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International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme
Twenty-second session

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http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6793&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Item 13 of the Provisional Agenda:
Report on activities of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010)

1. At its 61st session, the United Nations General Assembly, in Resolution 61/203, declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (hereinafter referred to as IYB). In the Resolution, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern for the social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of the loss of biodiversity, including negative impacts on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and stressed the necessity of adopting concrete measures in order to reverse this loss, including the need for effective education to raise public awareness for achieving the threefold objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the 2010 biodiversity target. Hence, the objective of IYB will be to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity by promoting actions at the local, regional and international levels.
2. The General Assembly designated the Secretariat of the CBD as the focal point for the Year and invited the Secretariat to cooperate with other relevant United Nations bodies, multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and other stakeholders, to bring greater international attention to the continued loss of biodiversity.
3. UNESCO has much to contribute in support of the implementation of IYB, and UNESCO's IYB activities are part of the official IYB Implementation Strategy. These include:
 - The UNESCO launch of the Year on 21 and 22 January 2010 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. At the launch, a Travelling Exhibition on Biodiversity was unveiled, which has already travelled to Bali on the occasion of the 2010 session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum in February 2010. The launch was attended by a significant number of high-level personalities and succeeded in marking UNESCO's presence in the landscape of events organized on the occasion of the IYB launch (Curitiba, 6-7 January; Berlin, 11 January; and Paris, 21-22 January 2010, respectively). UNESCO Member States participated actively in the Paris launch. The meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves was organized at the time of the IYB Science Policy Conference which immediately followed the launch events in order to enable the Advisory Committee Members to participate and contribute towards science-policy relationships on biodiversity.
 - The UNESCO IYB Science Policy Conference was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. This Conference gathered approximately 300 participants. These included scientists and other experts dealing with biodiversity-related disciplines and issues such as biogeography, taxonomy, biodiversity and development, communication, education and public awareness, conservation priority-setting, funding, planning and the biodiversity science-policy interface. The Conference produced a set of

recommendations. These recommendations, together with excerpts from the seventy-plus presentations made at the Conference, will be presented in the form of Conference proceedings to key IYB events that will be held in 2010.

- A conference on the relationship between biological and cultural diversity will take place in June 2010, in Montreal. It will reflect the developments at UNESCO towards an initiative on biological and cultural diversity and with the CBD, on the basis of their respective mandates.
 - UNESCO is also a channel through which to integrate the ideas of the IYB into the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). An educational kit on biodiversity is being produced, for official distribution to all CBD Parties in the course of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD, which will take place in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.
 - UNESCO will be present at COP 10 and contribute to its debates through a number of publications, side events, multi-stakeholder meetings and inputs into the COP discussions. A joint UNESCO-CBD initiative on biological and cultural diversity is expected to be endorsed and launched in Nagoya, based on the outputs of the above-mentioned Montreal Conference. Another initiative that may benefit the MAB Programme in particular, and UNESCO as a whole is an endeavor currently referred to as *Satoyama*, which aims at promoting sustainable landscape-level planning approaches based on traditional knowledge, local sustainable economies and multi-stakeholder dialogues and synergies akin to the Satoyama tradition of building harmonious human-nature relationships in Japan.
 - On 25 September 2010, the UN General Assembly will hold a special session on biodiversity. There, the establishment of an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) – aspiring to be the biodiversity equivalent of the IPCC, is expected to receive support. UNESCO is being considered (others being UNEP and FAO) a potential UN co-sponsor and co-host of the IPBES and its Secretariat. The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) could be promoted as places or field laboratories for UN-wide collaboration in testing approaches and learning lessons on science-policy relationships concerning biodiversity and ecosystem services which could contribute towards international dialogues and discussions of IPBES.
 - The National Commission of the Republic of Korea for UNESCO has had discussions with the MAB Secretariat on the possibility of hosting an event in Seoul on internationally-designated sites, e.g. biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites, as their contribution towards IYB. There are also other potential events, for example a seminar addressing the needs of journalists in Africa to raise awareness of biodiversity being considered by the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector and their partners, which are under discussion. An oral update on all such events shall be reported at the time of the 22nd session of the ICC from 31 May to 4 June 2010.
 - It is feasible that CBD Parties may adopt a protocol on ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing of the Use of Genetic Resources) at the Nagoya Conference of the Parties. A partnership between Rhön (Germany) and Kruger-to-Canyon (South Africa) Biosphere Reserves has created a pioneering 'bio-cultural' protocol which could enable other biosphere reserves to learn and develop similar arrangements in order to optimize contributions of the WNBR to this critical dimension of the CBD mandate.¹
4. IYB represents, first of all, an opportunity to raise further awareness in biosphere reserves and the countries to which they belong on the role of biodiversity for the provision of ecosystem services that are important for human well-being, and significantly contribute to attaining Madrid Action Plan Target 19, Action 19-1 and Target 24, Actions 24.3 and 24.4. A

¹ More detailed information about UNESCO's involvement in IYB can be found on: <http://www.unesco.org/en/biodiversity>.

number of resource materials have been developed by UNESCO² and the CBD Secretariat³.

5. IYB also provides an opportunity to promote the contribution of the MAB Programme to the main expected decisions that will be taken in the course of IYB. In particular, biosphere reserves could assist in the implementation of field activities in support of assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of multi-scale assessments that will feed into the proposed IPBES. Moreover, the MAB Programme could assist, as appropriate, in the implementation of capacity-building activities in the context of the IPBES programme of work.
6. In light of the information and considerations presented above, the Council may wish to:
 - a. Encourage Governments participating in the MAB Programme to rely on UNESCO's efforts in support of IYB, including available UNESCO resource materials, to promote actively the importance of biodiversity for human well-being and development in biosphere reserves, in light with the spirit of the UN General Assembly on 2010 - International Year of Biodiversity;
 - b. Encourage MAB National Committees to participate actively in the implementation of IYB; in particular MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO are encouraged to inform themselves of the composition of their country Delegations to the 10th Conference of Parties of the CBD in Nagoya, Japan and inform the Delegation of all relevant work from the MAB Programme and its WNBR to be used in the dialogue and debates of the COP 10; and
 - c. Recognize that the MAB Programme and its WNBR have a role to play in the implementation of relevant outcomes of IYB, in particular the intended joint UNESCO-CBD initiative on biological and cultural diversity, the potential establishment of an IPBES and the implementation of a possible ABS protocol due for ratification at COP 10.

² http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=8004&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

³ <http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>.