorporate a development function component aimed at fostering sustainable economic and human development of the local communities in each of the biosphere reserves,
 - Consider a re-design of the biosphere reserves, in order to ensure a zonation of the core area, buffer zone and transition area to facilitate the three functions of conservation, sustainable development and logistic support for science and education for each biosphere reserve.
 - Integrate the various plans managing the areas within each biosphere reserve in one overall biosphere reserve management plan.
359. The Council considered that one possible way forward for the US authorities to address the above recommendations may be through technical workshops, dialogue, consultation and technical visits involving all stakeholders in each biosphere reserve.

Big Bend Biosphere Reserve (USA)

360. The Council welcomed the submission of this first periodic review report for the Big Bend Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976. The Council noted that the zonation of the biosphere reserve remained the same as when it was designated. The Council noted the quality of the numerous conservation and tourism development activities and actions. The Council considered that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, since there were strong conservation and good logistics functions but a weak development function .
361. It also noted the lack of local communities' involvement in activities promoting sustainable development. The Council noted the long existence of cooperative projects. It recommended that the size of the transition area be increased and invited the US authorities to explore the possibility of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with the Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve in Mexico, as the Big Bend Biosphere Reserve is part of a cluster of an international area of huge conservation interest .
362. The Council also recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:
- A new periodic review report using the official periodic review form.

- Land use maps and zonation maps with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

363. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

California Coast Ranges Biosphere Reserve (USA)

364. The Council welcomed the submission of this first periodic review report for the California Coast Ranges Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983, and the reports on some units of this site. With regard to the Heath and Marjorie Angelo Coast Range Reserve Unit, the Council noted that the zonation remained unchanged since its designation. The Council noted the quality of the numerous actions to promote conservation and develop tourism. It noted the strong conservation and good logistic functions but regretted the weak development function, as well as the lack of involvement of local communities in activities promoting sustainable development. The Council acknowledged the rich biodiversity at this site and the importance of the conservation function and high standard of research, education and training programmes and stewardship activities.

365. As regards the unit of Landels Hill Big Creek, the Council noted that the zonation remained unchanged since its designation. The Council noted the quality of the numerous actions to promote conservation and develop tourism. It noted the strong conservation function and good logistic function but regretted the weak development function, as well as the lack of involvement of local communities in activities promoting sustainable development. The Council acknowledged the rich biodiversity at this site and the importance of the conservation function and high standard of research, education and training programmes and stewardship activities.

366. As regards the Redwood National and State Parks Unit, the Council noted that the zonation remained unchanged since its designation. The Council noted the quality of the numerous actions to promote conservation and develop tourism. It noted the strong conservation function and good logistic function but regretted the weak development function, as well as the lack of involvement of local communities in activities promoting sustainable development. The Council acknowledged the rich biodiversity at this site and the importance of the conservation function and high standard of research, education and training programmes and stewardship activities.

367. Based on the above information, the Council considered that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:

- A new periodic review report using the official periodic review form for the 11 units of the biosphere reserve.
- Land use maps and a zonation map with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
- Evidence of engagement with the surrounding local communities.

368. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Carolinian-South Atlantic Biosphere Reserve (USA)

369. The Council welcomed this periodic review from the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary unit, which is part of the biosphere reserve designated in 1986. From the limited information provided, the Council considered that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Council acknowledged the rich biodiversity at this site, the importance of the conservation function and high standard of research, education and training programmes and stewardship activities. The committee also noted the creation of the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council to enable a participatory process and public involvement.
370. The Council recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:
- Updated periodic review report using the official form for all the units of this biosphere reserve;
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
371. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (USA)

372. The Council welcomed this periodic review from the biosphere reserve, designated in 1983. From the limited information provided, the Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Council acknowledged the rich biodiversity at this site, the importance of the conservation function and high standard of research, education and training programmes. The committee also noted that the biosphere reserve staff cooperated with many stakeholders but that the stakeholders had no mechanism for participating directly in the biosphere reserve management and planning. The Council recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:
- Updated periodic review report using the official form ;
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
373. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Channel Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA)

374. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Channel Islands Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, the Channel Islands Biosphere Reserve is located west of Los Angeles, covering the Channel Islands National Park and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Over the years, the park and sanctuary, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, have played an important role in ensuring biodiversity conservation, restoration and recovery, through a rich portfolio of management, protection, research, monitoring, education and public awareness-raising programmes and projects.
375. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the Channel Islands Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

376. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.

Denali Biosphere Reserve (USA)

377. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Denali Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, Denali Biosphere Reserve is situated in south-central Alaska, centered on the Alaska Range in the vicinity of the Denali National Park and Biosphere Reserve. Since its inception, the reserve has contributed to the protection and management of the ecosystems and wildlife found in Denali. A large number of institutions are carrying out a wide range of important research projects in the area. The national park and biosphere reserve are also successfully involved in activities related to education, public awareness-raising and traditional ecological knowledge.

378. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the Denali Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

379. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.

Glacier Biosphere Reserve (USA)

380. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Glacier Biosphere Reserve and National Park. Designated in 1976, Glacier Biosphere Reserve and National Park is located in north-western Montana in the northern Rocky Mountains and adjacent to the Canadian Waterton Biosphere Reserve. There is transboundary cooperation between Glacier and Waterson National Parks, which comprise a joint Peace Park, designated in 1995 as a World Heritage site (Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park). As a unique wilderness area with a very rich geological past, including mountain formation and glaciation processes, this biosphere reserve has successfully provided vital contributions to science, research, education, recreation and transboundary cooperation over the years.

381. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the Glacier Biosphere Reserve and National Park does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

382. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Glacier Bay and Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (USA)

383. The Council welcomes the submission of the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1986. This biosphere reserve represents an outstanding example of the marine and terrestrial ecosystem of the Sitkan Biogeographical Province of North America. This biosphere reserve is reported to be a protected area. It is a large oceanic island well-buffered from the effects of development on other islands off the mainland. In addition, the Admiralty Island unit is not only a national forest but also a national monument and largely designated wilderness.
384. The Council noted that the management structure emphasized protection and preservation of biodiversity, providing for only modest development and extraction activities. Economic activities at this site are recreation, tourism, a resumption and expansion in mining, a decline in commercial logging and investment in infrastructure. The committee acknowledged the submission of a location and vegetation map for this biosphere reserve.
385. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve was functioning well with respect to conservation, logistic support and development. It noted, however, the lack of proper zonation with respect to what is prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
386. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve (USA)

387. The Council welcomed the submission of this periodic review report for the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1988. The riparian habitat in the park has been reported to support many wildlife species, including federally threatened Coho salmon and federally endangered California freshwater shrimp. Economic activities in the biosphere reserve include tourism and agriculture (wine grapes, silage and apples).
388. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

Hawaiian Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA)

389. The Council welcomed the submission of this periodic review report for the Hawaiian Islands Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1980. The committee noted the reported increase in the size of the two national parks which constitute this biosphere reserve since 2003, although this new area is not included in the biosphere reserve.
390. This biosphere reserve provides a refuge for over 100 endangered plant and animal species. The majority of these species are endemic and globally unique to the islands. About 90% of the plant species are endemic, which makes this site very significant for biodiversity conservation. The description provided for this site was done in detail.

Opportunities to encourage sustainable development are focusing on lands adjacent to the biosphere reserve, through collaborative partnerships with landowners and public outreach to surrounding communities.

391. The Council acknowledged that this biosphere reserve contributed immensely to conservation and also noted with appreciation the involvement of local communities. It noted, however, the lack of proper zonation and concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore recommended that the biosphere reserve authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

Jornada Experimental Range Biosphere Reserve (USA)

392. The Council welcomed the submission of the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1976. It noted that, in terms of conservation values, no significant changes had been reported. This biosphere reserve fulfills its logistic function by collaborating with numerous universities, including New Mexico State University. It also noted that there had been collaborations with the USDA Agricultural Research Service. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities implement the following:
- Provide an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - Provide a zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - Explore opportunities for economic activities in the biosphere reserve and the involvement of local communities in decision-making processes with regard to its management.
393. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Konza Prairie Research Natural Area Biosphere Reserve (USA)

394. The Council welcomed the periodic review report submission for the Konza Prairie Research Natural Area Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1978. This biosphere reserve is reported as being operated as a field research station by the Kansas State University Division of Biology. It is a unique outdoor laboratory that provides opportunities for the study of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem and for basic biological research on a large range of taxa processes.
395. The Council noted with appreciation that there had been increased emphasis on ecotourism in the Flint Hills and enhanced efforts to build public awareness and educate. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve (USA)

396. The Council welcomed the periodic review report submission for the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1990. This biosphere reserve consists of a core area (52,830 acres) a zone of cooperation (94,365 acres) and a transition area (762,133 acres).
397. The Council noted that a variety of agricultural activities continued within the biosphere reserve outside the core area. This biosphere reserve was expanded in 1996 to include 909,328 acres in six counties. Along with promoting sustainable development, there continues to be a strong effort to promote awareness of the importance of water quality to protect the internationally recognized cave and karst landscape throughout the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve.
398. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following by 30 September 2015:
- A zonation map with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.

Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve (USA)

399. The Council welcomed the periodic review report submission for two units of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 1984. This area conserves large landscapes and areas of biodiversity. Topographical features and climatic conditions serve to isolate populations.
400. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- A zonation map with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form for all units of the biosphere reserve.

New Jersey Pinelands Biosphere Reserve (USA)

401. The Council welcomed the submission of this first periodic review report for the New Jersey Pinelands Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1983. The Council noted the high quality of the numerous actions promoting conservation and the development of tourism. It noted the strong conservation and good logistic functions of this biosphere reserve. However, the development function was weak and there was a lack of local community involvement in activities promoting sustainable development. The Council therefore considered that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- An updated periodic review report using the official form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - Evidence of engagement with the neighbouring local communities.

Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve (USA)

402. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1979, the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve is located 65 km northwest of Denver in north-central Colorado. Niwot Ridge has successfully been used by the

University of Colorado and its Mountain Research Station for science and environmental education for more than 80 years and the site is today one of the best-studied subalpine and alpine ecosystems. Globally, offering excellent opportunities to detect the impact of climate change and atmospheric pollution on biodiversity, notably through the Mountain Research Station and Niwot Ridge Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) programme.

403. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation and limited focus on development aspects, the Council concluded that the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
404. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Noatak Biosphere Reserve (USA)

405. The Council welcomed the detailed periodic review report for the Noatak Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, the Noatak Biosphere Reserve is located in northwestern Alaska in the Arctic Range. The biosphere reserve is largely situated in the Noatak National Park and the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Reserve; its main function is to promote nature conservation and related research and monitoring, including as concerns the unregulated Noatak River and the rich wildlife found throughout the area. Economic activities within the site are limited to subsistence hunting and fishing among local residents and some tourism and recreation. However, there are important mining operations adjacent to the reserve. Due to its zonation, the focus on the development aspects of the biosphere reserve is limited.
406. The Council concluded that the Noatak Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
407. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Olympic Biosphere Reserve (USA)

408. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report presented by the US authorities. It appreciated the quality of the report on activities implemented since the site was designated in 1976. It noted the success of the Elwha River Restoration project conducted with the national park. This demonstrated the importance of providing technical authorities and policy-makers, who share a common concern for ecological, economic and social sustainability, with detailed scientific information. Moreover, the research also highlighted the economic importance of service sectors other than tourism, especially in the transition area, which lies beyond the national park.

409. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.

Rocky Mountain Biosphere Reserve (USA)

410. The Council welcomed this first periodic review report presented by the US authorities. It took note of the report on the activities implemented since the site was designated in 1977. The Council welcomed the sharing of experiences organized through the “sister park agreement,” which they rather understand as a “sister biosphere reserves agreement”. Indeed, mountainous areas are the most sensitive to climate change, making the Rocky Mountain Biosphere Reserve an important site for monitoring and experiencing mitigation and adaptation measures. The Council suggested that the authorities delineate the most sensitive areas as core areas and buffer zones. The Council also added that the logistic function of the transition area would contribute to mitigating the impact of tourist flows.
411. In this regard, the Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A zonation map showing a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - A revised management plan reflecting the integration of these zones in the biosphere reserve.

San Joaquin Experimental Range Biosphere Reserve (USA)

412. The Council welcomed the periodic review report of the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve is located on the western slopes of the central Sierra Nevada Mountains. Established in 1934 by the US Forest Service as an experimental range to investigate resource and animal husbandry management issues on the foothill rangelands, San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve contributes in particular to research and educational activities on these issues through a vast network of state and federal agencies, universities and organizations.
413. However, due to its zonation, the focus on the development aspects of the biosphere reserve is limited. The Council concluded that the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
414. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve (USA)

415. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1976, the Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve is located in the southern Sierra Nevada (California) and comprises the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Based on two prominent national parks, it is clear that the biosphere reserve is managed primarily for biodiversity conservation, research, monitoring, education and public awareness-raising. Biodiversity changes detected in the reserve over the years, including due to global warming, have been recorded in the parks' 2013 *Natural Resources Condition Assessment*. However, due to its zonation, the focus on the development aspects of the biosphere reserve is limited to tourism and recreation.
416. The Council concluded that the Sequoia–Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
417. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (USA)

418. The Council welcomed the periodic review report concerning the South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1983, the South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve is located in the flat floodplain of the Congaree River in the eastern United States encompassing the Congaree National Park. Through the good work of the national park, important inventories, research and educational programmes have been undertaken and supported in partnership with a large number of academic institutions and organizations. Work is also under way to discuss development issues, as the overall population in the State of South Carolina is growing rapidly.
419. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
420. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve (USA)

421. The Council welcomed the detailed and comprehensive periodic review report for the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1988, the biosphere reserve is located in the Southern Appalachian Mountains shared among six states. Encompassing several units, including the National Great Smoky Mountains National Park, based on an

innovative cluster approach, the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve engages successfully with a wide range of community, federal, state and academic institutions to foster biodiversity conservation, research, monitoring, environmental education, sustainable tourism and recreation.

422. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
423. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review forms. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve (USA)

424. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1979, the University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve is located at the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan on the southern shore of Douglas Lake. The reserve is renowned for its piping plover recovery programme. Teams from the University of Michigan, as well as from a large number of other universities, are successfully conducting biodiversity research in and around the Great Lakes, as well as research on carbon flows in temperate forest ecosystems. The site also has an impressive educational programme.
425. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
426. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.

Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA)

427. The Council welcomed the periodic review report for the Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1979, Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve is located on and around the volcanic island of St John and based on the Virgin Islands National Park. Climate change caused the loss of 52% of the live coral cover in one bleaching event in 2005. Tourism, notably cruise visits, have increased rapidly and pose a management challenge. The reserve makes highly important and appreciated contributions to biodiversity conservation, research, monitoring, education and public awareness-raising.

428. However, due to the biosphere reserve's zonation, its focus on development aspects is limited. The Council concluded that the Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
429. Consequently, the Council recommended that the authorities be invited to revisit the zonation of the site, in order to include buffer zone(s) and transition area(s) that can cater for the sustainable development function, in line with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The authorities are also requested to submit a revised zonation map and an updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Yellowstone Biosphere Reserve (USA)

430. The Council welcomed this first periodic review of the Yellowstone Biosphere Reserve, established in 1976. The Council noted with satisfaction the major efforts in the areas of scientific research and environmental education. It noted that this national park had gained important international recognition, with 3 million visitors per year. It is one of the best-preserved ecosystems in the northern hemisphere, with comprehensive reports on, and inventories of, the biosphere reserve's biodiversity.
431. While welcoming the periodic review report, the Council regretted that no maps had been submitted. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with the following information by 30 September 2015:
- A zonation map with a clearly defined core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - An updated periodic review report using the official periodic review form.
 - A management plan developed taking into consideration the Seville Strategy and park management strategies.

Follow-up recommendations

Parc du Djurdjura Biosphere Reserve (Algeria)

432. The Council welcomed the report submitted by the Djurdjura Biosphere Reserve in response to recommendations from 2011. The Council noted with satisfaction the development efforts in support of local populations. It also noted the challenges encountered in managing tourism and related activities in the biosphere reserve. The Council also recognized that the Djurdjura Biosphere Reserve did not derive any substantive direct benefits from tourism and that this should be possible, as it would help the reserve recover its operating costs.
433. The committee concluded that the Djurdjura Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested that the authorities:
- Clarify the biosphere reserve zoning, which includes one national park, to facilitate the inclusion of human populations ;
 - Systematically conduct impact studies for new infrastructure developments and for important existing installations;

- Identify legal and regulatory means for enabling the biosphere reserve and national park to engage in, or benefit from, commercial activities to meet their operating expenses.

434. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve (Belarus)

435. The Council welcomed the additional information from Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve. It noted that the proposed extension of the biosphere reserve included an enlargement of the transition area only. It also noted that the reason for extension was to further promote sustainable forestry, hunting fishing and tourism.

436. The Council acknowledged the description of all these activities as joint actions between the administration of the biosphere reserve and active community groups. It also welcomed the incentives to increase interest among local youth in the region's development and to create new jobs and social conditions that would attract young professionals. The Council also welcomed the information on the involvement of local communities in the implementation of the European Union International Assistance Project "Water, nature and people in disappearing landscape - Development of sustainable tourism in Russia and Republic of Belarus" in Lepel district.

437. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and approved the extension.

438. The Council requested the authorities to provide an updated map with topographic layers showing the precise location and delimitation of the three zones of the biosphere reserve, in electronic copy, together with the shape files (also in WGS 84 projection system) used to produce the map. The requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

439. The Council welcomed the report by the Canadian authorities on the implementation status of the MAB ICC's recommendation of 2012. The Council noted with satisfaction the monitoring for conservation in the core areas and the involvement of First Nation members in managing the site. It acknowledged that the zonation and size of the biosphere reserve seemed functional. The Council noted with satisfaction the measures taken to address the sustainable development function and concluded that this site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It also noted that the monitoring and the involvement of local communities were satisfactory.

Long Point Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

440. The Council welcomed the report of the Canadian authorities on the implementation status of the 2012 recommendation by the MAB ICC regarding this site. The Council noted with satisfaction the information provided and measures taken on the ground to explain the zonation of the biosphere reserve, especially the core area and buffer zone and the additional Bacchus Wood core area. The Council considered that the additional Bacchus Wood core area was surrounded by properties owned by Nature Conservancy Canada that could be easily included with some farmland to constitute a buffer area surrounding the entire new core area, eventually in connection with the major buffer zone, if possible.

441. The Council requested that this new core area be surrounded by a buffer zone, in order for the zonation to meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the zonation be updated by the end of September 2014 and that a new zonation map be sent to the MAB Secretariat by the end of September 2014, in order to confirm that the site meets the Statutory Framework criteria.

Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

442. The Council welcomed the explanation and strategic plan, as well as the involvement plan elaborated since the MAB ICC recommendation of 2011. The Council noted with satisfaction the information provided and measures taken on the ground. The Council noted the efforts by the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Foundation (MABF) to support initiatives limiting urban sprawl. The Council appreciated the new actions that had been developed and the action plan relating to active participation by local communities and First Nation members. The Council encouraged the authorities to pursue the fundraising process, as well as awareness-raising on socio-ecological issues, and to implement the planned actions outlined in the new strategic plan (2013-2018).

443. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

444. The Council welcomed the report of the Canadian authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation by the MAB ICC in 2012 regarding this site. The Council acknowledged the information provided and measures taken on the ground. The Council appreciated the updated information relating to efforts made to reinforce the biosphere reserve management committee by extending its membership to include, in particular, provincial government agencies and First Nation members. The Council noted the progress made towards the design of a coordination plan.

445. The Council noticed the difficulties concerning the buffer zone delineation, especially as concerned conflicts with local landowners, but considered that without a clear delineation of a functional zoning, the biosphere reserve does not meet the Statutory Framework criteria. The Council noted that the local biosphere reserve authority preferred to name the buffer zone a cooperation zone or to use existing perimeters (health system or national park boundaries) to design the buffer zone and the rest as a transition area.

446. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested clear zonation maps showing all suggested zoning options, as well as clarification of their impact on implementation of the biosphere reserve's three functions, by 30 September 2015.

Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

447. The Council welcomed the information provided by the biosphere reserve further to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2012. It noted with satisfaction that an executive committee had been established with several sub-committees (tourism, education, science and resource management) and that their task was to facilitate and coordinate planning and project implementation. It also appreciated the participation process, through meetings with municipalities and supporting agencies. It pointed out, however, that there was not

enough information on the engagement with local communities and First Nation members. It also acknowledged that numerous communication and educational activities had been implemented.

448. The Council further encouraged the authorities to implement the biosphere reserve's 15 local recommendations for future activities and requested that they:
- Provide a management plan for the biosphere reserve adapted to its current financial and management status.
 - Provide evidence of a participatory process in the biosphere reserve's activities and engagement with First Nation and coastal communities.
 - Foster conservation of nature and cultural heritage and provide evidence of activities performed and proper strategies.
 - Provide an updated zonation map.
449. The Council requested that the authorities send all these elements to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015, so that the Council could consider if the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Waterton Biosphere Reserve (Canada)

450. The Council welcomed the follow-up information with regard to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2009. The Council noted that the formalization of zonation, especially regarding the transition area, was not yet finalized. It appreciated the plan to elaborate delineation and prepare a cooperation plan using a participatory process. It also acknowledged that the communication plan had been completed in 2010.
451. The Council considered that the site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council recommended that the authorities:
- Provide updated zonation, with a high-quality map giving a clear explanation of the functions for each zone, to meet the criteria
 - Provide the management plan for the biosphere reserve
452. This information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)

453. The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to the recommendations it had made in 2011. The Council noted that the transition area was still being defined and that the map sent did not include the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Council also pointed out that the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had not been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the Colombian authorities provide a clear zonation map, a management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda.

Cinturon Andino Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)

454. The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to the recommendations it had made in 2011. The Council noted that the transition area was still being defined and that the map sent did not include the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Council also pointed out that the list of sustainable

development projects to be implemented had not been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the Colombian authorities provide a clear zonation map, a management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda.

El Tuparro Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)

455. The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to the recommendations it had made in 2011. The Council noted that the transition area was still being defined and that the map sent did not include the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Council also pointed out that the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had not been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the Colombian authorities provide a clear zonation map, a management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda.

Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)

456. The Council welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Colombian authorities with regard to the recommendations it had made in 2011. The Council noted that the transition area was still being defined and that the map sent did not include the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Council also pointed out that the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had not been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the Colombian authorities provide a clear zonation map, a management plan for the entire biosphere reserve and guidelines for a research agenda.

Taï Biosphere Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire)

457. The Council welcomed the report for Taï Biosphere Reserve, which follows up the recommendations provided in 1999 by the Council, following submission of the first periodic review in 1998. Taï Biosphere Reserve was designated in 1978. The Council acknowledged the response to the recommendations related to transboundary management of the forest with Liberia, the establishment of a foundation providing sustainable financial resources and completion of the management plan of the Tai National Park structured around conservation, research, development, education and institutional marketing.

458. The Council noted with concern that neither the zonation nor the management plan addressed the specific issues related to the refugee problems facing the biosphere reserve and that the report did not provide enough information on actions taken.

459. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested that the authorities:

- Improve the zonation and management of the site, taking into account the need to reduce the impact of settlement and that of the influx of refugees from Liberia.
- Develop a management plan for the whole area as a biosphere reserve and implement it with the involvement of the local population.

- Provide additional information on the settlement policy in the region and its impact on the site.
- Explore the possibility of enhancing cooperation with the Liberian authorities, in order to improve the management of the whole transboundary ecosystem.

460. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Bile Karpathy Biosphere Reserve (Czech Republic)

461. The Council welcomed this updated information. It noted that the biosphere reserve had established cooperation with the authorities at the municipal level with most of the mayors and farmers. It appreciated that a regional trademark had been created in cooperation with an NGO to support local craftsmen. It also took note that a LIFE project had started in 2011 to improve grassland management in the area, involving the local population and scientists.

462. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the authorities to:

- Ensure participation of all mayors in their respective areas in managing the biosphere reserve.
- Support actions, projects and events that would enable joint work between managers of the biosphere reserve and the local population, in addition to farming.
- Participate in the WNBR and share with it the results of the ongoing LIFE project.

463. Having implemented the necessary actions, the requested information should reach the Secretariat by 30 September 2015.

Krkonoše/Karkonosze Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Czech Republic/Poland)

464. The Council welcomed the information provided as a follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation made in 2012. It noted that the biosphere reserve had designed a Management Plan for the Krkonoše Mts National Park for 2010 – 2020, with chapters describing possible development activities. The Council appreciated the short list of joint activities, which provided an insight into the cooperation between the two countries. It acknowledged the ongoing work related to the preparation of a common logo, the many joint projects focusing on nature management, environmental education and raising public awareness.

465. The Council considered that the site followed the Pamplona recommendations for transboundary sites. The Council recommended that the authorities ensure that the management plan included goals and activities related to sustainable development, research, communication and local community engagement in the activities of the transboundary biosphere reserve.

Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (India)

466. The Council acknowledged the responses provided by the national authorities concerning the MAB ICC recommendations made in 2013. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encouraged the authorities to reconsider extending the biosphere reserve and to explore opportunities for a transboundary biosphere reserve initiative in the Gulf of Mannar region.

Mount Carmel Biosphere Reserve (Israel)

467. The Council welcomed this report of the Israeli authorities further to the submission of the periodic review of Mount Carmel in 2007. The Council noted that land issues and the establishment of settlements in the biosphere reserve prevented the appropriation by the local communities of the vision of the biosphere reserve and their participation in the coordination structure. The Council acknowledged the measures foreseen by the authorities to redynamise (renegotiation of limits, hiring of a coordinator) the biosphere reserve and their intention to share their experience with EuroMAB.
468. However, the Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the authorities pursue:
- Redefinition of the limits of the biosphere reserve with the support of the State authorities, in close collaboration with all the communities and the relevant actors.
 - Development of a management plan which would be the result of the new collaboration arrangements with local communities.
 - Inclusion of representatives of the communities in the new management structure of the biosphere reserve.
469. The Council requested that the Israeli authorities send a report on progress made by 30 September 2015.

Cilento and Vallo di Diano Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

470. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting the Italian authorities to: provide additional information on the education and sustainable development functions of the biosphere reserve; develop the management plan for the biosphere reserve with integration of tourism; clarify the coordination between the National Park and the transition area regarding implementation of activities and involvement of stakeholders; reinforce the participation of local communities in the management and governance of the biosphere reserve; improve the monitoring of the impacts of economic activities on the biosphere reserve; clarify how the various projects and research activities contribute to the functioning of the biosphere reserve; share experiences and practices among the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, for example during regional meetings such as EuroMAB.
471. The Council acknowledged with satisfaction the information provided by the Italian authorities in response to the above recommendation. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Circeo Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

472. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting the Italian authorities to: enlarge the buffer zone to encompass farmland; enlarge transition areas to cover the rest of the plain where the national park authorities have developed monitoring with other organizations; secure the participation of local stakeholders in managing the biosphere reserve and in the decision-making process of the governance structure; develop co-management and socio-economic action plans for the biosphere reserve and integrate these into the regional master plans; provide explicit and detailed information on how these action plans address the issues of tourism and

farming; improve monitoring of the impact of economic activities and raise awareness among the inhabitants, including those from different social and ethnic groups.

473. The Council acknowledged with satisfaction the additional information provided by the Italian authorities in response to the above recommendations, including the information concerning the extension of the buffer zone and transition areas, and concluded that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo Alto Molise Biosphere Reserve (extension and change of name, former Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo Biosphere Reserve) (Italy)

474. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2012 requesting that the Italian authorities provide information on the implementation of the zonation, as well as elaborate a management plan for the whole area. Further to this recommendation, the Italian authorities decided to propose an extension to the biosphere reserve and to change its name to Collemeluccio-Montedimezzo Alto Molise Biosphere Reserve.

475. The Council took note of the information provided by the Italian authorities in response to the above recommendation, notably the detailed extension proposal and the overall management plan and renaming of the site. The Council concluded that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and approved the extension and new name.

Miramare Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

476. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting that the Italian authorities: develop a co-management plan for the biosphere reserve and support its integration into the regional master plans; clarify and reinforce the participation of local communities in managing the biosphere reserve and in its governance bodies; clarify how the various scientific research outcomes are contributing to the functioning of the biosphere reserve; improve the integration of the social science-based studies within the research monitoring function of the biosphere reserve.

477. The Council took note of the information provided by the Italian authorities in response to the above recommendation and concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Somma-Vesuvio and Miglio D'Oro Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

478. The Council welcomed the additional information with regard to this biosphere reserve. The Council noted that the biosphere reserve had put mechanisms in place to deal with illegal dumping and construction through cooperation with several relevant authorities. It also appreciated the fact that information on coordination between the authorities in charge of the different zones had been provided.

479. The Council welcomed the plan of the Park Authority to establish a specific framework agreement between various stakeholders for participatory management of the biosphere reserve. It also appreciated the information provided on education and capacity-building of local communities with a focus on better resource management.

480. The Council noted with satisfaction the work on monitoring the ecological and social impact of economic activities, especially as concerns tourism and urbanization, funded by the Ministry of Environment.
481. The Council appreciated the explanation of how the various projects and research outcomes would be integrated within the functioning of the biosphere reserve.
482. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the biosphere reserve authority design a biosphere reserve management structure which would involve all stakeholders, separate from the national park. It also requested that the authorities further describe the activities planned to reinforce the participation of local communities in the biosphere reserve management.

Ticino Valley Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

483. The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities and the explanation concerning the delineation and extension of the biosphere reserve with support from the cities of Belgirate, Meina, Lesa and Stresa.
484. The Council acknowledged that clarification had been provided about the coordination of activities between the authorities, including the signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Parco Ticino Lombardo and the Parco Ticino Piemontese, concerning the promotion and implementation of cooperative actions, including the coordinated management of the biosphere reserve itself. The management structure is constituted by the Consultative Assembly, Executive Committee and a MAB Bureau. Regione Lombardia and Regione Piemonte are about to approve a Protocol of Agreement, in order to identify areas for collaboration specifically regarding significant topics, such as the local sustainable development, tourism and culture.
485. The Council further took note of the information provided on local and regional management and planning, strengthening of participation by local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve, the improvements in monitoring the impact of economic activities like agriculture and networking within the WNBR. It welcomed the possible future establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve with the neighboring part of Ticino River in Switzerland.
486. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the Italian authorities provide a monitoring strategy for economic activity (especially agriculture) in terms of impact assessment.

North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve (Latvia)

487. The Council welcomed the information provided on the governance of the biosphere reserve, further to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013. It appreciated the recruitment of a new employee in charge of coordinating the site but questioned whether a part-time assignment was sufficient to implement the biosphere reserve functions effectively and ensure appropriate management.
488. The Council expressed concern about the ongoing biosphere reserve management and financial status and congratulated the authorities on the efforts made to address these

issues in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development. The Council requested that updated information on the management and financial situation be sent to the MAB Secretariat by the end of September 2014.

489. The Council suggested that the authorities consider the creation of an institution with a coordinating function for the entire biosphere reserve that would involve stakeholders and inhabitants on a permanent basis, where authorities in charge of nature conservation would be only one of the stakeholders and the biosphere reserve management, staffing and budget would be secured in a collective manner.
490. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves but requested that the following information be sent to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2014:
- Updated information on the management and financial situation.
 - Updated information on the creation of an institution with a coordinating function for the entire biosphere reserve that would involve stakeholders and inhabitants on a permanent basis, where authorities in charge of nature conservation would be only one of the stakeholders and the biosphere reserve management, staffing and budget would be secured in a collective manner.

Sahamalaza-Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve (Madagascar)

491. The Council welcomed the report of the Madagascar authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2012 regarding the Sahamalaza-Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with satisfaction the information provided and the measures taken on the ground to address these recommendations. The Council appreciated the improved zonation of the biosphere reserve, which clarifies the core area and buffer zone delineation; however, the transition area is still unclear. The Council acknowledged the integration of the management plan of the national park and of the biosphere reserve within a regional master plan. The committee took note of the involvement of local communities and traditional chiefs in a co-management process based on local park committees. The Council encouraged the authorities to pursue the implementation of such participatory land planning and management, which is compliant with the biosphere reserve concept.
492. The Council considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities provide a new zonation map clarifying the limit of the core area, buffer zones and transition area, by 30 September 2014.

Mananara Nord Biosphere Reserve (Madagascar)

493. The Council welcomed the report of the Madagascar authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2012 regarding the Mananara Nord Biosphere Reserve. The Committee received with appreciation the information provided and the measures taken on the ground. The Council acknowledged the improvement in the community-based management of forests located in the surroundings of the national park and the clarification of the zonation. The committee noted and approved the efforts by the authorities to reinforce the control of illegal logging and build the capacity of rangers and local communities in charge of managing the forests.

494. The committee considered that the biosphere reserve does not meet criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommended that the authorities:
- Provide a new zonation map of the terrestrial part, clarifying the limits of the dedicated biosphere reserve zones: core area, buffer zone and transition area.
 - Provide a map on an adequate scale of the marine part of the biosphere reserve showing the three zones.
 - Clarify the status of the zonation function of the enclave (buffer zone/transition area).
495. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2014. The Council encouraged the authorities to develop a strategy to address the issue of the enclave and to minimize its impact on biosphere reserve management.

Mapimí Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

496. The Council welcomed the report of the Mexican authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013 regarding the Mapimi Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with satisfaction that the maps and the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

497. The Council welcomed the report of the Mexican authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013 regarding the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with satisfaction that the transition area was clearly defined and that the map and the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

498. The Council welcomed the report of the Mexican authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013 regarding the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with satisfaction that the maps and the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

499. The Council welcomed the report of the Mexican authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013 regarding the Sierra Manantlán Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with satisfaction that the transition area was clearly defined and that the map and the list of sustainable development projects to be implemented had been sent. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Babia Gora Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

500. The Council welcomed the additional information provided on the Babia Gora Biosphere Reserve as a follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013. It noted that the satellite core areas were temporary (interim status only) and that the connection of the remote

core area to the main core area was planned within the enlargement of protected areas to be approved by the Ministry of Environment in 2015.

501. The Council appreciated that the forestry activities in the buffer zones and transition areas were managed sustainably, in accordance with Polish legislation and the international nature conservation agreement, Natura 2000. It also welcomed the information on participation by private landowners in the biosphere reserve management, including through the Scientific Council of the National Park. The Council considered that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
502. The Council encouraged the authorities to design a biosphere reserve coordinating management structure that would be inclusive and involve stakeholders and inhabitants on a permanent basis (where the nature conservation authorities would be on an equal footing with other stakeholders). The Council recommended using the WNBR to find an inspiring model for such inclusive and participatory management of the site. The Council requested that the authorities prepare an integrative biosphere reserve management plan based on the national park's management plan by the end of 2014. The Council welcomed the possible creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve with Slovakia and encouraged the establishment of such a site and preparation of the joint nomination form.

Slowinski Biosphere Reserve (Poland)

503. The Council noted the responses submitted by the Slowinski Biosphere Reserve further to the MAB ICC recommendations of 2013.
504. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council encouraged the national authorities to continue engaging in constructive efforts towards achieving sustainable development in the biosphere reserve. The Council also welcomed any additional information on the state of, and future plans for, sustainable use of renewable energy. The Council requested that the national authorities provide the MAB Secretariat with links to relevant management plans covering the integrated management of the biosphere reserve.

Darwinsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

505. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting that the Russian authorities provide: all documents having a bearing on the report in one the working languages of UNESCO (English or French); a clear zonation for the three zones, including a zonation map, rationale, description of activities in each zone, exact number of people living in each zone, maps with locations of towns and settlements and a clear delineation of the transition area; a description of industrial activities in Cherepovets and monitoring of their impact; the management plan for the biosphere reserve with a description of its governance; information on strategies for sustainable development, communication and public awareness-raising, and the participatory process for involving the local population; identify key stakeholders and the process for cooperation with the managers of the Rybinski reservoir hydropower station; information on how it was promoting (or planned to promote) greater participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and international cooperation in climate change research and environmental impact assessments of water accumulation.

506. Following examination of the information provided by the Russian authorities in response to the above recommendations, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

507. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting that the Russian authorities provide information on: the activities in each biosphere reserve zone and areas; and the radiation monitoring and data linked to the possible establishment of a nuclear plant facility in the vicinity of the biosphere reserve.

508. Following examination of the information provided by the Russian authorities in response to the above recommendations, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Ugra Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

509. The Council welcomed this follow-up to the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013 requesting that the Russian authorities provide a description of the current status and monitoring of indicators of the state of the environment, specifically with regard to the electromagnetic field levels, the possible health hazards these represented for people and their impact on nature.

510. Following examination of the information provided by the Russian authorities in response to the above recommendations, the Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia)

511. The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Slovak authorities regarding the MAB ICC recommendation of 2013. It acknowledged the efforts made recently. However, The Council considered that the issues raised had not yet been addressed, so that the site does not meet the criteria the criteria in the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves. The Council requested that the Slovakian authorities address all issues by 30 September 2015.

Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (South Africa)

512. The Council welcomed the report of the South African authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2013 regarding the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve. The Council noted with great satisfaction the information provided. It appreciated the efforts made to develop a participatory process and integrate mining and agricultural activities within the management process. The committee noted the involvement of local communities and local authorities within management structures, such as the biosphere reserve board and the network coordinating unit.

513. The Council also appreciated the development of an environmental monitoring project based on local communities' empowerment. The committee also acknowledged the establishment of the K2C Environmental Education Forum for co-learning and the standardization of monitoring of interventions in the biosphere reserve. The committee noted the clarification of ecological and social issues related to land claims and the consequences of rezoning. The decisions enshrined in national regulations and the Memorandum of Agreement provide an efficient operational framework for dealing with these key issues.

514. The Council commended the South African authorities for the high quality of the report and considered that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair – Parc Naziunal (Switzerland)

515. The Council welcomed the report of the Swiss authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2010 regarding this site. The Council noted with satisfaction the information provided and the measures taken on the ground to create a new buffer zone around the core areas and develop an integrated management plan for the entire biosphere reserve. The Council appreciated the democratic process adopted to this end and noted the potential difficulties and willingness of the biosphere reserve authorities to conclude before the end of 2014.

516. In order to evaluate whether the site is meeting the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and implement the exit strategy, the Council requested that the MAB Secretariat be provided with information on the rezoning and management of the biosphere reserve by the end of September 2015.

Mae Sa-Kong Ma Biosphere Reserve (Thailand)

517. The Council acknowledged the map sent by the authorities for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1977.
518. The Council recalled that the first periodic review of this biosphere reserve had been submitted in 1999 and that the second periodic review was now due. Therefore, the Council requested that the report, including a proper zonation map for this biosphere reserve clearly showing the core area, buffer zone and transition area, reach the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015.
519. The authorities are requested to address the recommendations below, endorsed by the MAB ICC in 1999, by the time they submit their second periodic review report:

The Council noted that several national bodies were involved in research and management activities at Mae Sa-Kog Ma and that, among the recommendations of South-South Working Paper 3 on the site, there was the need to improve co-ordination among the many government policies, objectives and implementing offices involve in the area. With this as background, the Council recommended that the Thai authorities:

- *Establish a transition area, in consultation with relevant government agencies and the local population, and provide a map for the entire biosphere reserve;*
- *Examine the management structure and responsibilities of the agencies concerned with the Biosphere reserve, with regard to improving co-ordination and leading to a management policy/plan for the whole area as a biosphere reserve;*
- *Consider launching and implementing a study on conservation policies similar to that undertaken within the East Asian Biosphere reserve Network, in co-operation with UNESCO field offices;*
- *Encourage further community involvement in reserve management.*

520. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

Sakaerat Biosphere Reserve (Thailand)

521. The Council acknowledged the map sent by the authorities for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1976.
522. The Council recalled that the first periodic review of this biosphere reserve had been submitted in 1999.
523. The Council concluded that this site does not meet the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve and requested that the authorities undertake the second periodic review and submit the report to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2015 at the latest. The national authorities are also requested to submit a zonation map for the biosphere reserve showing clearly the core area(s), buffer zone(s) and transition area(s).

Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve (Uruguay)

524. The Council welcomed the report of the Uruguayan authorities on the implementation status of the recommendation made by the MAB ICC in 2012 regarding this site. The Council had recommended in 2012 that a management structure be designated to coordinate the activities of the biosphere reserve and that information thereon be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by the end of December 2013, together with a clear zonation map for the biosphere reserve, as well as information on how the sustainable development function of the biosphere reserve could be strengthened.
525. The Council noted with satisfaction that maps with a preliminary zonation had been submitted. The authorities are still defining a management structure and working on how the sustainable development function of the biosphere reserve could be strengthened.
526. The Council concluded that this biosphere reserve meets the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

XIII. UNESCO MAB Policy on Open Access to MAB/Biosphere Reserve Documentation

527. The Secretariat introduced paper SC-14/CONF.226.11, which referred to the objective of introducing a policy on open access in order to increase transparency and public access to MAB and biosphere reserve information, data, documents and multimedia materials, including complete biosphere reserve nomination files, periodic review reports, and associated items. The Secretariat described these resources as a huge treasure: a very rich resource for research and education.
528. Overall, the responses of Council members and observers to this proposal were positive, and it was noted that this policy would link well to the measures to increase communication and data sharing that should be included in the new MAB strategy. However, concerns were expressed, and consensus achieved, on a number of issues. First, a number of members noted the sensitivity of certain maps: the identification of particular areas and resources could link to security concerns, poaching, looting, etc. Second, that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Bureau should not be published, as these are internal documents: they are taken into consideration by the Council in making decisions, and only these should be published.

529. The conclusion of the discussion was that the MAB programme should have a principle and policy of open access as described in paper SC-14/CONF.226.11, as follows:
530. For existing documents already held by the Secretariat, the Secretariat will issue a MAB Circular Letter requesting Member States to give permission for open access to all existing materials relating to biosphere reserves currently held by the Secretariat, and also to state if there were any specific documents or items, such as maps, to which open access should not be provided. Considering that many materials are not in digital form, the Secretariat will seek to secure extrabudgetary financial resources to digitize these materials, including from Member States that provided the materials in question.
531. For documents to be produced in the future, the Secretariat will issue a circular letter stating that the general principle will be that there will be open access to documents relating to approved biosphere reserves and periodic reviews unless specific requests are made to limit access. The Secretariat will draft a protocol to be used for this purpose.
532. Each year, proposals for biosphere reserves and periodic reviews will only be made available to members of the Advisory Committee for their scrutiny and also, together with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and Bureau¹, to members of the Council one month before their annual meeting. These files will be available to members of the Council on a password-protected website.
533. After the Council has met and made its decisions and recommendations, documents relating to approved biosphere reserves and periodic reviews will become open access and posted on the UNESCO MABnet unless the respective national authorities have expressly requested that documents (or parts of documents such as maps), should not be made available. Proposals for biosphere reserves that are not approved by the Council will not be made available.
534. In addition to documents and data held by the Secretariat, all national committees, focal points, biosphere reserve managers, and regional and thematic networks are encouraged to promote communication and enhance information exchange and data sharing both within the WNBR and with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, as outlined in paper SC-14/CONF.226.11.
535. The Council will review the implementation of this policy at its 27th session in 2015.

XIV. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management

536. The Chair introduced this item and informed the Council that the Secretariat had received 7 eligible case studies from 7 countries by 31 October 2013. He further informed that the Bureau endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee made at its twentieth meeting and that Ms Ana Luisa R. Figueroa (Mexico), Director of Islands of the Gulf of California Flora and Fauna Protection was the 2014 winner for her case study on "A group of fishermen and fishing families became guardians of the San Pedro Martir Island, which

¹ The MAB Secretariat would like to recommend that due to procedural matters with respect to the election of the Bureau this decision should be further reviewed by the Council.

is part of the Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve". Ms Ana Luisa R Figueroa presented her case study.

XV. MAB Young Scientist Awards

537. The Secretariat received 54 eligible applications from 34 Countries. Twenty-two of the applicants (40.7%) were females. Applications were received from Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guatemala, India, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tunisia.

538. The Council endorsed the six (6) winners of the 2014 MAB Young Scientist Awards. The winners and the topic of their research studies are.

Country	Winner	Project Title
Iran	Ms Mona Poordazy	Replacement of renewable energies in Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve instead of using the forest resources as fuel wood.
Lebanon	Mr. Nizar Hani	Sustainable Territorial Management and Action Plan: Shouf Biosphere Reserve
Mexico	Ms Julieta Rosell Garcia	How will bark contribute to plant survival under climate change? A comparism of plant communities in wet and dry environment.
Philippines	Mr Thomas E. Dela Cruz	Biodiversity, Taxonomy, ecological patterns and conservation of myxomycetes and macrofungi in Peurto Galera Biosphere Reserve and Sablayan Watershed Forest Reserve, Mindoro Philippines
Slovakia	Mr Juraj Svajda	Monitoring of Visitors (impacts and perceptions) in the Slovak part of the Tatra Biosphere Reseerve
South Africa	Ms Michelle Jooste	The invasive tunicates <i>Ciona intestinalis</i> and <i>Botryllus Schlosseri</i> : Habitat utilization and impacts

539. The 2014 Selection of the winners of the MAB Young Scientist award shows an excellent case of gender balance and geographical representation.

540. The MAB Secretariat informed participants that due to the financial situation affecting UNESCO which has resulted in the reduction of the total Regular Programme budget, it has been compelled to reduce the number of MAB Young Scientist Awards from ten(10) to six(6) since 2013. The MAB Secretary added that, considering the importance of this award to the MAB Programme, Member States should consider supporting an increase in the total number of awards and the award amount. He acknowledged the financial support of the Austrian MAB National Committee and thanked them for their pledge to finance two of the awards for 2015.

XVI. Information on the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve case

541. The Secretariat introduced document SC-14/CONF.226/14, which notes the Judgment of the International Court of Justice in the case concerning the “*Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*” rendered on 19 November 2012. The Council encouraged the two Member States to continue their dialogue to address issues relating to the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve and invited them to report at its 27th session in 2015.

XVII. Date and venue of the 27th session of the Council

542. The proposed date and venue of the 27th session of the Council are 8 to 12 June 2015 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

XVIII. Other matters

543. As required by Resolution 104 of the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, all UNESCO intergovernmental programmes shall complete a self-assessment covering the overall relevance of their work. This process is being managed by an external auditor, which has developed a survey consisting of 38 questions, to be completed by 2 September 2014. The Secretariat will obtain the survey and send it to all members of the Bureau as soon as possible. Each member of the Bureau will then send the survey to the members of the Council for its region, requesting a reply by 31 July 2014. Each member of the Bureau will then compile the responses from its region and return the resulting document to the Rapporteur of the Council by 15 August 2014. The Rapporteur will then prepare a consolidated response and circulate this to the members of the Bureau for their comment, revision and approval before the Chair of the Council submits the final version of the consolidated response to the external auditor by the deadline.

544. A few members of the Council proposed that, given the large number and complexity of proposals for biosphere reserves and periodic reviews and the need for clear communication of complex decisions, the Chair of the Advisory Committee should attend future sessions of the Council. One member noted that the mandate of six members of the Advisory Committee ends in 2014, and requested information about the process of choosing the members of the Committee. It was noted that they are invited to serve in their personal capacity and are chosen to ensure geographical representation. It was suggested that members of the Advisory Committee should not represent their countries in the Council, and should certainly not be members of its Bureau.

545. An observer delegation noted that certain National MAB Committees have developed criteria which they utilize for periodic reviews of biosphere reserves in their own countries, and that they have shared these criteria with other national committees and with the Secretariat. It was noted that it is challenging to manage a process of assessment that is based on broad criteria, such as those in the Statutory Framework, and considering also the desire to accommodate the diversity of the network and the need for consistency in approach and outcome. It is clear that the process of the Advisory Committee be open, transparent, and accountable. Consequently, it was proposed that the criteria by which the Advisory Committee makes its decisions be available on the MAB website so that all

Biosphere Reserves and National Committees clearly understand the processes used to assess proposals and periodic reviews.

546. A member of the Council proposed that, at future sessions of the Council, the agenda item on periodic reviews should come before the agenda item on proposals for new biosphere reserves. This would give more time for the Bureau to review proposals and, if necessary, consult with the concerned Member State.

XIX. Adoption of the Report

547. Mr Martin Price, Rapporteur of the Council, presented the draft report of its 26th session to the Members and Observer Delegations section by section, and paragraph by paragraph where appropriate. A small number of modifications, additions and deletions introduced by delegations were noted.
548. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed during the review of the report on 13 June 2014, the last day of the 26th session of the Council.

XX. Closure of the Meeting

549. A representative of the Government of Peru expressed their interest to host the 28th session of the Council and the proposed international conference on biosphere reserves in 2016. The Chair thanked the Government of Peru for this offer.
550. In their closing remarks, the Chair of the MAB Council and the MAB Secretary thanked the Government of Sweden and the Sweden National Commission for UNESCO for hosting the Council meeting and for their invaluable input which had ensured the success of the meeting. They also acknowledged the Sweden MAB National Committee, the team from the East Vättern Scarp Landscape Biosphere Reserve and the student volunteers for their support in coordinating the various logistical needs for the meeting. They thanked all participants, especially the MAB ICC members and the MAB Secretariat, for their extraordinary work despite the heavy agenda. Lastly, the Secretary thanked the technician for his immense contribution and the interpreters for their excellent work.
551. The Secretary then presented certificates to the student volunteers in recognition of their services during the 26th session of the MAB ICC. The Secretary took the floor again to thank members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves for their work which provided a sound basis to facilitate the work of the Council. He also thanked the former Chair of the MAB ICC and the past Vice-Chairs for their leadership and contribution to the MAB Programme. He acknowledged that the Council had made good progress in its work and that, with their support, the MAB Secretariat will continue to implement the Exit Strategy and the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. He once again assured Member States that a recommendation for deferral of a nomination was not a rejection but rather an opportunity for Member States to resubmit an improved nomination file. He added that the Secretariat will continue to work on improving the various working methods of the MAB Programme in order to ensure efficiency.

552. Finally, the Chair acknowledged that the field visit organized by the Sweden MAB National Committee was a success and subsequently declared the 26th session of the MAB ICC closed.

Annex 1: Participants list

Annex 2: Agenda

Annex 3: Report of the MAB Secretary

Annex 1

Participants list

**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION****Conseil international de coordination du Programme sur l'Homme et la biosphère (MAB)
International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**

Vingt-sixième session / Twenty-sixth session

**Jönköping, Réserve de biosphère East Vättern Landscape, Suède
Jönköping, East Vättern Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Sweden**

10 – 13 juin 2014 / 10 – 13 June 2014

PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE PROVISOIRE DES PARTICIPANTS**ICC MEMBERS / MEMBRES DU CIC****ALGERIA / ALGERIE**

Mr Mohand Amer Nassim
Attaché des Affaires Etrangères
c/o Permanent Delegation of Algeria to UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: dl.algerie@unesco-delegations.org

Pr Dahmani Malika
Représentante de l'Algérie au CIC-MAB
c/o Permanent Delegation of Algeria to UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: Malika_dahmani@yahoo.fr
Tel: 0033 (0)145.682.964

Dr Khelifi Houria
Maître de conférences à l'ENSA,
Présidente du Comité MAB-Algérie
Département de Botanique Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie (ENSA) El Harrach 16200
Algérie
Tél: 00213 21 66 86 24
Fax: 00213 21 66 82 83
mail: h.khelifi@ensa.dz / houriakina@yahoo.fr

BURKINA FASO

Mr Jean-Marie Ouadba
Professeur
CNRST
Ouagadougou BP 7047
Burkina Faso
Email: jmouadba@yahoo.fr
Tel: +22 670.283.962

CHILE / CHILI

Mr Mario Galvez
Forest Engineer
National Focal Point MaB in Chile
Tres Norte 541
2520695 Viña del Mar
Chile
Email: mario.galvez@conaf.cl
Tel: +56 996.495.720

COTE D'IVOIRE

Dr Martine Gauze nee touao kah
Leader
Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire
08 BP 109 Abidjan 08
225 Abidjan
Côte d'Ivoire
Email: mtahoux@yahoo.fr
Tel: +22 507.921.641

Dr Kaddy Kamate
Delegate
Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire
BP V 151 Abidjan
Côte d'Ivoire
Email: kaddy.kamate@egouv.ci
Tel: +22 507.905.392

EGYPT / EGYPTE

Ms Boshra Salem
Professor
Delegation of Egypt Family name / Nom: Salem
Moharram bey, Faculty of science
21511 Alexandria
Egypt
Email: boshra.salem@dr.com
Tel: +0020 100.144.9645

Pr Atef Ahmed
Advisor
Delegation of Egypt
Suez Canal University
202 Cairo
Egypt
Email: atefkamel1955@hotmail.com
Tel: +20 100.413.5504

Pr Manal Fawzy Ahmed
Professor & Chair
Environmental Sciences Dept, Faculty of Science, Alexandria University
21511 Moharram Bek, Alexandria
Egypt
Email: dm_fawzy@yahoo.com
Tel: +20 122.228.8901

Ms Amira Soliman
Assistant professor
Institute of African research and studies, Cairo University
12316 Cairo
Egypt
Email: sitamira2000@yahoo.com
Tel: +01 009.388.468

ESTONIA / ESTONIE

Dr Toomas Kokovkin
Delegate
Delegation of Estonia
Sadama 19
92411 Kärđla
Estonia
Email: toomas@pelagis.eu
Tel: +37 250.230.75

FRANCE

Mr Jean-Pierre Poncet
Deuxième Conseiller
Délégation permanente de la France auprès de l'UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email : jean-pierre.poncet@diplomatie.gouv.fr
Mobile : 33 (0) 6 12 05 32 66

Ms Catherine Cibien
Directrice
BP 42234
31321 Castanet-Tolosan
France
Email: catherine.cibien@mab-france.org
Tel: +33 561.735.702

Ms Mireille Jardin
Delegate
Delegation of France
136 avenue Emile Zola
75015 Paris
France
Email: mireille.jardin@mab-france.org

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Mr Jürgen Nauber
Delegate
Delegation of Germany
Konstantinstrasse 110
53179 Bonn
Germany
Email: juergen.nauber@bfm.de
Tel: +49 228.849.11780

Mr Marc Auer
Delegate
Delegation of Germany
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn
Germany
Email: marc.auer@marcauer.de
Tel: +49 228.305.2782

GHANA

Mr Daniel Amlalo
Leader
Delegation of Ghana
Environmental Protection Agency, Starlets 91 Road, P O BOX M326
M Accra
Ghana
Email: daniel.amlalo@epa.gov.gh
Tel: +233 302.664.697/8

Ms Sheila Ashong
Delegate
Delegation of Ghana
Environmental Protection Agency, Starlets 91 Road, P O BOX M326, Ministries
M Accra
Ghana
Email: sashong@gmail.com
Tel: +233 302.664.697/8

Pr Akwasi Asabere-Ameyaw
Delegate
Delegation of Ghana
University of Education
+233 Winneba
Ghana
Email: vc@uew.edu.gh
Tel: +233 244.314.781

HAITI

Mr Paul Judex Edouarzin
Programme Specialist
Delegation of Haiti
5, Rue 4, Pacot
HT 6110 Port-au-Prince
Haiti
Email: pauljudex.edouarzin@gmail.com
Tel: +50 937.771.910

HUNGARY / HONGRIE

Dr Rozália Érdiné Szekeres
Head of Department for Nature Conservation
Delegation of Hungary
Kossuth ter 11
1055 Budapest
Hungary

Email: rozalia.szekeres.erdine@vm.gov.hu
Tel: +36 309.821.388

ISRAEL

Prof Uriel nahum Safriel
Leader
Delegation of Israel
Tedesky 3
93780 Jerusalem
Israel
Email: uriel36@gmail.com
Tel: +97 277.300.6905

JAPAN / JAPON

Mr Hiroyuki Matsuda
Japanese National commission for UNESCO
3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
100-8959 Tokyo
Japan
Email: jpnatcom@mext.go.jp
Tel: +81 367.342.557

Mr Noda Takao
Senior Specialist for Cooperation with UNESCO
Delegation of Japan
Monbukagakusho, 3-2-2 Kasumigaseki
100-8959 Chiyoda-ku Tokyo
Japan
Email: jpnatcom@mext.go.jp
Tel: +81 367.342.585

Pr Takehiro Masuzawa
Specially Appointed Professor
Delegation of Japan
Monbukagakusho, 3-2-2 Kasumigaseki
100-8959 Chiyoda-ku
Japan
Email: jpnatcom@mext.go.jp
Tel: +81 367.342.585

KAZAKHSTAN

Pr Roman Jashenko
Leader
Delegation of Kazakhstan
Al-Farabi street, 93
050060 Almaty
Kazakhstan
Email: r.jashenko@inzool.kz
Tel: +77 017.239.525

KENYA

Dr Paul Makenzi
Chairman Kenya MAB Natcom
20115 Egerton
Kenya

Email: pmakenzi@yahoo.com
Tel: +25 472.467.5219

Mr Albert Ingati Etechera
Programme Officer Natural Science
Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
Harambee Avenue 72107
00200 Nairobi
Kenya
Email: declanmagero@gmail.com; aetechera@yahoo.com
Tel: +25 472.043.2551

LUXEMBOURG

Mr Christian Ries
Alternate
Musée national d'histoire naturelle
Rue Münster 25
2160 Luxembourg
Luxembourg
Email: cries@mnhn.lu
Tel: +35 246.223.3416

MALAYSIA / MALAISIE

Mr Zoal Azha Yusof
Secretary General
Delegation of Malaysia
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, level 17, Wisma Sumber Asli
62574 Putrajaya
Malaysia
Email: zoalazha@nre.gov.my
Tel: +60 388.861.652

Mr Danial Lee Abdullah
Principal Assistant Secretary
Delegation of Malaysia
Biodiversity and Forestry Management Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,
level 12, Wisma Sumber Asli
62574 Putrajaya
Malaysia
Email: danial@nre.gov.my
Tel: +60 388.861.134

Mr Mohd Zulkifli Bin Mohammed
Permanent delegate of Malaysia to UNESCO
Delegation of Malaysia
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: dl.malaysia@unesco-delegations.org
Tel: +01 456.834.73

Mr Jamili Nais
Director
Delegation of Malaysia
Sabah Parks Board, P.O. Box 10626

88806 Kota Kinabalu
Malaysia
Email: jamilinais@gmail.com
Tel: +60 198.610.101

Mr Zulkifli Mohamed Hashim
Deputy Secretary General (Science)
Delegation of Malaysia
Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, level 6, block C5, complex C, Federal
Government Administrative
62662 Putrajaya
Malaysia
Email: dr.zulkifli@mosti.gov.my
Tel: +60 388.858.017

Mr Abdul Fatah Amir
Director
Delegation of Malaysia
Natural Resources Officer, Chief Minister's Department, 11th floor, Wisma Innoprise
88817 Kota Kinabalu
Malaysia
Email: abdfatah.amir@sabah.gov.my
Tel: +60 884.231.11

Ms Mushrifah Idris
Head of Tasik Chini Research Centre
Tasik Chini Research Centre, Faculty of Science and Technology, National University of Malaysia
43600 Bangi
Malaysia
Email: mushrifahidris@gmail.com
Tel: +60 389.213.291

Mr Mohamad Roslan Harun
Dato'
Delegation of Malaysia
State Economic Planning Division, 4th floor, Wisma Sri Pahang
25503 Kuantan
Malaysia
Email: tsuk1@pahang.gov.my
Tel: +60 951.267.01

Ms Wan Azlida Wan Muda
Delegate
Delegation of Malaysia
State Economic Planning Unit, 4th floor, Wisma Sri Pahang
25503 Kuantan, Pahang
Malaysia
Email: azlida2308@gmail.com
Tel: +60 951.267.04

Ms Nik Munirah Muhd Nur
Delegate
Delegation of Malaysia
State Economic Planning Division, 4th floor, Wisma Sri Pahang
25503 Kuantan, Pahang

Malaysia

Email: nikmunirah@pahang.gov.my

Tel: +60 951.267.13

Mr Mohd Soffi Abd Razak

Dato' Ir

Delegation of Malaysia

3rd floor, Wisma Sri Pahang

25503 Kuantan, Pahang

Malaysia

Email: soffi@pahang.gov.my

Tel: +60 951.784.42

Mr Muhammad Shafiq Ruslan

Research Officer

Delegation of Malaysia

Tasik Chini Research Centre (TCRC), Faculty of Science and Technology, University Kebangsaan

Malaysia

43600 Bangi

Malaysia

Email: muhammadshafiqruslan85@yahoo.com

Tel: +60 389.213.291

MEXICO / MEXIQUE

Mr Sergio Guevara

Vice-President for Latin-America

Delegation of Mexico

Carretera Antigua a Coatepec no. 351

91070 Xalapa

Mexico

Email: sergio.guevara@inecol.mx

Tel: +52 228.842.1806

Ms Ana Luisa Figueroa

Winner of the 2014 Michel Batisse Award

Gulf of California Islands Biosphere Reserve /CONANP

Isla Rasa esq. Isla Peruano, Lomas de Miramar

85450 Guaymas, Sonora

Mexico

Email: afiguero@conanp.gob.mx

Tel: +52 (622) 221.300

REPUBLIC OF KOREA / REPUBLIQUE DE COREE

Ms Eun-Young Kim

Chief, Sciences Team

Korean National Commission for UNESCO

26 Myeongdong-gil Jung-gu

100-810 Seoul

Republic of Korea

Email: heidi@unesco.or.kr

Tel: +82 269.584.122

Ms Jeewon Jung

Assistant Programme Specialist

Delegation of Republic of Korea

4th FL, 144 Mapodae-ro (Taeyoung Bldg. Gongdeok-dong), Mapo-gu
121-717 Seoul
Republic of Korea
Email: meiran0130@gmail.com
Tel: +82 109.956.3537

Mr Hokyung Jung
Deputy Director of Natural Policy Division
Delegation of Republic of Korea
Ministry of Environment, Eojin-dong
339-714 Sejong
Republic of Korea
Email: dreaminblue@korea.kr
Tel: +824 420.172.31

Mr Chung-Il Choi
Chairman of MAB National Committee of Republic of Korea
Delegation of Republic of Korea
Suite 1413, Teheran Office Building, 707-38, Yoksam-2-dong
135-918 Seoul
Republic of Korea
Email: cichoi@hanyang.ac.kr
Tel: +82 109.194.9290

Mr Do-Soon Cho
Vice-Chairman of MAB National Committee of Republic of Korea
Delegation of Republic of Korea
4th FL, 144 Mapodae-ro (Taeyoung Bldg. Gongdeok-dong) Mapo-gu
121-717 Seoul
Republic of Korea
Email: dscho@catholic.ac.kr
Tel: +82 103.019.4357

Mr Myunggyu Hwang
Secretary General of MAB National Committee of Republic of Korea
Delegation of Republic of Korea
4th FL, 144 Mapodae-ro (Taeyoung Bldg. Gongdeok-dong) Mapo-gu
121-717 Seoul
Republic of Korea
Email: nimrod58@hanmail.net
Tel: +82 109.014.9341

Ms Suk-Kyung Shim
Professional Officer of ICLEI Korea Office
Delegation of Republic of Korea
16, Jeongjo-ro 905beon-gil, Paldal-gu, Suwon
442420 Gyeonggi-do
Republic of Korea
Email: hallosks@gmail.com
Tel: +82 109.629.9907

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES / SAINT VINCENT ET LES GRENADINES

Ms Claudine Le Marant de Kerdaniel
Counsellor
Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

39 rue François 1^{er}
75008 Paris
France
Email: dl.st-vincent@unesco-delegations.org
Tel: +01 565.209.11

SOUTH AFRICA / AFRIQUE DU SUD

Mr Vongani Nicolus Maringa
Assistant Director
Delegation of South Africa
315 Pretorius Street
0001Pretoria
South Africa
Email: vmaringa@environment.gov.za
Tel: +27 123.103.368

Mr Caiphus Ernest Khumalo
Director
Delegation of South Africa
315 Pretorius Street
0001Pretoria
South Africa
Email: ckhumalo@environment.gov.za
Tel: +27 123.951.849

Ms Skumsa Kathlen Audrey Mancotywa
Chief Director
Delegation of South Africa
315 Pretorius Street
0001Pretoria
South Africa
Email: smancotywa@environment.gov.za
Tel: +27 123.103.014

Mr Mpho Pila
Biodiversity Production Officer grade B
Delegation of South Africa
315 Pretorius Street, fedsure building forum
0001 Pretoria
South Africa
Email: mpila@environment.gov.za
Tel: +27 731.033.53/ 277 380 5625

Mr Mashudu Lucky Nmutandani
Deputy Director Scientific Support
Delegation of South Africa
CNR. DR. James Moroka and Stadium RD
2735 Mafikeng
South Africa
Email: Mnmutandani@nwpg.gov.za
Tel: +27 738.844.469

Ms Lebogang Diale
Director Environmental Empowerment Services
Delegation of South Africa

Cnr. Dr. James Moroke Drive and Stadium Road
2735 Mmabatho
South Africa
Email: Ldiale@nwpg.gov.za
Tel: +27 826.979.433

Ms Mbassa-Sibaji Thandeka
Head
Department of Agricultural and Rural Development
11 Diagonal Street
New Town
Johannesburg
South Africa

Mr Leku Tebogo
Department of Agricultural and Rural Development
11 Diagonal Street
New Town
Johannesburg
South Africa
Email: tabo.leku@gauteng.gov.za

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

Mr Francisco José Cantos
Secretario del Comité Español del Programa MAB
Delegation of Spain
José Abascal 41
28003 Madrid
Spain
Email: FJCantos@oapn.es
Tel: +34 915.468.239

Ms Paloma Ramos
Oficina Técnica Comité Español del MaB
Delegation of Spain
José Abascal 41
28003 Madrid
Spain
Email: at_mab3@oapn.es
Tel: +34 915.468.258

SWEDEN / SUEDE

Ms Johanna MacTaggart
National MAB Coordinator
Delegation of Sweden
Biosfärkontoret, Box 77
542 21 Mariestad
Sweden
Email: johanna.mactaggart@vanerkulle.se
Tel: +46 501.393.193

Mr Per Magnusson
Deputy Director
Delegation of Sweden
Drottninggatan 16

10333 Stockholm
Sweden
Email: per.magnusson@gov.se
Tel: +46 702.295.889

Mr Mats Djurberg
Secretary General
Delegation of Sweden
Drottninggatan 16
10333 Stockholm
Sweden
Email: mats.djurberg@gov.se
Tel: +46 840.514.57

Ms Annika Markovic
Ambassador to UNESCO and OECD
Delegation of Sweden
17 rue Barbet-de-Jouy
75007 Paris
France
Email: annika.markovic@gov.se
Tel: +33 144.188.883

Mr Tomas Kjellqvist
Vice Chair National Commission for UNESCO
Delegation of Sweden
Olof Skötkonungs väg 32
12650 Hägersten
Sweden
Email: tomas.kjellqvist@bth.se
Tel: +46 730.937.293

Mr Göran Blom
Chair of Swedish MAB committee
Delegation of Sweden
Valhallavägen 195
106 48 Stockholm
Sweden
Email: goran.blom@naturvardsverket.se
Tel: +46 869.817.11

Mr Shepherd Urenje
Programme Specialist
SWEDESD – The Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development
Uppsala Universitet
SE-621 67 Visby
Sweden
Tel: +46 18 4718407
Email: shepherd.urenje@swedesd.uu.se

TANZANIA (UNITED REPUBLIC OF) / REPUBLIQUE UNIE DE TANZANIE

Mr Albert Mziray
Park Ecologist
Delegation of Tanzania
C/o TANAPA, P. O. Box 3134

Arusha
United Republic of Tanzania
Email: almziray@yahoo.com
Tel: +25 578.439.5826 / +25 576.739.3608

THAILAND / THAILANDE

Mr Theerapat Prayurasiddhi
Leader
Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
61 Pholyothin Road, Ladyao, Chatuchak
10900 Bangkok
Thailand
Email: theerapat@hotmail.com
Tel: +66 256.107.77 Ext. 1930

Mr Prasert Sornsathapornkul
Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
61 Pholyothin Road, Ladyao, Chatuchak
10900 Bangkok
Thailand
Email: ps_dnp@yahoo.com
Tel: +66 890.207.54

Mr Sumeth Dechatuntrakool
Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
61 Pholyothin Road, Ladyao, Chatuchak
10900 Bangkok
Thailand
Email: workshop67@gmail.com
Tel: +66 897.815.801

Mr Wijarn Meepol
Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
184 Moo 4 Tumbon Ngao Muang District
85000 Ranong
Thailand
Email: wijarn.meepol@yahoo.com
Tel: +66 860.965.218

Mr Chakree Rodfai
Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
120 Moo 3, Chaeng Watthana Road, Thong Song Hong, Laksi district
10210 Bangkok
Thailand
Email: chakree_rod@hotmail.com
Tel: +66 214.113.71

Ms Ratchanin Pongudom
Foreign Relations Officer / Programme Officer
Bureau of International Cooperation
The Thai National Commission for UNESCO
Ministry of Education
Thailand
Email: ratchanin@yahoo.com
Tel: 66 262.856.46 ext. 114

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND/ ROYAUME-UNI DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD

Pr Martin Price

Leader

Delegation of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Perth College UHI, Crieff Road

PH12NX Perth

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Email: martin.price@perth.uhi.ac.uk

Tel: +44 1738-877217

Mr Andrew Bell

Vice Chairman UK MaB Committee

Delegation of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Civic Centre

Ex39 1EA Barnstaple

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Email: andybell33@gmail.com

Tel: +44 796.713.4149

UKRAINE

Mr Pavlo Cherinko

Deputy Chairperson of National MAB Committee

Delegation of Ukraine

54, Volodymyrska Street

01130 Kyiv

Ukraine

Email: Cherinko@nas.gov.ua

Tel: +38 044.234.8630

**OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS
UNESCO MEMBER STATES / ETATS MEMBRES DE L'UNESCO****ALBANIA**

Ms Djana Bejko
Vice Minister for Environment, Chairperson of MaB Committee of Albania
Delegation of Albania
Rruga "Durrësit" 27
1000 Tirana
Albania
Email: Djana.Bejko@moe.gov.al
Tel: +355 422.599.00

Ms Jula Selmani
Assistant and Zv. Ministres
Delegation of Albania
Rruga e "Durrësit" Nr 27
00000 Tirana
Albania
Email: Jula.Selmani@moe.gov.al
Tel: +355 422.706.25

Mr Ardit Konomi
Prefect of Korca Region
Prefektura Korçe, Blv. Republika,
Sheshi i Katedrales
Albania
Email : prefekturakorce@gmail.com

ARGENTINA

Ms Laura Ramirez Barrios
Embassador
Delegation of Argentina
Narvavägen 32 - 3^o floor (Zip C:115 22) P.O. Box 140 39
104 40 Stockholm
Email: lr Ramirezbarrios@yahoo.com.ar

AUSTRIA

Mag. Dr Günter Köck
Leader
Delegation of Austria

Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2
1010 Vienna
Austria
Email: guenter.koeck@oeaw.ac.at
Tel: +43 664.205.3444

CANADA

Mr Jean-Philippe Messier
Chair
Canadian Association of Biosphere Reserves
41 Mance Avenue
G4Z 1M6 Baie-Comeau
Canada

Email: jpmessier@rmbmu.com
Tel: +14 182.932.548

Ms Megan de Graaf
Executive Director
Delegation of Canada
P.O. Box 1650 Stn Main
E1C 9X5 Moncton NB
Canada
Email: info@fundy-biosphere.ca
Tel: +01 596.874.3272

Mr Stanley Boychuk
Chair
Canada MAB
3018 Blackwood Street
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada
Email: stan@boychukconsulting.com
Tel: +01 250.589.7826

CHINA

Mr Ding Wang
Secretary-general
Delegation of China
NO.52, Sanlihe Street
100864 Beijing
China
Email: wangd@ihb.ac.cn
Tel: +86 106.859.7591

COLOMBIA

Ms Sonia Marina Pereira
Abassador
Delegation of Colombia
Carrera 6 No. 9 - 46
110321 Bogota
Colombia
Email: sonia.pereira@cancilleria.gov.co
Tel: +57 138.140.00 Ext. 1287

Ms Elizabeth Ines Taylor Jay
Durector Marine, Coastal and Aquatic Affairs
Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development
Calle 37 # 8-40
00000 Bogota D.C.
Colombia
Email: etaylor@minambiente.gov.co
Tel: +57 316.525.2737

Ms Monica Isaza
Delegate
Delegation of Colombia
Carrera 6 No. 9 - 46
10321 Bogota

Colombia
Email: monica.isaza@cancilleria.gov.co
Tel: +38 140.00 Ext. 1306

Ms. June Marie Mow Robinson
Advisor
Delegation of Colombia
Calle 55 #6-17
110236 Bogota
Colombia
Email: mariemow@gmail.com
Tel: +57 347.75.87

Mr Francisco Gutierrez
Permanent Delegation of Colombia to UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: fj.gutierrez.co@unesco-delegations.org
Tel: +33 1 45 68 28 57

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr Yong Guk Kim
Counselor of the Embassy of DPR of Korea to Sweden
Delegation of Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Norra Kungsvagen 39
18131 Lidingö
Sweden
Email: koryo@telia.com
Tel: +0046 876.738.36

Mr Sim Il Gwang
Third Secretary
Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic Korea
Norra Kungsvägen 39
181 31 Lidingö
Sweden
Email: similgwang@yahoo.se
Tel: +46 0 728 444 059

INDIA

Dr. S.V. Reddy
Director (Scientific)
Ministry of Environment & Forests
Government of India
Room No.753, Paryavaran Bhawan,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road
New Delhi 110003
India
Email: sv.reddy@nic.in
Tel: +24366764

INDONESIA

Mr Yohanes Purwanto
Executive Director of The Indonesian MAB Programme National Committee

Delegation of Indonesia
Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No 18
16122 Bogor
Indonesia
Email: mab-lipi@mab-indonesia.org
Tel: +62 251.832.5854

Mr Andi Basrul
Head of Gunung Leuser National Park Authority
Delegation of Indonesia
Jl. Selamat No. 137
20219 Medan
Indonesia
Email: mab-lipi@mab-indonesia.org

Mr Sudayatna Sudayatna
Head of the Lore Lindu National Park Authority
Delegation of Indonesia
Jl. Prof. Muhammad Yamin No. 53
94124 Palu
Indonesia
Email: tnlorelindu@gmail.com

Mr Jefri Susyafrianto
Directorate of Conservation Area and Protected Forest Management Staffs
Delegation of Indonesia
Gedung Manggala Wanabakti Blok VIII, LT 7 Jl. Jenderal Gatot Subroto
10270 Jakarta
Indonesia
Email: wiratns@gmail.com

ITALY

Mr Giorgio Andrian
Advisor
Delegation of Italy
Via Fasolato, 5
35132 Padova
Italy
Email: projects@giorgioandrian.eu
Tel: +39 335.680.2024

Mr Ottavio Di Bella
Expert
Ministry of the Environment
Via Cristoforo Colombo 44
00147 Roma
Italy
Email: dibella.ottavio@minambiente.it
Tel: +39 392.659.1870

Ms Valentina Mauriello
Expert
Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea
Via Cristoforo Colombo - 44
00147 Rome

Italy

Email: valentina.mauriello@gmail.com

Tel: +39 347.301.3142 / +39 065.722.3484

Ms Anna Maria Maggiore

Officer

Ministry for Environment

Via Cristoforo Colombo 44

00147 Roma

Italy

Email: maggiore.annamaria@minambiente.it

Tel: +39 347.861.4314

Dr Michele Laudati

Director of Ente Parco Nazionale della Sila

Via Nazionale snc

Lorica di San Giovanni

87055 Fiore

Italy

Email: direttore@parcosila.it

Dr Valeria Pellegrini

Ente Parco Nazionale della Sila

Via Nazionale snc

Lorica di San Giovanni

87055 Fiore

Italy

Email: ufficio.stampa@parcosila.it

Dr Pietro Oieni

Member of MAB National Committee

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, State Forestry Corps

Via Giosuè Carducci 5

00187 Roma

Italy

Email: p.oieni@corpoforestale.it

MACEDONIA (Former Yugoslav Republic of) / Ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine

Mr Dimitrija Sekovski

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Macedonia Office

Email: Dimitrija.sekovski@gmail.com

Mr Dejan Panovski

Ministry of Environment

Galiciaca 47

6000 Ohkid, Macedonia

Email: Dejapan11@gmail.com

Tel: +38 9 75 263 000

NIGER

Mr Hamissou Halilou Malam Garba

Chef de Division des Aires Protégées (DFC/AP)

Delegation of Niger

Rue des Ambasses

BP 578 Niamey
Niger
Email: hamissou66@yahoo.fr
Tel: +22 796.531.543

NIGERIA

Mr Patrick Okafor
Deputy Permanent Delegate to UNESCO
Delegation of Nigeria
1 Rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: patozulonye@yahoo.com
Tel: +33 698.156.398

Mr Adeshola Adepoju
Provost
Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria Jos
Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Ibadan
2019 Bauchi Road, JOS
Nigeria
Email: soadepoju2003@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +23 480.358.68634

NORWAY

Ms Irene Lindblad
Senior advisor
Delegation of Norway
Kongensgate 20
Postboks 8013 Dep, 0030 Oslo
Norway
Email: iren.Lindblad@gmail.com
Tel: +47 994.249.07

Ms Kari Evensen Natland
Project leader
Delegation of Norway
Postbox 13
5902 Isdalstø
Norway
Email: kari@nordhordland.net
Tel: +47 480.709.72

Pr Peter Emil Kaland
Professor emeritus
Delegation of Norway
Department of biology, Univ. of Bergen, Postal box 7803
N-5020 Bergen
Norway
Email: peter.kaland@bio.uib.no
Tel: +47 905.540.22

OMAN

Mr Sulaiman Al Mabsali
Specialist, International Relations

Delegation of Oman
1964
111 SEEB
Oman
Email: mabsali@moe.om
Tel: +96 899.244.626

PAKISTAN

Mr Omar Muhammad
Third Secretary
Permanent Delegation of Pakistan to UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75015 Paris
France
Email: dl.pakistan@unesco-delegations.org
Tel: +01 456.830.77

PERU

Mr Nonally Pedro Gamboa
Leader
Servicio Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado- SERNANP
Calle diecisiete 355 Urb. El Palomar, San Isidro
27 Lima
Peru
Email: pgamboa@sernanp.gob.pe
Tel: +51 122.601.22

POLAND

Ms Patrycja Stawiarz
Head of the Nature Projects Unit
General Directorate for Environmental Protection
Department of Natural Resources Management
Wawelska 52/54
00-922 Warsaw
Poland
Email: Patrycja.Stawiarz@gdos.gov.pl
Tel: [+48 225.792.168](tel:+48225792168)

SERBIA

Mr Goran Sekulić
Expert support
Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia
Kumanovska 24
11000 Belgrade
Serbia
Email: goran.sekulic@zzps.rs
Tel: +38 165.204.2726

Mr Marko Tucakov
Senion Associate for International Cooperation and Project Manager
Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province
Radnička 20a
21000 Novi Sad Postal
Serbia
Email: marko.tucakov@pzzp.rs

Tel: +38 1648.500.709

SWITZERLAND

Mr Carlo Ossola
Leader
Delegation of Switzerland
Federal Office for Environment
3003 Bern
Switzerland
Email: carlo.ossola@bafu.admin.ch
Tel: +41 796.933.794

TURKEY

Mr Yildiray Lise
Delegate
Delegation of Turkey
Resit Galip Cad. Hereke Sok. No.10 Cankaya
06700 Ankara
Turkey
Email: yildiraylise@yahoo.com
Tel: +90 532.520.4900

Mr Mahir Kucuk
Leader
Delegation of Turkey
Resit Galip Cad. Hereke Sok. No.10 Cankaya
06700 Ankara
Turkey
Email: mkucuk58@gmail.com
Tel: +90 533.437.7871

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr Vernon Gilbert
President
United States Biosphere Reserves Association
2228 Island Home Boulevard
37920 Knoxville, Tennessee
United States of America
Email: vernongilbert@comcast.net
Tel: +86 557.901.99

Mr Ben Bobowski
Chief of Resource Stewardship
National Park Service, Rocky Mountain National Park, USA
1000 HWY 36
80517 Estes Park
USA
Email: Ben_Bobowski@nps.gov
Tel: +01 970.586.1350

Mr John Dennis
Deputy Chief Scientist
U.S. National Park Service
1201 I Street, N.W.
20005 Washington, DC

USA

Email: john_dennis@nps.gov

Tel: +01 202.513.7174

Ms Janel Heird
Second Secretary, Science Officer
U.S. Department of State
12, Av. Raphael
75016 Paris - France
Email : Heirdjm@state.gov
Tel: +33 143.127.499

**INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES NON GOUVERNEMENTALES**

SCOPE

Mr Jon Samseth

President

SCOPE - Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment

SCOPE Secretariat, c/o UNESCO 1 rue Miollis, Bât. VII, Room 3.16

75732 Paris Cedex 15

France

Email: jsamseth@gmail.com

Tel: +33 145.684.571 / +47 996.186.08

INSTITUTS

Dr Lisen Schultz

Stockholm Resilience Centre

Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm university

10691 Stockholm

Sweden

Email: lisen.schultz@su.se

Tel: +46 702.888.138

Dr Thomas Schaaf

Terra-Sana environmental consulting

Guenterstalstrasse 12a

79100 Freiburg

Germany

Email: tschaaf22@hotmail.fr

Tel: +49 761.705.96556

Mr Wolfgang Fremuth

Team Leader TBR Ohrid Prespa Watershed

Frankfurt Zoological Society

Am Finkenbergr 13

53227 Bonn

Germany

Email: wolfgang@fremuth.net

Tel: +49 171.715.3236

Pr Gaoming Jiang
SUMAMAD participator
Institute of Botany, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, 20 Nanxincun, Xiangshan
100093 Beijing
China
Email: jianggm@126.com
Tel: +08 601.062.836.086

Mr Mansour Esfandiari Baiat
SUMAMAD Case Study Project in Iran
Research Society for Sustainable Rehabilitation of Drylands (REaSSURED)
West Saheli street, Lane 2, Eram Complex 2, 6/1
7143637994 Shiraz
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Email: esfandiari.b@gmail.com
Tel: +98 917.118.4741

Pr Donald Gabriels
SUMAMAD
Em.Prof.dr.ir.
Ghent University, Belgium
Coupure links 653
B9000 Ghent
Belgium
Email: donald.gabriels@UGent.be
Tel: +0032 476.898.772

Mr Maen Smadi
SUMAMAD
Head of protected areas
The royal society for the conservation of nature
11941 Amman
Jordan
Email: maen@rscn.org.jo
Tel: +0096 279.727.3999

Mr Zafar Adeel
SUMAMAD
Director
United Nations University Institute for Water Environment & Health
175 Longwood Rd, South
L8P0A1 Hamilton
Canada
Email: zafar.adeel@unu.edu
Tel: +19 056.675.511

Dr Magali Garcia Cardenas
SUMAMAD
Proyecto Quinagua
Facultad de Agronomia
Universidad Mayor de San Andres
Calle Abdon Saavedra esq. Landaeta
La Paz - Bolivia
Email: magalygc1@yahoo.es
Tel: +59 122.491.485

Dr Rudy Herman
SUMAMAD
Senior Scientist
Ministry of Flanders
Science and Policy Administration
Boudewijnlaan, 30
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Email: rudy.herman@ewi.vlaanderen.be
Tel: +32 255.360.01

UNESCO SECRETARIAT

UNESCO Offices / Bureaux de l'UNESCO

Mr Ram Boojh
UNESCO New Delhi Office
B 5/29 Safdarjung Enclave
110029 New Delhi
India
Email: r.boojh@unesco.org
Tel: +91 112.671.3000

UNESCO Headquarters / Siège de l'UNESCO

Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences:

- Mr HAN Qunli Director and Secretary of the MAB Programme
- Ms Meriem Bouamrane, Programme Specialist
- Ms Noeline Rakotoarisao-Raondry, Chief of Section, SC/EES/BNC
- Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, Senior Programme Specialist
- Mr Peter Dogse, Programme Specialist
- Ms Melody Ocloo, Assistant Programme Specialist
- Mr Alberto Hernandez Salinas, Assistant Programme Specialist
- Ms Maria Cardenas, Consultant
- Ms Kremena Nikolova, Assistant
- Ms Sylvie Venter, Senior Assistant to the Director

International Oversight Service:

- Mr Vaessen Josef, Principal Evaluation Specialist

Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs:

- Mr Jean-Christophe Badaroux-Mendieta, Legal Officer

Interpreters / interprètes

Ms Cécile Galy
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: cecilegaly@gmail.com

Ms Christine Victorin
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: christine.victorin@wanadoo.fr

Ms Isabelle Seguela
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: sequelai@wanadoo.fr

Ms Naia Sadaba-Herrero
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: nsadaba@yahoo.fr

Mr Philip Rees
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: philippe.rees@orange.fr

Mr Godrics Yann Obame Ndong
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: yan_ndong@hotmail.com

Ms Amaya Moran Orthiz
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: amaia.moran@wanadoo.fr

Ms Ann Isabel Freeman
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: annabel.freeman@wanadoo.fr

Ms Dominique Chatelle
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: dominique.chatelle@wanadoo.fr

Ms Juan Maria Burdiel Perez
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: jmburdielperez@gmail.com

Ms Marta Bujan-Navarro
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: martabujan@yahoo.es

Mr Thomas Afton
Interpreter
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
France
Email: tomafton@gmail.com

Annex 2

Agenda

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Jönköping, East Vättern Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Sweden
10 - 13 June 2014

AGENDA

1. Opening by the Chair of the ICC
2. Opening remarks by the UNESCO Director-General
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 and discussion on collaborative thematic and research projects
8. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP)
9. MAB and World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) – post Rio+20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021
10. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves that are part of the WNBR
11. Update on the exit strategy
12. Periodic review of biosphere reserves and follow-up of recommendations
13. UNESCO MAB policy on open access to MAB/biosphere reserve documentation
14. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management
15. MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme
16. Information on the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve Case
17. Date and venue of the 27th session of the MAB-ICC
18. Other matters
19. Adoption of the report
20. Closure of the session

Annex 3

Report of the MAB Secretary

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
Twenty-sixth session

Jönköping, East Vättern Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Sweden
10 - 13 June 2014

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE MAB PROGRAMME

Since the 25th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC), MAB has seen many new developments at the international, regional and national levels. Divided into the following five sections, this report provides MAB-ICC with an update on these developments:

- I. The overall situation of the MAB Programme,
- II. Implementation of the main decisions of the last session of MAB-ICC,
- III. MAB regional/thematic networks;
- IV. Highlights of MAB actions and activities,
- V. MAB partnerships.

I. Overall situation of the MAB Programme

1. Completion of 36C/5 (2012-2013) of MAB. After the 25th session of MAB-ICC, the implementation of MAB Programme was accelerated by the Secretariat as well as by MAB national committees and thematic and regional networks. The results of the implementation of the six Expected Results relating to MAB as well as assessments of the impacts and lessons learnt during the biennium were reported to the Executive Board at 192nd and 194th Sessions as well as to the 37th General Conference, which accordingly endorsed the reports¹. It should be noted that the successful delivery of the MAB Programme was made in the context of the special financial difficulties experienced by UNESCO throughout the 2012-2013 biennium.
2. MAB in 37C/4 and 37C/5². Thanks to the strong support from the Member States, the MAB Programme has maintained its importance in UNESCO's new Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021) and 37C/5 quadrennial workplan. The MAB Programme has been assigned to implement one of the six Main Lines of Actions (MLAs) under the Natural Sciences programme, namely, '*Strengthening the roles of ecological sciences and biosphere reserves*'. This MLA is related to a specific Expected Result entitled '*Use of biosphere reserves as learning places for equitable and sustainable development and for climate change mitigation and adaptation strengthened, and the ecological and biodiversity sciences*

¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002266/226627e.pdf>.

² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002268/226841e.pdf>

reinforced. Despite the difficult financial situation of the Organization and a much reduced expenditure package for UNESCO's Regular Programme, the governing bodies of UNESCO have given ecological sciences and MAB Programme around 79% of the total Regular Budget proposed, thus ensuring a basis for the implementation of the MAB Programme.

3. MAB and Priority Africa flagship programmes in the 37C/5. The MAB Secretariat participated actively in the development of Priority Africa flagship programmes, within which '*Flagship 4: Fostering sciences for the sustainable management of Africa's natural resources and disaster risk reduction*' and '*Expected Result 3: UNESCO network of internationally designated sites expanded to foster sustainable socio-economic development including transboundary sites which successfully manage shared water and/or ecosystem resources*' specifically address action relating to MAB.
4. Information sharing with Member States. In addition to the information on MAB provided to the governing bodies of UNESCO, the Secretariat also provided a report to the MAB International Support Group (ISG) in March 2014 about the achievements and challenges of MAB. In 2013, reports were provided during the preparation of the 37C/4 and 37C/5 to the Africa and Asia-Pacific Member State groups represented by the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO. A new MAB leaflet and a new World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) map were produced and distributed widely, both in hard-copy and on-line. This information sharing meetings were highly appreciated by the Member States.
5. MAB contributions to major international processes related to sustainable development. Through the MAB Secretariat, input and expertise were made available in support UNESCO's overall contributions to CBD, IPBES, UNCCD, climate change, Future Earth, the Post-2015 Development Agenda discussion and the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the UN Secretary General's Science Advisory Board (SAB). The work of MAB – in particular the relevance and added value of the WNBR - contributed to all these input and interventions.
6. New biosphere reserve proposals in 2013. There has been an increase in the proposals for biosphere reserves in 2013, with a total of 29 nominations from 19 countries. This higher number of requests for new biosphere reserves, including requests for transboundary biosphere reserves, provides strong evidence that MAB and its WNBR are vibrant and highly relevant to the Member States. The interest in making use of MAB and WNBR continues to grow in the contexts of new and emerging international cooperation for sustainable development.
7. The MAB Secretariat. The financial situation has led to a reduction of professional-level posts in the MAB Secretariat, which has impacted the capacity of the MAB Secretariat. However, in the new and reduced structure of the Natural Sciences Sector, the MAB Secretariat is still well maintained in the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences with two professional sections, namely, a) the Section of MAB Research and Policy: Ecology and Biodiversity, and b) the Section of MAB Networking: Biosphere Reserves and Capacity Building. The Secretariat's capacity is further reinforced by some 15 science professionals partially working for the MAB Programme in the Field Offices of UNESCO across all regions
8. Overall, the MAB Programme is highly relevant to the needs of the Member States, and contributes significantly toward UNESCO's Overarching Strategic Objective of Promoting International Scientific Cooperation on Critical Challenges to Sustainable development. MAB

and WNBR constitute a central pillar in UNESCO's programmes for sustainable development. In spite of continued financial constraints, the opportunities for MAB and its WNBR to grow and become stronger are real, tangible and worth exploring vigorously.

II. Implementation of the main decisions adopted at the 25th session of MAB-ICC

9. Implementation of the Exit Strategy. Reference is made to the MAB ICC decision on the Exit Strategy³. After the last MAB Council meeting, the MAB Secretariat has been following this decision very closely. The first year of the Strategy's implementation has shown very encouraging signs, as demonstrated by the response to the MAB Council's call for the submission of periodic reports. A document (ref. SC-14/CONF.226/9) has been prepared for this session of the MAB Council, detailing the progress made, recommendations made by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves at its meeting in March 2014, as well as remaining issues to be addressed by the MAB Council.
10. Evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP). Reference is made to MAB ICC decision to carry out a comprehensive evaluation prior the completion of the MAP at the end of 2013⁴. UNESCO's Internal Oversight Office (IOS), in close cooperation with the MAB Secretariat and an electronic MAB working group, has carried out an online survey using a questionnaire designed specifically for the MAP evaluation as well as interviews with programme specialists and a document desk review. A related document (ref. SC-14/CONF.226/6) has been prepared by IOS for the MAB Council. The results of the MAP Evaluation will be highly relevant and useful in the elaboration of the new MAB Strategy and related action plans for the WNBR.
11. Preparation of the new MAB Strategy. Reference is made to the debate and conclusion of the 25th Session of the MAB Council regarding *MAB and World Network of Biosphere Reserves – post Rio+ 20 opportunities and towards a strategy for 2014-2021*⁵. As follow up, the Secretariat first concentrated in the preparation of UNESCO 37C/4 and 37C/5, as well as on ensuring quality implementation of the remaining tasks in the 2012-2013 workplan (36C/5) and related reporting. The development of a new MAB Strategy was further discussed at several regional MAB meetings in 2013. In February 2014, in order to enable broad participation and collective contributions to the preparation of the new MAB Strategy, a simple questionnaire was designed in consultation with MAB Bureau Members and the electronic MAB working group. The questionnaire was sent to all MAB National Committees in March 2014. At the time of writing, close to 30 MAB National Committees, some individual Biosphere Reserves and the EuroMAB network had replied with specific comments and suggestions in response to the questions of the questionnaire, providing a substantive basis for further work. A preliminary draft ('zero draft') has been prepared (ref. SC-14/CONF.226/7) for the attention of this session of the MAB Council.
12. The time frame for the preparation of the new MAB Strategy is one year, given the fact that it has to be further elaborated, most likely through several working groups of MAB. It should also be associated with, and benefit from, the global processes relating to the preparation of

³ SC-13-CONF-225-11_Final_Report Paragraph 56-65

⁴ SC-13-CONF-225-11_Final_Report Paragraph 29-34

⁵ SC-13-CONF-225-11_Final_Report Paragraph 35-47

the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In the light hereof, it is suggested that the text of the new MAB Strategy be finalized by the 27th Session of the MAB-ICC in 2015.

III. Information concerning MAB thematic and regional networks

13. Thematic and regional MAB networks provide the main platforms for MAB cooperation in research, elaboration of new ideas and subjects, sharing of information, exchange of experience and lessons learnt, and mobilization of cooperation for capacity building. During the last 12 months, despite the constraints of the limited regular budget in UNESCO, most MAB thematic and regional networks continued their cooperation, bringing together new resources and new partners. This is evidenced by the list of meetings below (in chronological order):
- 11th International Meeting of the East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network (REDBIOS), at the Biosphere Reserve of the Island of Príncipe, Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, from 3 to 9 May 2013.
 - 3rd Meeting of the Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves in the Islands of Hiiumaa and Saaremaa, West-Estonian Archipelago biosphere reserve, from 3 to 7 June 2013.
 - 3rd General Assembly of the African Network of Biosphere Reserves (AfriMAB) in Accra, Ghana, from 24–27 September 2013.
 - EuroMAB 2013 meeting in Frontenac Arch Biosphere, Canada, from 15 to 19 October 2013.
 - 13th Meeting of the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network in Ulaanbaatar and Hustain Nuruu Biosphere Reserve, Mongolia, from 21-25 October 2013.
 - Training Course for Island and Coastal Area Biosphere Reserves Managers, island of Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 21 to 25 October 2013.
 - 7th SeaBRnet meeting in Puerto Princesa, Palawan Biosphere Reserve, Philippines, from 23 to 27 October 2013.
 - 5th SACAM Meeting (26-28 November 2013) and ECO Workshop (29-30 November 2013) in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
 - 4th Meeting of the Pacific Biosphere Reserves Network (PacMAB): Role of Biosphere Reserves in Sustainable Development in the Pacific, from 23-25 April 2014 in Nadi, Fiji.
14. In addition to these events, MAB has participated actively in many other workshops and meetings on issues such as climate change, mountain ecosystems, the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). One example of this engagement by MAB was the International Workshop on Mangroves and Sustainable Development held in July 2013 in Santa Marta, Colombia, organized by UNESCO-Quito, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), Conservation International (CI), and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia.
15. The above meetings provided very rich information and knowledge from country and site studies, and addressed the common issues of the MAB Programme: biodiversity and its sustainable use under different ecosystems (islands and coasts, forests, mountains, drylands) and various socio-economic contexts; development of green economies in and around biosphere reserves; transboundary cooperation using biosphere reserve as platforms; identification of new biosphere reserves in different region and subregions; promoting biosphere reserves as model regions for sustainable development; research and

measures on climate change impacts mitigation and adaptation; ecosystem rehabilitation; participatory management and governance; traditional knowledge and management; interdependence of biodiversity and cultural diversity; and education for sustainable development.

16. It is noted that, however, there is a need to improve communication within MAB, between UNESCO programmes and sectors, and with civil society regarding the results obtained and the new findings and ideas emerging from MAB's thematic and regional networks. It is also noted that a very large number of MAB-supported technical workshops and seminars are held at the national level, the results of which are not effectively shared internationally. This issue will be addressed under the items relating to the new MAB Strategy and MAB communication.

IV. Highlights of MAB actions and activities

17. While MAB thematic and regional networks as well as national networks have supported exchange and sharing of information and experience relating to research and development, numerous actions and activities have been undertaken by MAB National Committees and the development authorities of Member States. Several examples of MAB actions and activities supported and facilitated by the Secretariat are highlighted below.
18. Completion of the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD) project. Funded by the Flemish Government of Belgium, this 10 year project, which aimed to combat desertification at pilot sites in nine countries: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia, has been completed. During the last 10 years, the nine countries and their experts worked together to share experience in drylands conservation and development; to study rehabilitation of degraded drylands and improvement of agricultural yields through better water management; to produce development of policy guidelines for decision-makers; and to support local communities to adopt more sustainable livelihoods through ecotourism, handicraft production, bee-keeping and dietary diversification, and to reduce their dependence on traditional dryland agriculture in a deteriorating environment.
19. Trifinio-Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. This is the first tri-national Biosphere Reserve in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, established to promote transboundary cooperation in conservation of biodiversity and management of natural resources. As a major step following the establishment of the tri-national biosphere reserve, the three countries have agreed to work together to promote green economy development of the local communities and municipalities located in the Trifinio-Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve. This cooperation is supported by Germany, which has committed project support totalling 11 million euros.
20. The first MAB Category II Center. Following the decision by the 37th session of General Conference, the **Director-General of UNESCO** officially inaugurated the Category II International Centre on 'Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves, Two Coastlines United by their Culture and Nature' in April 2014. Located within the premises of the Abertis Foundation in Castellet I la Gornal, Kingdom of Spain, it is the first MAB category II centre under UNESCO auspices. The center will focus on scientific cooperation between the two shores and the biosphere reserves of the Mediterranean. As the first example of such a MAB institution, it is

noted that the Centre combines public commitment and private sector financial support for long-term support to MAB, indicating a new modality for MAB cooperation in support of capacity building at regional level.

21. Supporting nomination of new transboundary biosphere reserves for Peace in Lake Chad and in Central Africa. Sound management of transboundary ecosystems is one of the priorities of AfriMAB. During the last biennium, the MAB Secretariat supported feasibility studies at two transboundary biosphere reserves: one in Lake Chad involving Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, Central African Republic and Libya; and another in the TRIDOM area in Central Africa involving Congo, Gabon and Cameroon. The study contributed to the capacity of MAB national committees in these countries.
22. Promoting the use of solar energy by empowering women in Volcans Biosphere Reserve, Rwanda. MAB and its local partner, the 'Gorilla Organization', supported the solar electrification of 100 households in Nyarugina village within the Volcanoes BR in Rwanda, home to the endangered Mountain Gorillas. The solar equipment provides improved access to energy and security. The equipment is installed, maintained and repaired by local grandmothers, who were sent to India for six months in 2012 to train as fully qualified solar engineers. The training was provided through a partnership with Barefoot College in Tilonia, India, and was supported by the Government of India, providing a good example of south-south cooperation.
23. Exhibition 'Climate change impacts on mountain regions of the world' Funded by the Flemish Government of Belgium and using satellite images from JAXA, ESA, USGS, MAB and IHP, and presented during the 37th Session of UNESCO's General Conference, this exhibition highlighted the effects of climate change in different mountain regions, many of which are UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. The exhibition is currently shown in Italy, and will be shown in Lima, Peru, in December for the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP20). Discussions are ongoing regarding a possible exhibition at the UN Climate Summit 2014.
24. No plastic - a small gesture in our hands was an awareness and mobilization campaign project supported by the MAB programme, the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, and the Island of Principe (Sao Tomé and Principe), to reduce plastic waste and promote access to drinking water in a biosphere reserve. The campaign was launched in February 2014 and was a great success. Fifty plastic bottles can be exchanged for a 'Principe Biosphere Bottle', a reusable stainless steel bottle that can be replenished at various treated water points installed across the island of Principe. On the first collection day of the campaign, 24,000 used plastic bottles were collected by schoolchildren and 400 'Principe Biosphere Bottles' were distributed to the local population.
25. RENFORUS Initiative - Renewable Energy Futures for UNESCO Sites. The objective of the RENFORUS initiative is to provide the international community with global climate change field observatory sites involving the sustainable use of environmentally sound renewable energy sources in UNESCO sites (biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites). While addressing climate change mitigation, this initiative will also aim to demonstrate the benefit of harnessing locally available renewable energy sources and the potential impacts hereof on the environmental and ecological preservation of UNESCO sites.

26. Implementation of Green economy in Africa Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) was started in June 2014 with inception meetings followed by workshops to set up the baseline for future forest monitoring and related socio-economic activities in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. The project is the first KOIKA fund-in-trust (1.8 million US dollars) for African Biosphere Reserves.
27. UNESCO – CHIC Group (China) Biosphere Integrated Rural Urbanization Programme (BIRUP): The Biosphere Integrated Rural Urbanization Programme (BIRUP) in the Ba'nán District, Chongqing (China) promotes green economies based on integrated rural land consolidation with new agricultural projects, training of farmers and expansion of urbanized rural villages in-line with the biosphere reserve concept. Through the BIRUP project, possible inputs for the Milan Expo 2015 are also under preparation.
28. MAB communication, outreach and publications have increased since the last MAB Council, although much more still remains to be done:
- Production and distribution of the 2013-2014 map of the WNBR, with generous support from the German National Commission for UNESCO and MAB-Germany. The map is available in English, French, Spanish and German, and available also online from the UNESCO website.
 - Production and distribution of a MAB programme Leaflet (in English, French, Spanish), also available online from the UNESCO website.
 - A MAB Facebook page has been established on an experimental basis. The Facebook page features new posts once or twice daily with information, pictures and videos about activities related to biosphere reserves and the MAB programme. Use of other social media platforms is also under discussion.
 - The video '*People and nature - better together!*' produced by EuroMAB network, features the biosphere reserve story and shows that a sustainable way of living is not only possible, but already happening.
 - The video '*Mangroves and Sustainable Development*' developed by the UNESCO Quito Office in partnership with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) and Conservation International – Ecuador, promotes the conservation and sustainable use of mangroves, the values of the ecosystem goods and services and to address economic issues and cultural, social and spiritual aspects of mangroves.
 - The book '*Reservas de la Biosfera de Chile — Laboratorios para la Sustentabilidad*' (Biosphere Reserves of Chile — Laboratory for Sustainability) presents each of the biosphere reserves in Chile, in particular their natural and cultural heritage, in order to stimulate research and raise the interest among the Chilean population about the uniqueness of ecosystems and human livelihoods in biosphere reserves.
 - The book '*AfriMAB — Biosphere Reserves in Sub-Saharan Africa: Showcasing Sustainable Development*' shares stories of sustainable development as portrayed through the management of biosphere reserves in nine African countries.
29. MAB training and education continued during the last 12 months, with the following new activities undertaken:
- ERAIFT (Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forest and Lands initiated by UNESCO-MAB in partnership with DR Congo, EU and UNDP) now offers bilingual courses (French and English) and short term capacity building for professional staff of national institutions. With 21 sub-Saharan countries benefitting, ERAIFT has developed a strong technical partnership at all level. In 2012-2013, 41 Masters and 36 PhD students have been enrolled with 23

- graduated during the 2012-2013 academic year. Cooperation with UNEP has been fostered through revived MAB participation in the Great Apes Survival Partnership. The enrolment for the 9th promotion of DESS (Diploma in Advanced Specialized Studies) to start in September 2014 has been launched.
- A training course on bioinformatics and taxonomy in Rwanda trained 23 trainers from universities, research institutions and NGO's who will be an asset for a bioinformatics centre foreseen to be established as part of the Centre of Excellence. As a result of courses organized by UNESCO in 2012 in collaboration with University of Rwanda and University of Cape Town, South Africa, eleven species of mosses new to Rwanda have been recorded. This is a very important step in the inventory of plants in the country, which is a biodiversity hotspot.
 - Training Course for Island and Coastal Area Biosphere Reserve Managers. UNESCO and the island of Jeju organized this training course in the island of Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 21 to 25 October 2013. The aim of the course was to deepen the understanding of biosphere reserve managers of the concept and vision of biosphere reserves, raise their awareness of the vulnerability of island and coastal biosphere reserves to climate change, and transfer technical knowledge.
 - Masters Course on Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Landscape Development. Offered by the Department of Economy and Society, Human Geography Unit - School of Business Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg (Sweden), the course gives a deep insight into the concepts of sustainability and biosphere reserves.
 - Effort to build capacity of MAB national committees in Southern Africa. In the sub-region, so far only South Africa and Zimbabwe have established biosphere reserves. A capacity building regional workshop was organized by the UNESCO Harare office in July 2013 in Limpopo Province in South Africa. This was followed by another training workshop in Botswana in November 2014 in collaboration with BfN (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation).

V. MAB partnership

30. Partnerships are vital for the MAB Programme and its WNBR. In a rapid changing world and dynamic international environment, MAB needs to consolidate its traditional partnership with scientific institutions and organizations on one hand, and on the other hand to explore vigorously new partnerships with civil society organizations, local governments, development agencies and the private sector. For the latter, encouraging developments are already taking place through the work of the UNESCO Offices in Beijing, Jakarta and New Delhi and Venice, in particular in the fields of ESD and biodiversity. While partnerships remain a critical matter of discussion for the new MAB strategy, the past months have seen positive developments in MAB partnership, as follows.
31. In partnership with the French government and research institutions, as well as CBD, IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences) and the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, MAB Secretariat will organize the International Conference 'Botanists of the Twenty-first Century: Roles, Challenges and Opportunities' in September 2014 in Paris, with the objective of developing forward-looking perspectives for the botanical profession in the twenty-first century.

32. Sustainable financing for AfriMAB. Following the request of the 3rd general assembly of AfriMAB, the MAB Secretariat completed a study and concept note on the AfriBioFund, a trust fund to be established to support regional activities in African Biosphere Reserves with particular focus on development and logistic functions. It is worth noting that this study has been financed by voluntary contributions from African MAB national committees.
33. Partnership with the World Heritage Convention has led to new joint efforts for development of a project on biodiversity in Africa and related fundraising. An expert dialogue of MAB/WNBR and WH as well as the global geopark network on the use of space technologies for the management of internationally designated sites held in May 2014 in China provides new insight into common management challenges and opportunities for cooperation between the three categories of sites.
34. Communication and information exchange with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and IUCN has become more active. This is evidenced by a joint proposal of IUCN, MAB, Ramsar and WHC for a comparative study on international designated conservation areas (to be financed by Jeju Island of the Republic of Korea); MAB cooperation with IUCN for a coastal and island Biosphere Reserves workshop at the World Park Congress 2014; and IUCN participation at the 20th session of International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserve in March 2014.
35. SCOPE has expressed interest in continuing its work with MAB and has offered to publish a special issue of about MAB and WNBR in the international journal Ecosystem Health and Sustainable Development (EHS) in early 2015. Exchanges with the Stockholm Resilience Center also demonstrate strong potential for joint activities in research. UNEP-WCMC has indicated its willingness to reactivate database cooperation on WNBR - an issue that will require further examination by the MAB Council and the next session of International Advisory Committee.
36. An important partnership with Member States is the provision of professional staff to the MAB Secretariat through UNESCO's Associate Expert Scheme. Thanks to the French Government, an associate expert is now based at the GRASP Secretariat in Nairobi. Other arrangements include professional secondment and government supported young professional internships. The MAB Secretariat and UNESCO Field Offices welcome such partnership, in particular given the reduction of staff at the MAB Secretariat and the growing interest of many countries and young researchers in the work of MAB and WNBR.

VI. Conclusion – facing the challenges and moving forward

37. MAB is relevant, active and vibrant. While MAB and its WNBR continue growing, delivering and performing, the challenges are also mounting and serious. Among the main challenges faced are the following.
38. Firstly, the lack of resources. A much greater effort must be made by all to raise resources, both financial and technical. To sustain and develop an intergovernmental scientific programme of MAB's scale and an extensive world network of learning laboratories for biodiversity and sustainable development, it is no longer adequate to rely mainly on UNESCO's regular budget. New funding sources must be found, in the interest of all countries and communities involved.

39. Secondly, the MAB research agenda. A new, inspiring and forward-looking MAB research agenda is truly needed for the Post-2015 era. Such an agenda must lead MAB work to address the most critical issues (both current and emerging) relating to biosphere sustainability, and must contribute to the mainstream development agenda of participating countries.
40. Furthermore, communication. MAB needs to communicate much better in this era of information and interconnectivity. MAB needs to publish more and better, and explore new forms of communication. Only with the support of general public will the ideas, concepts and scientific advice from MAB make real impacts. Successful communication to this end is essential.
41. Next, the tools and instruments used in the operation of MAB. There is a need to improve the technical operation of the programme, by refining, compiling and improving the tools and instruments used - in project development, in the technical guidance provided for field management practices, for databases and data standards. There is also a need to consider greatly enhancing the MAB Young Scientists Award or Fellowship Scheme.
42. In conclusion, the MAB Secretary is confident that - with the continued support and guidance from all Member States, in particular guidance of the MAB ICC - and with the successful elaboration of the new MAB strategy, MAB will continue to be one of the most inspiring, energetic and productive programmes of UNESCO. Now in its 5th decade, MAB continues to provide highly useful and increasingly important services to all Member States.
43. On behalf of the MAB Secretariat and all colleagues working both in Paris and the network of Field Offices. I express my sincere thanks to the MAB Council for its attention.