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Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP), decisions and recommendations of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC and other related matters

1. At the time of the meeting of the 22nd session of the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) from 31 May to 4 June 2010 the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) will be in its 27th month since its adoption at the 20th session of the MAB-ICC in Madrid, Spain in February 2008. A general overview of the status of implementation of MAP for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) is included in document SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3.

2. In reviewing the implementation of the MAP at its 21st session held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 25 to 29 May 2009, ICC made several decisions and recommendations. A summary of these decisions and recommendations, circulated to ICC Member and Observer States soon after the 21st session is included as annex 1 to this document. In document SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3 reference to selected decisions and recommendations, are made where appropriate; see for example progress reported on MAP target 9 in SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3.

3. This document aims, based on information provided in SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3, as well as on other working and information documents of the 22nd session of the ICC, to highlight selected aspects of the implementation of MAP and draw attention of ICC and Observer States to particular issues and problems with a view to improving implementation-effectiveness in the remaining years until 2013. This document will also be the basis for the oral presentation of the Secretary of the MAB Programme under item 6 of the provisional agenda.

4. Some of the other working documents of the 22nd session of the ICC where information related to the implementation of some important decisions and recommendations of the 21st session of the ICC could be found are:

- SC-10/CONF.201/10: Biosphere reserves as learning platforms for sustainable development including the future work of the task force on quality economies (see paragraph 1 of Annex 1);
- SC-10/CONF.201/9: Biosphere Reserves and relevant legislative frameworks at the national level (see paragraph 3 of Annex 1); and
- SC-10/CONF.201/8: Implementing the Madrid Action Plan Target 9: All biosphere reserves undertake periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations (see paragraphs 6 and 7 of Annex 1);

These documents consider their relevant themes quite extensively and hence will not be addressed herein.

5. The Secretariat's work to implement MAP has been significantly facilitated by regular information exchange with UNESCO Delegations of ICC and Observer Member States at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris that has been made feasible by the establishment of the International Support Group (ISG) by the 21st session of the ICC in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in 2009. During 2008-2009 the same mechanism operated as an informal support group. At the last ISG meeting held in Paris in March 2010 several participating Delegates expressed their interest to contribute towards the on-going work of the review and updating of statutory documents of MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) (see document SC-10/CONF.201/6). The Council may wish to explore ways and means to build on this interest when it discusses item 8 of the provisional agenda of the 22nd session of the ICC.

6. Information from reports of Member States (SC-10/CONF.201/4) and regional and thematic networks (SC-10/CONF.201/5) is likely to cover actions, activities and outcomes not included in the working documents prepared by the Secretariat for the 22nd session of the ICC. Such new information will be however integrated into the table of progress in the implementation of MAP that constitutes the major part of document SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3.

7. In accordance with the decision of the 21st session of the ICC (see paragraph 8 of Annex 1 of this document) the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted a resolution that called upon UNESCO Member States and the Director-General of UNESCO to take specific actions to strengthen the MAB Programme and its WNBR, with a particular focus on promoting the role of biosphere reserves as learning places for sustainable development. The new Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova has, since she took office in November 2009, given considerable prominence to strengthening the work of MAB and the potential role biosphere reserves can play in addressing global challenges such as sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity loss. Following her guidance the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) of UNESCO included MAB and WNBR, as well as biodiversity issues as priorities for discussions with UNESCO's strategic partners such as the EU as well as with some private sector partners. These opportunities are being pursued with the objective of launching concrete projects and activities addressing the attainment of specific MAP targets.

8. In accordance with UNESCO's overall priorities, special efforts are being made to develop projects for Africa. The new phase of the ERAIFT project for 2009-2013 is now underway and in addition to the 81 Africans from 15 countries already trained at post-graduate levels up to 2008 an additional 90-100 Africans will be trained on integrated land and resources management in the tropics until 2013. The ERAIFT model has been replicated to West Africa with a feasibility mission to create a similar institution in Cote d'Ivoire. The current phase of ERAIFT includes more international activities such as those to be undertaken through the South-South Co-operation MOU signed between ERAIFT, the Federal University of Para, Belém, Brazil and MAB-Indonesia during the last session of the MAB-ICC in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in May 2009. During 2009-2013, ERAIFT is also expected to cater to English-speaking African countries through short courses and similar modalities. Other capacity building activities related information including the winners of the MAB Young Scientist Awards for 2010 as well as the winners of the two (2) special awards offered by Austria in connection with the International Year of Biodiversity - 2010 (see paragraph 10 below) will be considered under item 12 of the provisional agenda of the 22nd session of the ICC.

9. An AfriMAB meeting scheduled for mid-May 2010 in Madagascar had to be postponed due to unavoidable reasons. An African Biosphere Biocarbon Forum, convened during 20-23 April in Brazzaville, under the auspices of HE the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Forest Economy of Congo and the Chair of the MAB-ICC since the 20th session of the ICC in Madrid, Spain in February 2008, Mr Henri Djombo, generated considerable interest for biosphere reserve projects addressing carbon sequestration and other climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. These and other MAB and WNBR activities that are being developed within the framework of the UNESCO Strategy on Climate Change are described in document SC-10/CONF.201/19. Two African countries, namely

Ethiopia and Zimbabwe will have their first biosphere reserve nominations considered by the 22nd session of the MAB-ICC when it convenes at UNESCO Headquarters from 31 May to 4 June 2010.

10. 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) and the MAB Secretariat of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences (SC/EES) led the organization of the IYB launch activities and the organization of a Science-Policy Conference on Biodiversity during 20-29 January 2010 at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris). Document SC-10/CONF.201/18 describes the outcomes of the Science-Policy Conference as well as other activities of IYB in which UNESCO including the MAB Secretariat expects to play a key role.

11. 2011 has been declared the International Year of Forests (IYF) and the MAB Secretariat is exploring a range of collaborative activities with others in and outside of UNESCO to signify MAB and WNBR contributions for conservation and sustainable use of forests. Soliciting the continuing support of HE Mr Henri Djombo of Congo, the current Chair of MAB-ICC whose term ends at the time when the 22nd session of the ICC begins on 31 May 2010, to support MAB and WNBR entry into IYF activities for 2011 may be desirable given Mr Djombo's high standing in both global and Congo Basin Forest circles.

12. The new network of coastal and small island biosphere reserves for climate change and sustainable development launched at the last session of the ICC in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in May 2009 is having its first meeting in early September 2010, once again in the Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve in the Republic of Korea. The IberoMAB network will have its first international conference in Mexico in mid-November 2010 only a few weeks before the Cancun Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in early-to-mid-December 2010. The IberoMAB Conference will try to transmit a message to the UNFCCC event, via the Mexican Delegation for the latter event, the importance of using biosphere reserves as sites for experimenting with mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change.

13. As shown in the table in document SC-10/CONF.201/4, individual biosphere reserves, Member States, MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO have led responsibilities for well over 50% of the actions defined in MAP for the timely achievement of the 31 targets. Hence, ways and means of building national capacity and partnerships to enable National Commissions for UNESCO, MAB National Committees and individual biosphere reserves to mobilize public-private partnerships for the implementation of MAP must be promoted. Initiatives such as that of the German National Commission for UNESCO to strengthen capacity of five (5) African National Commissions for UNESCO (see target n° 18 in SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3) need to be commended and replicated in all parts of the world with the help of main donor nations. The range of iterative training workshops held in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region to improve understanding of MAP and build capacity for its implementation were of significant value.

14. An area where National Commissions for UNESCO and MAB National Committees can greatly contribute towards improvement in the implementation of MAP is by enabling the Secretariat to receive timely and precise information on activities, assessments and other efforts to implement MAP at the level of biosphere reserves. Response rates to questionnaires sent to countries to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Seville Strategy (see target 1) have been disappointingly low. Information flow on national and biosphere reserve level activities to the Secretariat will be critical as the Secretariat attempts to gather data on target specific actions and activities in preparation for the interim evaluation of MAP scheduled for end of 2010 (see document SC-10/CONF.201/14 on mid-term evaluation of MAP). The importance of functionally effective MAB National Committees for the timely implementation of MAP (see MAP target 7 in SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3) needs to be stressed. Many MAB National Committees have either been newly constituted (e.g. Ethiopia) or are undergoing significant change (Ecuador) in order to improve their functional effectiveness as required by MAP Target 7. Nevertheless in many countries MAB National Committees remain weak. One of the

documents under item 8 of the provisional agenda outlines measures for establishing and developing a functionally effective MAB National Committee for consideration by the MAB-ICC and for replacing the current version of the Guidelines for the establishment of MAB National Committees which is quite outdated.

15. The communication strategy and clearing house mechanism (MAP target 3) activities have progressed (see SC-10/CONF.201/7 for details). The web-based platform for enabling exchange of information and experience among communities of practice being tested for the European region will be a critical experiment whose outcome will have a significant bearing on the implementation of MAP. The lack of a full-time dedicated staff and earmarked financial resources for pursuing MAP target 3 on communication and clearing house mechanism is a serious constraint at present facing the implementation of MAP. ICC Member and Observer States may consider seconding staff and/or providing extra-budgetary funding via appropriate UNESCO modalities to assist the Secretariat in this regard.

16. The Deputy Secretary-General of MAB-China has been seconded to work with the MAB Secretariat and is expected to start work during the month of May 2010 and will facilitate co-operation between MAB-China, the Secretariat and selected regional and thematic networks. As a first step a symposium to re-orient MAB urban ecosystem activities to meet the needs of MAP target 23 is planned for late October 2010.

17. One of the Delegates attending the last meeting of the ISG held at UNESCO Headquarters in March 2010 (see also paragraph 5 above) raised the question about the total amount of funding needed to implement MAP in its totality. The Secretary of MAB while acknowledging that there has been no attempt made to estimate such a total cost expressed the hope that National Commissions for UNESCO, MAB National Committees and biosphere reserve authorities will use the plan as a framework for dialogue within their own countries and with bi- and multi-lateral donors and private sector interests to mobilize the necessary financial and human resources to implement MAP effectively. The European Union and Flemish Funds-in-Trust Projects benefit the ERAIFT and the SUMAMAD projects, respectively. At the country level, Spain for example has set aside 80 million Euros for the implementation of MAP; internationally Spain also provides voluntary contributions to UNESCO's MAB account for specific projects benefiting UNESCO Member States in the Ibero-American network and a few selected countries in the African region. Countries like India provide a substantial amount of funding for the work of MAB and biosphere reserves of India. The Republic of Korea has provided regular sustainable source financing for East Asian Biosphere Reserves since 1994. Israel makes modest yet regular contributions to the MAB account at UNESCO Headquarters for supporting activities of the dryland ecosystem network. The Statutes of the MAB-ICC, under article IX, paragraph 3, provides for interested ICC and Observer Member States to contribute towards the implementation of MAP.

18. Building partnerships and mobilizing human and financial resources from private sector groups needs substantially more attention. The German National Commission for UNESCO has been successful in mobilizing funds from the Danone Group in Germany to biosphere reserves projects in Germany. The UNESCO-MAB/STAR Alliance partnership during 2007-2009 has enabled travel of MAB and biosphere reserve representatives from all parts of the world. MAP targets 25-31 call for a range of innovative partnerships to be developed which would require assistance from all Member States for implementation at national level, building of private-public partnerships will continue to provide more opportunities than building similar partnerships at regional and global levels.

19. The ICC is invited to review, comment and criticize as appropriate the information reported in this document and in document SC-10/CONF.201/INF.3 and also provide suggestions and advice for improving the implementation of MAP in the remaining years up to 2013.

ANNEX 1

Main Conclusions and Recommendations of the Twenty-First Session of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, Jeju KAL Hotel, Grand Ballroom (Jeju, Republic of Korea) 25 - 29 May 2009

This document contains a summary list of the main conclusions and recommendations contained in the final report of the 21st session of the MAB-ICC. Kindly note that conclusions and recommendations specific to newly designated biosphere reserves and extensions to existing biosphere reserves have been communicated directly to concerned MAB National Committees.

1. In view of the importance of economic issues of biosphere reserves, it was suggested that the work on quality economies in biosphere reserves be reinforced and the development of statutory frameworks for regional networks of biosphere reserves be given due consideration in efforts to review and update that of the WNBR. The Council called for action from the Secretariat to improve the visibility of MAB and WNBR to levels enjoyed by the World Heritage inscription; while the Council recognized the important role MAB National Committees play, they also called attention to the need for management committees at the individual biosphere reserve level. Furthermore the Council agreed that closer links between the work of WNBR and ESD could help in positioning WNBR as a significant tool to achieve UNESCO targets for the remaining years (2010-2014) of the DESD. (para 12)
2. The Council decided to set a new deadline of 30 September 2009 for receipt of responses on the questionnaire on the assessment of the achievements of the Seville Strategy as required by MAP target 1 and action 1.1, strongly urging all ICC and Observer Member States to facilitate the Secretariat's efforts to improve the response rate. National Commissions for UNESCO and regional/thematic networks should be called upon to support the Secretariat efforts to optimize the response rate to the questionnaire. (para 15)
3. After reviewing document SC-09/CONF.207/6 that outlines the first phase of a study involving a survey sent to all MAB Committees (SC-09/CONF.207/INF.4) to collect information on the extent to which the biosphere reserve concept is included in national legislation frameworks, the Council requested the Secretariat to make information available from different countries that have incorporated the concept of biosphere reserves into the national legislative instruments and processes. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a document for the next session of the ICC, which would group countries that have tried to integrate the biosphere reserve concept into various categories of legislations, for example nature conservation, environmental protection, sustainable development and provide brief descriptions of the outcome and lessons learned through such national efforts. (para 16)
4. The Council welcomed and adopted the integrated strategy for communications and the clearinghouse mechanism described in document SC-09/CONF.207/7 which aims at increasing the visibility of the WNBR, improving the access to information for biosphere reserves and facilitating interaction between biosphere reserves. (para 17)
5. The Council requested the Secretariat to inform Member States of the dates and the documents sufficiently in advance of the dates of the meetings of the International Support Group (ISG) to enable Member States to consult with national experts as appropriate in the preparation for the information exchange sessions effectively. (para 18)
6. The Council called upon the Secretariat to prepare a list of pre-Seville (1995) sites and an assessment of the number of sites in that set which are unlikely to be re-designed to meet the Seville and MAP expectations as defined in MAP target 9 for submission to the consideration of the 22nd session of the Council. (para 62)

7. The Council adopted the recommendation of the Bureau that both the biosphere nomination and the periodic review forms required simplification and revision. The Council suggested that the revisions of both forms be undertaken, with the assistance of an electronic working group. The time interval for periodic review should also be reduced from 10 to every 4-6 years. The Secretariat must explore the feasibility of providing technical support for capacity building in conducting the periodic review process in co-operation with regional networks and other appropriate partners. (para 63)
8. The Council agreed that it accepted the submission of a draft resolution on the promotion of biosphere reserves as learning platforms and places for sustainable development in principle and invited willing ICC Member Permanent Delegations such as Madagascar and Viet Nam to explore with the Secretariat the feasibility of preparing and submitting such a draft resolution to the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference in consultation with all other ICC and interested Observer Member States. (para 66)
9. There was broad consensus on renaming the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme as "MAB Council" removing the word 'Coordinating'. Some ICC Members felt that referring to the Council explicitly as an "Intergovernmental Council" could facilitate the participation of Government Ministries and Departments. (para 69)
10. Council members proposed that a time-limit for periodic reviews – a five-year interval with one year margin must be prescribed in the Statutes. (para 70)
11. The role of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves as an "independent" body was strongly supported. There was some discussion on increasing interactions between this body and the Council, perhaps through the representation of the IACBR at the Council sessions. (para 71)
12. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare up-to-date versions of the following three documents to facilitate the implementation of MAP: (i) Statutes of the MAB-ICC; (ii) Rules of Procedures of the MAB-ICC; and (iii) the Statutes of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, for discussion and finalization at its 22nd session of the Council. It also asked the Secretariat to prepare for the same session revisions to the Statutory Framework of the WNBRC as well as a document on the implementation of MAB and WNBRC activities at the national level, including guidelines for establishing MAB National Committees. (para 73)
13. The Council adopted a text on the "MAB Programme for Sustainable Development" that highlights the importance of ecosystem-specific networks on mountains, coastal zones, and small islands, and MAB research, capacity-building and educational projects in marine ecosystems, forests, drylands, urban areas, wetlands, and agro-ecosystems. Networking at ecosystem, regional and sub-regional levels and context specific sustainable development learning in biosphere reserve land/seascapes shall constitute the two principal MAB modalities for supporting sustainable development in Member States. (para 74 and Annex 4)
14. The Council approved the proposed approach and timetable for the first evaluation of MAP in 2010, and requested the Secretariat to submit a progress report to the 22nd session of the Council. (para 76)
15. The Council requested the Secretariat to make a comparison between 2004 and 2009 concerning the evolution in the total number of biosphere reserves, the total areas they cover, as well as the total budgets allocated to MAB under the UNESCO Regular Programme. This comparative table, to be broken down according to regions, should be sent to all ICC Member States and Observer States attending the 21st session of the Council in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea as well as any other countries that may request it. (para 77)

16. The Council endorsed the Secretariat's initiative to carry out a feasibility study on the future legal status of ERAIFT in order to ensure ERAIFT's autonomy and sustainability. (para 78)
17. The MAB-ICC decided that the age limit of candidates for the MAB Young Scientists Award shall be fixed at 40 years of age for all applicants; to be eligible for the MAB Young Scientists Award, the proposed research projects shall have to be undertaken in a designated biosphere reserve or a potential biosphere reserve; the number of candidates that each MAB National Committee can submit each year to the MAB Secretariat shall be reduced from three to two. (para 82)
18. The Council requested the Secretariat to investigate, in collaboration with selected UNESCO Chairs, appropriate UNESCO Category II Centres and other partner institutions, the feasibility to launch a collaborative programme for capacity building in sustainable development research and development in biosphere reserves that would generate well-designed and content-rich case study materials and other pedagogic resources during the last five years (2005-2014) of the DESD. (para 87)
19. Many ICC Delegates expressed support for the South-South Cooperation Network for the Humid Tropics and expressed the wish that similar networks be considered for other ecosystems of the world. ICC Delegates of countries such as Sri Lanka indicated the wish to be part of the South-South Cooperation Network for the Humid Tropics. (para 89)
20. The Council decided unanimously to create a Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Contributing to Action on Climate Change and Sustainable Development under the auspices of Spain and the Republic of Korea as one of the MAB Programme thematic networks. (para 95)
21. The Council decided that it should meet every year to decide on new entries to the World Network as well as on other important matters such as extensions/modifications to biosphere reserves already included in the World Network, periodic review of biosphere reserves, MAB Young Scientists Awards, Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management, etc. The Council decided that in the future the venue for its annual sessions would alternate between Paris and interested Member States and that its 22nd session would be convened at UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) during 2010. The Council requested that the Secretariat in consultation with Members of the Bureau propose dates for the 22nd session of the Council in 2010 to all ICC Members before 1st December 2009. (para 97)
22. Recognizing that the 40th anniversary of the MAB Programme will be commemorated in 2011, the Council recommended that the Secretariat consult with ICC and Observer Member States, including their Delegations at UNESCO Headquarters, to explore interest among Member States to host the 23rd session of the MAB-ICC and associated events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of MAB. (para 98)
23. The Council instructed the Secretariat to co-operate with the Indonesian authorities in organizing a successful first meeting of the important South-South Co-operation initiative in 2010 in connection with the International Year of Biodiversity. (para 99)