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Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda: World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR):

a. Implementing the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) 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

1. At its last session held in the Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve, Republic of Korea from 25 to 29 May 2009, the ICC 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.

2. MAP target 9 foresees that **all** biosphere reserves would have undertaken periodic review and related actions to update zonation, management and other changes to meet Seville and MAP requirements and recommendations by 2013, with 2010 serving as an interim time frame to assess progress. MAP action 9.1 calls upon MAB National Committees, with support of Regional Networks to screen new biosphere reserve proposals as well as devise schemes to support periodic review processes in view of the evolution of the mission and vision contained in MAP, in particular through field visits by teams of regional and national experts, in co-operation with UNESCO Regional, Cluster and National Offices as appropriate. Thematic networks and partner organizations like IUCN may be called upon to assist and contribute to the implementation of this action. The success indicator for this target, to be measured in 2010 and 2013, is the number of biosphere reserves that have undertaken necessary steps to update themselves to a post-Seville and MAP vision. The implication of a complete implementation of MAP target 9 is that at the end of 2013 there would not be any sites in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) that have not undertaken periodic review in accordance with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR and that do not meet the Seville Strategy and MAP requirements and recommendations.

3. At the time of the writing of this document, i.e. 6 May 2010, the statistics concerning the pre- and post-Seville sites with regard to whether or not they have undertaken periodic review, are as follows:

- Of the 553 sites currently included in WNBR, 326 sites were included in 1996 or before and 227 sites were included in WNBR after 1996, respectively. Although the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR were both adopted by UNESCO in 1995, the proposals for biosphere reserves submitted in 1995 and approved by the Bureau of the MAB-ICC in 1996 could not be expected to have addressed the changes introduced by these two statutory documents. Hence 1996 has been taken as the cut-off point for enumerating pre- and post-Seville sites in WNBR;
- Of the 326 pre-Seville sites, 212 have undertaken periodic review. Of the remaining 114 sites that have never undertaken a periodic review, 47 are in one country, namely the USA. The US Delegation to UNESCO in Paris has indicated to the Secretariat that its

Government's efforts to re-engage with the MAB Programme since that country's return to UNESCO in 2003 are due to be given special attention in 2010. The Secretariat is hopeful that the undertaking of periodic review of the US biosphere reserves will be high on the agenda of the US National MAB Programme when it is revived during the 2010-2011 biennium;

- Of the 212 pre-Seville biosphere reserves which undertook a periodic review, 100 were deemed as not fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria of the WNBR while the other 112 were considered as generally fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. When a biosphere reserve is assessed to be 'generally fulfilling Statutory Framework criteria', it means that the site serves the three functions of biosphere reserves but improvements could be made with regard to zonation, particularly the definition of a transition area, level of participation by local communities in management and/or the overall co-ordination and consolidation of conservation and development activities throughout the biosphere reserve;
- Of the 100 sites deemed as not fulfilling criteria only 31 responded to recommendations made by the Bureau of the MAB-ICC on changes needed to be implemented to comply with the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR adopted by UNESCO in 1995. Of the 31 sites, nine (9) did not implement the changes recommended by the Bureau; of the 22 which implemented recommendations only two (2) are now meeting the criteria;
- Of the 227 sites that are post-Seville, i.e. post-1996, seven (7) have undertaken periodic review. Of the seven (7), four (4) are fully meeting the Statutory Framework criteria while three (3) others are not. None of the seven (7) sites however have so far responded to the recommendations of the Bureau transmitted to the Member States on the basis of the periodic review reports;
- In summary, of the 326 pre-Seville sites, only 114 can be considered as generally fulfilling the Statutory Framework criteria. Many of the other 227 post-Seville sites are currently undertaking or will be undertaking their periodic reviews in the coming years. Since these sites were proposed when the Statutory Framework of the WNBR had already been adopted by UNESCO in 1995, more than 90% of the 227 sites were proposed with the three zones, a mix of conservation, development and research and knowledge building activities, and the presence of resident human communities in buffer zones and/or transition areas of biosphere reserves. Nevertheless, the periodic review process will help to identify constraints and build on opportunities for using these biosphere reserves as effective learning platforms for sustainable development as visualized by MAP of 2008-2013.

4. The Secretariat has communicated with the MAB National Committees and MAB Focal Points in UNESCO Member States to request them to supply updated information on the status of implementation of the periodic review recommendations as well as future plans to undertake periodic review exercises. Responses from MAB National Committees and MAB Focal Points are being received on a regular basis and an oral update on the status on this subject will be provided at the time of the 22nd session of the ICC to be held at UNESCO Headquarters from 31 May to 4 June 2010. One important lesson that has emerged from responses received thus far is that there is a time-lag of about 5-7 years from 1995 when the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework of the WNBR changes were introduced and the full understanding of the implications of the changes for biosphere reserve design and management at the level of practice.

5. The periodic review process has resulted in withdrawals by the Member States concerned with eight (8) biosphere reserves as shown in the table below. When the ICC meets for its 22nd session from 31 May to 4 June 2010 it will be informed about the UK MAB National Committee's decision to withdraw UK's fifth site, i.e. Taynish, from WNBR. Reasons given by Member States referred to in the table below for withdrawal of a site from WNBR predominantly related to the lack of a resident population and the lack of support or interest from nearby residential communities to become part of a redesigned biosphere reserve that will incorporate community lands and other human inhabited areas into a buffer zone and/or transition area of the 'new' biosphere reserve. In the case of the Southwest Biosphere Reserve of Australia, the Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment, in his letter to the MAB

Secretariat expressed the view that efforts devoted to preparing status reports for the biosphere reserve could be better directed to implementing conservation programmes within the national park. Cost considerations in undertaking a thorough periodic review fully involving all stakeholders may be a critical factor in decisions whether or not to attempt the transformation of pre-Seville to post-Seville sites in selected cases.

Country	Biosphere Reserve	Year of withdrawal	Periodic Review
Norway	North-east Svalbard	1997	Conducted but not submitted
UK	Caerlawaerock Claish Moss Rum St. Kilda	2002	Conducted but not formally submitted
Bulgaria	Maritchini Ezera	2002	NA
Australia	South west	2002	NA
Germany	Bayerischer Wald	2007	Submitted in 2002

6. Based on the figures given in paragraph 3 above, 212 of the 326 pre-Seville, i.e. pre-1996, biosphere reserves have either never undertaken periodic review or do not satisfy important Statutory Framework criteria of 1995 to be retained as part of WNBR. The feasibility of transforming a pre-Seville to a post-Seville site has been demonstrated in places such as Camargue (France), La Campana-Peneuelas (Chile) and Braunton Burrows (UK). The information contained in the table in paragraph 5 above points to the fact that some States are arriving at rational decisions to withdraw pre-Seville sites, which they consider unchangeable into the post-Seville model, from WNBR. Nevertheless, there are countries that are concerned about losing their biosphere reserve status assigned to sites during pre-Seville times which still serve important conservation and/or research functions though their prospects for including residential communities and contributing towards regional sustainability through design changes appear remote. At the last session of the Council in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, on 25-29 May 2010, the Austrian Delegate called ICC's consideration for the creation of a separate network of research sites based on pre-Seville sites (and perhaps addition of new sites) that have contributed significant research and knowledge towards understanding and addressing global environmental and conservation issues.

7. Some countries that have a Federal Government structure with decision making on zoning and land-use planning fully decentralized to provincial levels, e.g. *Cantons* in Switzerland are encountering specific difficulties in redesigning pre-Seville sites to post-Seville and MAP design criteria. Given that the inclusion of buffer zones and transition areas in these countries requires full buy-in of the local communities and their administrations the transformation of pre- to post-Seville sites may have to proceed along several steps, each of which may benefit from the endorsement of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves and/or the MAB-ICC in order to have the support of communities and administrations that would be part of extensions in subsequent steps. Both the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves and the ICC may have to consider how such proposals for extensions could be evaluated and supported in a manner so that the completion of the full transformation of pre- to post-Seville sites could be completed before 2013.

8. The lessons learned in the compilation of statistics, analyses of periodic review reports and requests from Member States for withdrawal of sites provide insights and lessons that could be fed into the discussions of the electronic working group that has now been set up in accordance with the decision of the 21st session of the ICC in 2009. The working group will be co-ordinated by the Chair of the French MAB Committee, Prof. Robert Barbault, and has two Members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (from Palau and USA, respectively) as well as others from the following countries: Benin, Brazil, Germany,

Lebanon, Republic of Korea and South Africa. The Secretariat would like to start with a small group and expand participation over time and will distribute the outcome of the group's work on a regular basis.

9. The ICC is invited to consider making the following decisions and recommendations:
- Reiterating that the end of 2013 as defined in MAP shall be the final date for all transformations of pre-Seville sites to meet post-Seville and MAP design criteria to be completed by Member States. Sites that have not effectively undergone this transformation by end of 2013 will no longer be considered part of WNBR;
 - Inviting Member States to take the necessary steps to transform pre-Seville sites to post-Seville ones learning from successful cases in countries such as Chile, France and UK, and also learn from and follow examples, as appropriate, set by decisions of selected countries to withdraw sites where such transformation is considered not desirable or feasible by local communities and concerned provincial and national authorities;
 - Requesting the Secretariat in co-operation with interested Member States to study the case for creating a network of "MAB Research Sites" drawing from the set of pre-Seville sites as well as potential of new ones to recognize their contributions to research and knowledge on global environmental and conservation issues and problems, and submit a report to the 23rd session of the ICC in 2011;
 - Requesting the Secretariat that to ensure that the electronic working group set up to revise nomination and periodic review forms as recommended by the 21st session of the ICC held in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 25 to 29 May 2009 takes into account all insights and lessons outlined in this document and others that may arise from the discussion of this document at the 22nd session of the ICC, and submit a progress report to 23rd session of the ICC in 2011.