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Item 10.5 of the Provisional Agenda:
World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR):
Periodic review reports of biosphere reserves received since MAB-ICC 21

1. The International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves held its sixteenth meeting at UNESCO Headquarters on 27-29 January 2010. It was invited to consider periodic reviews of the status of biosphere reserves designated for a period of over ten years. The new periodic reviews are listed below as well as the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee (Annex 1).
2. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee were sent to the concerned Member States for their information. These recommendations will be examined by the new MAB-ICC Bureau to be elected at the time of the 22nd session of the MAB-ICC at its first meeting.
3. As of March 2010, 229 periodic reviews had been submitted to the MAB Secretariat. Two countries (Canada and Côte d'Ivoire) have submitted a periodic review for the second time for three biosphere reserves.
4. As a follow-up to the recommendation of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC held in 2009 in Jeju, Republic of Korea regarding the implementation of Target 9 of the Madrid Action Plan, "All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and Madrid Action Plan requirements and recommendations", as well as Action 9.1, the MAB Secretariat has written individually to countries that have never conducted any periodic reviews inviting them to undertake necessary actions to do so in order to meet the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves and Target 9 of the MAP. The Secretariat has also written to countries that undertook the periodic review but never provided any information on the implementation of the recommendations. At the time of the draft of this document (22 March 2010) the Secretariat has sent 69 letters to concerned Member States. An update on the information received by the Secretariat up to the time of the 22nd session will be made orally at the meeting.
5. At its 21st session, the MAB-ICC adopted the recommendation of the Bureau that both the biosphere nomination and the periodic review forms required simplification and revision. It particularly suggested that the revisions of both forms be undertaken with the assistance of an electronic working group. At the time of the drafting of this document an electronic group is in the process of being constructed and the French MAB National Committee has generously offered to host the dialogues of the working group. A progress report on this subject will be presented orally to the 22nd session of the MAB-ICC.
6. The MAB Council may recommend follow-up actions based on the data and information received by the Secretariat on the status of implementation of the periodic review, including on progress made by the electronic working group for updating and revising the nomination and periodic review forms.

Annex 1: Periodic Review Reports considered by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves during its last meeting held at UNESCO Headquarters from 25 to 27 January 2010

EUROPE/NORTH AMERICA		ASIA	
Russian Federation		China	
(additional information received since the last session of the Advisory Committee)		Nanji Island	
Chernyje Zemli		ARAB REGION	
Daursky		Morocco	
Taimyrsky		Arganeraie	
Teberda		AFRICA	
Ubsunovskaya Kotlovina		Côte d'Ivoire	
France		Comoé	
Fontainebleau		South Africa	
Luberon		Kogelberg	
Ukraine			
Dunaisky			

PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES DESIGNATED FOR A PERIOD OF OVER TEN YEARS

The Advisory Committee considered twelve (12) periodic review reports and made the following recommendations thereon.

Comoe Biosphere Reserve, Côte d'Ivoire

The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire, especially the MAB National Committee for their efforts made in undertaking the Comoe periodic review and also responding to the questionnaire regarding the revision of the periodic review forms, despite the post-conflict situation in the region.

The Advisory Committee noted that since the 1980s, Comoe established an ecological research station, now well-known, with strong support from several international partners e.g. the UNESCO-MAB project on the Comoe management plan, the French Development Agency, and the Julius-Maximilian University (Germany).

The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to plan the rehabilitation of the "Comoe scientific research station" in their priorities, in order to allow the Comoe Biosphere Reserve to play its full role as one of the BIOTA (BIODiversity monitoring Transect Analysis in Africa), especially during this International Year of Biodiversity.

The Advisory Committee noted the importance of the biosphere reserve and of its core area (1,149,150 ha) with several sacred sites and endangered species. However, a map of the zones of the biosphere reserve was not provided in the report. The Committee noted that such maps

had been prepared within the framework of a recent UNEP-GEF/UNESCO-MAB regional project. The Committee recommended that the national authorities present a revised periodic review report that incorporates the results of different projects including maps. Also, the zonation should be revised to include a wider transition area.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities should actively involve the local population in the further development and management of the biosphere reserve in accordance with the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa

The Advisory Committee congratulated the South African authorities on this very well-prepared periodic review. The Committee noted that Kogelberg is a good example of biosphere reserve. Indeed, the examination of the report shows that the three functions of the biosphere reserve are fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. The Committee also highly appreciated the quality of the maps showing zonation, vegetation and tourism distribution.

The delimitation of the core areas and buffer zones and the approximate extent of the transition area remain the same as was indicated in the nomination file in 1998. The functions justifying the zonation are well outlined in the document. While the core areas fulfil the conservation function, development is promoted in all three zones, with environmentally-conscious economic development activities being supported specifically within the buffer zone. New developments promoting sustainable living principles within the transition area are encouraged, with emphasis on the scarcity of water and electricity in the country and within the Kogelberg region. Regarding the logistic function, a large diversity of research projects is carried out in the Kogelberg region. The biosphere reserve is regularly used as a study site for universities, namely the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town and the University of Western Cape.

Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve, Morocco

The Advisory Committee commended Morocco on a competent and comprehensive periodic review of the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve. The Committee took note with satisfaction of the development and implementation of the "Plan Cadre RBA" (the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve Framework Plan). In line with the Plan, the biosphere reserve is today an important platform for bringing together a number of actors for promoting biodiversity conservation and development of the Arganeraie and for combating desertification. In this context, the biosphere reserve and the participating management authorities, academia, associations and NGOs, and the private sector are to be commended for bringing sustainable income opportunities to local communities, in particular women, and for their education and public awareness efforts and the good number of scientific studies conducted in the Arganeraie.

Nanji Islands Biosphere Reserve, China

The Advisory Committee thanked the Chinese authorities for submitting this well-prepared report on Nanji Islands Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1998). It noted especially the well-developed research activities and educational and training programmes as particular successes of the site. The Advisory Committee considered that while there are multiple management plans and policies in place, these seem to be functioning well.

The Advisory Committee noted that international cooperation with other biosphere reserves in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves is weak, and welcomed the initiative of Nanji Islands to request assistance from the MAB Secretariat to build these relationships. The Committee recommended to the MAB Secretariat to support enhanced international communication and cooperation with the biosphere reserve.

Luberon Lure Biosphere Reserve, France - Extension and renaming (former Luberon)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the extensive process and commended the participative consultation process using the ARDI methodology which has led to a proposal for the Luberon Biosphere Reserve to be extended and to become the Luberon Lure Biosphere Reserve. It particularly welcomed the quality of the information and data provided as well as the clear vision for sustainable development of the region. It recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as best practice.

Pays de Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais Biosphere Reserve, France - Extension and renaming (former Fontainebleau)

The Advisory Committee welcomed the comprehensive report, quality of the data and maps provided, and commended the participative and consultation process using the ARDI methodology which has led to a proposal for the Fontainebleau biosphere reserve to be extended, and renamed as Fontainebleau et du Gâtinais. It welcomed the efforts being made for the coordination and governance of the overall site and recognized the investments made for improving communication on the objectives of the biosphere reserve. It recommended that the periodic review process and report be shared amongst the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as best practice.

Russian Federation

The Advisory Committee made a general recommendation for the Russian Authorities to explore ways and means to increase the understanding of the concept of biosphere reserve and zonation scheme at the local and national levels, with the support of the UNESCO Office in Moscow and the MAB Secretariat, including the convening of a specific workshop dedicated to designing a zonation scheme. In addition, the following specific comments were made for each site:

Ubsunorskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian Federation as well as the map. However, it noted that the map does not clearly show the different zones of the biosphere reserve and noted that there is no transition area. The Advisory Committee therefore requested that the Russian Federation authorities resubmit a proposal with a transition area in order to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria, with a map and clear legends for the different zones, as well as to provide information on the management plan for the entire area and encouraged the Russian authorities to pursue efforts in cooperating with Mongolia for the establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve.

Teberda Biosphere Reserve

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian authorities as well as a map and noted that this site had been involved in the GLOCHAMORE project. However, it noted that the report lacked updated data and information and that the zonation was still not meeting the Statutory Framework with no transition area. It therefore requested to resubmit a proposal, with a transition area to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria, with a clear zonation map and indication of how the updated zonation process will be achieved.

Chernyje Zemli Biosphere Reserve

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information and map that had been received. However, the Committee noted that the site does not fulfil the requirements of the Statutory Framework since the zonation characteristic of a biosphere reserve does not exist. The Advisory Committee reiterated the recommendation made at the last Advisory Committee

meeting that the site was important for conservation but involvement of local communities was to be improved and cooperation with the adjacent Rostowsky Biosphere reserve should be strengthened. The Advisory Committee invited the local authorities and the manager of the site in cooperation with the Russian National Committee to work with the UNESCO Office in Moscow on the zoning in order to fulfil the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR.

Daursky Biosphere Reserve

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received as well as the improvements made since the last report, particularly with regards to educational and scientific activities and the possibility to develop sustainable tourism. However, the Advisory Committee noted that the recommendations formulated at the last meeting were still not addressed and that the site was still not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria, particularly that there was no transition area. Therefore the Advisory Committee requested that the Russian Federation authorities resubmit a proposal with a transition area, in order to fulfil the Statutory Framework criteria.

Moreover, the Advisory Committee invited the Russian Federation authorities to provide more information on the progress made in cooperation with China and Mongolia on the transboundary aspects of the management of this biosphere reserve.

Taimyrskiy Biosphere Reserve

The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information received from the Russian Federation authorities. It however noted that the recommendations made at the last meeting were still not addressed and that the site was not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. It therefore recommended to the Russian Federation authorities that the site be withdrawn since it seems from the report that the management authorities view this site as a conservation and research area, which the Advisory Committee endorsed, but that there appears to be no evidence that this site could fulfil the criteria of the Statutory Framework for a biosphere reserve, in particular the sustainable development function by including local communities in the buffer zone(s) and transition area(s).

Dunaisky Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report provided by the Ukrainian authorities. It noted that the document was not reporting on the cooperation with the Romanian side of the transboundary biosphere reserve. It therefore requested that the Ukrainian authorities provide a clear joint zonation map of the transboundary site with the Romanian part. The Advisory Committee requested that a joint periodic review report be prepared and submitted by the Ukrainian and Romanian authorities, with the support of the MAB Secretariat.