

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL OF  
THE MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME**

Eighteenth Session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris,  
Room IV (Fontenoy Building)  
25-29 October 2004

**FINAL REPORT**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Convening of the session**

1. The eighteenth session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) for the Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 25 to 29 October 2004.

2. Participants included representatives of the following Members of the ICC elected by the UNESCO General Conference: Austria, Belarus, Benin, Colombia, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia and United Republic of Tanzania.

3. In addition, observers from the following Member States were present: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Eritrea, Finland, France, Haiti, India, Lebanon, Madagascar, Moldova, Namibia, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela. The Holy See was also represented.

4. The following United Nations international organizations were represented: The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The following international non-governmental organizations were present: the International Social Science Council (ISSC), the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE). The full list of participants is presented as Annex 1 to this report.

5. The significant contributions that Dr Michel Batisse, who passed away on 27 September 2004, to the MAB Programme and, in particular, biosphere reserves, were recognized and celebrated by several individuals, such as the Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO and the outgoing Chair of MAB-ICC (see paragraphs 7 and 14). The ICC requested

that the Secretariat work together with the Bureau to set up a scheme in memory of Dr Batisse whereby efforts to manage biosphere reserves in line with the recommendations of the Seville Strategy could be internationally recognized and rewarded periodically.

## **1.2 Opening of the session**

6. Mr Driss Fassi of Morocco, the outgoing Chairperson of the MAB ICC opened the Council session by inviting Mr Andras Szollosi-Nagy, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences and the representative of the UNESCO Director-General, to deliver his opening speech.

7. Mr Szollosi-Nagy warmly welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura. He stressed that MAB, together with IHP and IOC were longstanding intergovernmental programmes of UNESCO that had contributed significantly to promoting scientific cooperation over the last several decades. Mr Szollosi-Nagy paid tribute in this context to the memory of the late Michel Batisse as the father of the IHP and MAB Programmes and for his tremendous contributions to the work and objectives of UNESCO. Mr Szollosi-Nagy stressed that while IHP and IOC had a strong emphasis on sciences dealing with the physical environment, MAB on the other hand, due to its historical links with the International Biological Programme (IBP) of the 1960s and its position in UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences, had always been the main strength of UNESCO's efforts to promote scientific cooperation in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management. He noted that the MAB Secretariat was taking special initiatives to encourage UNESCO-wide collaboration to establish a biodiversity working group which included IHP, IOC, the World Heritage Centre and others. The purpose of this working group was to highlight and promote the significant contributions that UNESCO was making towards achieving global biodiversity conservation priorities. Mr Szollosi-Nagy also recalled that MAB and IHP had cooperated very closely on several joint initiatives since the launch in 2002 of "water and associated ecosystems" as the principal priority for the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector until 2007. He invited delegates to think about which priorities the IHP-MAB cooperation could focus on during the 2006-2007 biennium with regard to freshwater biodiversity as well as management of natural and man-made fresh water ecosystems in and around biosphere reserves.

8. Mr Szollosi-Nagy stressed that UNESCO Biosphere Reserves should be promoted to occupy a special niche as laboratories for sustainable development as we enter the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) in 2005, for which UNESCO was expected to be the lead agency. He also emphasized that biosphere reserves provided interesting combinations of nature and culture and thus provided a good testing ground for the search for sustainable solutions for culture-nature interactions. He therefore invited the MAB Council to issue a strong statement in support of the role of biosphere reserves in sustainable development to the relevant authorities in UNESCO as well as in the broader United Nations community.

## **1.3 Report of the outgoing Chairperson**

9. Mr Driss Fassi welcomed the new and the former Council Members as well as the observers and representatives from international organizations. Furthermore, he welcomed warmly Mr N. Ishwaran as the new director of the Division of Ecological Sciences. He emphasized particularly Mr Ishwaran's experience within the UNESCO World Heritage Centre as being very useful for the MAB Programme. He reported to the Council on the decisions of the last two Bureau meetings, particularly on the nomination of new biosphere

reserves and the periodic review of existing biosphere reserves. With regard to new biosphere reserves he noted that 18 new ones had been approved in 2002 and 18 evaluated, while in 2003 18 new ones had been approved and 21 evaluated. In this period, three (3) new countries established for the first time biosphere reserves: Dominican Republic, Slovenia and Yemen. Concerning the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, Mr Fassi mentioned that the Prize in 2003 was awarded jointly to the Centro de Ecologia (Venezuela) and to Peter Johan Schei, a Norwegian environmental specialist. Mr Fassi also mentioned the Young Scientists Awards as a very important training component of the Programme.

10. Mr Fassi mentioned several events in which the MAB Programme was well represented: the International Years on Ecotourism and on Mountains (in 2002) as well as the IUCN World Parks Congress held in Durban in September 2003. In all these events, MAB had a high profile, and Mr Fassi emphasized that most protected areas in the world are coming closer to the biosphere reserve concept with respect to zoning. Mr Fassi stressed the importance of biosphere reserves in the approach for sustainable development.

11. Mr Fassi discussed the working of the regional networks, including the EuroMAB network, which met in Rome, and the IberoMAB network, which met in Brazil in 2002. For Africa, Mr Fassi reported on the newly established MAB/UNESCO/UNEP/GEF project on conservation and sustainable use of dry lands in six West African countries. Mr Fassi mentioned as well the SeaBRnet network as a good example of cooperation in the Asian region, while the ArabMAB network was primarily focused on topics related to desertification. Finally, the interregional REDBIOS network was mentioned, which is known as the East Atlantic Biosphere Reserve Network in the Macaronesian Region. Mr Fassi stressed that this network brought together countries from the Arab region, the European region and the African region, and was unique in that it encompassed islands, coastal areas and continental areas with similar climates. He said that this network exemplified a turning point in the establishment of functional sub-networks that covered a biogeographical region cutting across geographical regions. Mr Fassi reported on different seminars, such as the desertification and rehabilitation of degraded areas seminar held in Syria (2002), the mountains in arid lands and quality economy seminars held in Germany (2002), the urban forum held in the United Kingdom (2002) and the traditional knowledge for modern sustainable use of ecosystems in arid lands seminar held in Russia (2004).

12. Concerning the meeting of the five Chairpersons of the Intergovernmental Programmes of UNESCO, Mr Fassi reported that they agreed on the priority of water and associated ecosystems and to work jointly on these issues, for example on the Volga basin. The Director-General of UNESCO met the five Chairpersons on 8 September 2003. It was highlighted that biosphere reserves were the tool for the ecosystem approach and sustainable development, which was stressed by the Johannesburg summit. It was mentioned that the topic of the priority water and ecosystems be retained without the word “associated”, in order to avoid a hierarchy between the terms. Furthermore, the identification and the strengthening of links between biodiversity and cultural diversity had been stressed. Of course, the need for research and training within these programmes had been stressed to the Director-General.

13. Mr Fassi mentioned that working within the MAB Programme was a declaration of faith that once adopted lasted a lifetime. He said that the concept was evolutive and needed constant vigilance in implementing its goals.

14. Mr Fassi mentioned in particular the enormous work of Mr Michel Batisse, who had recently passed away. He said that Mr Batisse committed his life to the work of the MAB

Programme, and in this context he asked for one minute of silence by the audience to honour the work of Mr Batisse.

15. Finally, Mr Fassi gave full support to the new Secretary of MAB, Mr Ishwaran, whom he had known very well for a long time when he served at UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. He closed his speech with good wishes for the future and thanked particularly the people of the MAB Secretariat and their commitment for the implementation of the Programme. In conclusion, Mr Fassi stated that all members of the MAB family "are well infected by the virus of sustainable development".

#### **1.4 Election of the Bureau of the MAB Council**

16. The Council elected the following officers to constitute the Bureau of the MAB Council:

##### **Chairperson:**

Mr Gonzalo Halffter Salas (Mexico)

##### **Vice-Chairpersons:**

Mr Georg Grabherr (Austria) (represented by Mr Günter Köck)

Mr Daniel Amlalo (Ghana) (Rapporteur)

Mr Chung Il Choi (Republic of Korea)

Mr Valery Neronov (Russian Federation)

Mr Nouri Soussi (Tunisia).

#### **1.5 Organization of the Council Session**

17. The Council adopted its agenda as provided in Annex 2.

#### **1.6 Report of the Secretary on programmes and activities since MAB-ICC-17**

18. The Secretary of the MAB Council presented briefly his report, which was submitted to the Council as working document SC-04/CONF.2004/11. Mr Ishwaran first recalled that, since the last session of the MAB Council (April 2002), the former Secretary, Mr Peter Bridgewater, had taken the position of Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. During the interim of about a year, the Division of Ecological Sciences and MAB Secretariat had been effectively led by Ms Mireille Jardin. During that time, the first MAB-GEF project on biosphere reserves was launched (see paragraph 20) and the preparation of a major international Conference on biodiversity to be organized by the French authorities in January 2005 at UNESCO was agreed upon.

19. The Secretary referred to major international events of direct importance to MAB, in particular the sixth (2002) and seventh (2004) meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) (2002) and the Fifth IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa (2003). He noted that the CBD had set a 2010 target to minimize the loss of biodiversity and had as well defined a global work programme on protected areas, which included UNESCO/MAB as one of the global partners. The WSSD had launched a type-2 partnership on the survival of great apes (GRASP) in which UNESCO was playing a major role, together with UNEP, NGOs and Member States. The Durban Congress focused on the theme "benefits beyond boundaries", particularly relevant to the biosphere reserve concept.

20. Mr Ishwaran stressed the importance of the six-country GEF Project in West Africa, which was officially launched in January 2004 at UNESCO, by a round table of the Ministers of the six countries concerned (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal). This round table underlined the importance of biosphere reserves to serve as operational sites for NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development).

21. Regarding the role of MAB in research, monitoring and assessment, the Secretary referred to initiatives such as *Diversitas*, emerging ecosystems GTOS (Global Terrestrial Observing System), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and the newly launched International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development, with which MAB was associated, as well as BRIM (Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring), which would be discussed under a separate item of the agenda.

22. Since the last session of the Council, 34 new biosphere reserves had been approved, bringing the World Network for Biosphere Reserves to 440 in 97 countries. Transboundary biosphere reserves (TBR) were receiving increasing support, with the first TBR established in Africa ("W", between Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger). Several were in preparation, such as Polesie in Europe, and Mount Elgon and Djoudj/Dwelling in Africa. Fifty-one periodic review reports had also been prepared and studied, and recommendations on 39 of them transmitted to the Member States concerned.

23. Regarding quality economies, the Secretary highlighted the major achievements and the pending issues that would be discussed by the special Task Force session to take place on Wednesday 27 October.

24. Capacity building activities had continued to be a major focus of MAB, in particular through the UNESCO-Cousteau Ecotechnie Chair Programme and the ERAIFT School in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Twenty-one MAB Young Scientists Awards were distributed during 2002-2003.

25. Many regional activities had taken place since the last ICC, in the framework of regional and thematic networks, which would be described in detail under item 7 of the agenda.

26. The Secretary informed the Council on staffing issues, announcing the appointment of three new staff members in Paris, Dakar and Moscow, and the separation of two associate experts.

27. The Secretary ended his report by paying a special tribute to Michel Batisse and requesting the Council and its Bureau to reflect on the best ways to honour his memory, suggesting the creation of a special biosphere reserve award or, as was suggested by one Council observer, a special publication on his contributions to the birth and nurturing of the biosphere reserve concept.

28. During the short debate that took place, some additional information was provided on activities in Africa. MAB Committees and biosphere reserves managers were invited to respond to surveys such as the one on institutional mechanisms, in order to enable the Secretariat to promote cooperation and exchange of information, knowledge and experience.

## **2. PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS AND REGIONAL NETWORKS**

### **2.1 National reports**

29. A number of Council Members presented written or oral reports on major activities carried out since the seventeenth session of the MAB Council: Benin, Belarus, Dominica, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and Tunisia. Reports were also presented by the following observers: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, India, Romania, Ukraine and United States of America. All the presentations were very interesting and rich in detail (the written national reports will be published on the MABNet). The following issues were often raised.

#### **2.1.1 Biosphere reserves**

30. All speakers stressed the importance of biosphere reserves and referred to the Seville Strategy as a vital tool for implementing the biosphere reserve concept. Several countries mentioned the ecosystem and bioregional approach to the establishment of biosphere reserves. The importance of strengthening existing biosphere reserves was also stressed repeatedly. The delegate of Spain mentioned the importance of mega reserves, giving the example of the “Cordillera Cantabrica” Biosphere Reserve, which is being developed. Several delegates commented on the role of biosphere reserves as models for land-use planning, in particular for the establishment of ecological networks. Their importance to job creation was mentioned several times. The Delegate of Switzerland demonstrated the role of biosphere reserves as models for sustainable development, referring notably to the work done to promote the economic valuation of biosphere reserves, which involved the labelling of 250 products.

31. Several delegates spoke of the importance of the periodic review and the need to discuss the procedures involved. Some delegates also mentioned the difficulty encountered in implementing zoning, in particular core zones and buffer zones.

32. The delegate of Mexico informed the Council of his country’s proposal to host, in conjunction with the IberoMAB network, in September 2005, a “Seville+10” meeting on key issues such as zoning, aspects of conservation and restoration in biosphere reserves, archipelago reserves, biological corridors and urban and peri-urban reserves.

33. Several delegates laid special emphasis on transboundary biosphere reserves, in particular Spain and Morocco, outlining a project for an intercontinental biosphere reserve. Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Hungary, Belarus and Benin also made statements supporting transboundary biosphere reserves. Ukraine and Romania both made a statement on the Danube Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. That point was the subject of a specific recommendation by the Bureau (see paragraphs 105-109).

#### **2.1.2 Regional and international cooperation and partnerships**

34. In their reports, several delegates spoke of their support for and active participation in MAB regional networks and mentioned the development of partnerships with various ministries, donors, public and private sector institutions and NGOs. The delegate of Benin referred to the support provided for the Pendjari Biosphere Reserve by GTZ, the Netherlands cooperation agency and the World Bank.

35. The delegate of Switzerland also stressed the importance of exchanging practices and information regionally and internationally with other biosphere reserves. The delegate of Argentina expressed his concerns over the impact of international consultant fees on the cost of environmental and development projects funded by donors in Latin America and the Caribbean, and also asked for interdisciplinary research on the increasing resort to cultivation of soy and its detriment to nature and the economic value of environmental services.

### **2.1.3 Education, information and awareness-raising**

36. Many delegates underlined the crucial importance of making the general public aware of biosphere reserves and the Programme on Man and the Biosphere. The delegate of Indonesia presented the work carried out in his country to improve public information, in particular through history museums and botanical gardens. The delegate of South Africa mentioned the funding of biodiversity education projects involving schools and women. The delegate of the Russian Federation stressed the importance of the research work conducted in the biosphere reserves, in particular work by MAB young scientists.

37. Many delegates read out lists of publications, including biosphere reserve handbooks, and bulletins and mentioned the inclusion of specific courses in school curricula, the production of guidebooks for primary- and secondary-school teachers and the establishment of Internet sites setting out activities in biosphere reserves and at the national level.

### **2.1.4 Involvement of local communities**

38. Several delegates, including Indonesia, Tunisia and South Africa, emphasized the importance of coordination and of local community involvement in the establishment, operation and management of biosphere reserves, in particular through participatory management as recommended in the Seville Strategy. Many delegates reported on pilot activities for women's groups and for local communities. The delegate of South Africa mentioned the plan to create a Wild Coast Conservation Area Biosphere Reserve, in which local communities would be responsible for 80% of the management of the area's zones.

## **2.2 Regional networks**

39. Several delegates reported on regional networks and regional projects, such as AfriMAB, ArabMAB, SACAM, EABRN, SeaBRnet, ASPACO, NordMAB Network and IberoMAB. The outgoing Chairman, Mr Driss Fassi, mentioned the REDBIOS network in his speech at the beginning of the meeting. Many delegates reported on the meetings held in their respective regions, which have proven very helpful in bringing together MAB National Committees as well as biosphere reserve managers and other stakeholders of the civil society. They also mentioned the large number of publications and audiovisual materials produced. Some delegates announced the establishment of websites and electronic newsletters in which national and regional activities are being published. The regional network reports are found in Annex 3.

## **3. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

40. Following the invitation by the Chairperson to make statements on current and future cooperation with UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences and the MAB Programme, the following points were raised by a number of international partners. The representative of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) made a presentation on the historical

context of the close relationship between IUBS and MAB, namely the International Biological Programme (IBP), and gave an account of recent collaborative activities as well as on future prospects. He spoke of the importance of integrative approaches to biological sciences research including the human dimensions of biodiversity and their applications to conservation, management and sustainable development in different ecosystems, such as freshwater ecosystems, coastal zones, mountain areas, urban and peri-urban areas. He stressed that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves was an ideal tool for the development of such approaches. Other areas proposed for MAB and IUBS collaboration included biological education and capacity building towards biodiversity education and training, as well as biological education in the context of the UNDESD. He also foresaw opportunities for collaboration in conjunction with the CBD and other partners on the topic of biodiversity, food and nutrition.

41. The representative of the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) addressed the ongoing relationship between MAB and SCOPE that goes back more than 30 years. She referred to two specific activities of cooperation, on emerging ecosystems and peri-urban ecosystems, as examples of the common mandate that MAB and SCOPE share, namely to provide science-based information to policy-makers and to promote the best management of natural resources. Finally, she mentioned a Memorandum of Collaboration between SCOPE and UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector, which will be signed shortly.

42. The representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) referred to the wide range of multilateral environmental agreements that are administered by UNEP and UNESCO that provide many opportunities for collaboration between the two organizations. Specific examples of joint activities include work related to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) target to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 (the "2010 target"), which is also relevant to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; the Great Apes Survival Programme (GRASP); the joint Cloud Forest Agenda; strengthening the global system of protected areas; the UNESCO/UNEP-GEF project in Western Africa; and the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS).

43. The representative of IUCN-World Conservation Union then discussed the longstanding cooperation between IUCN and MAB, which recently produced very concrete results in the form of outputs of the World Parks Congress workshop on building linkages in the landscapes and seascapes. He provided advice for the future of MAB, namely: the need to focus on key priority areas where MAB could have significant impact, such as strengthening the biosphere reserve network and highlighting the success stories; strengthening the capacity of biosphere reserve managers, as well as increasing the human resources of the MAB Secretariat; and creating strategic partnerships with the private sector. He concluded by stating his hopes for a renewed collaboration between IUCN and MAB in the future, such as the planned event at the forthcoming IUCN Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2004.

44. The MAB Secretariat provided some additional information on cooperation with international partners that required specific decisions by Council, namely: the proposed strategy on mechanisms to best operationalize cooperation with international conventions such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, CBD, and the World Heritage Convention; the possibility of projects similar to the UNESCO-GEF project in West Africa; and the proposal that Council Members engage actively in the proposed GBIF/UNESCO Chairs in Biodiversity Informatics.

45. The last speaker under this agenda item was the representative from the Ramsar Convention. He spoke on the existing cooperation framework between Ramsar and MAB during 2002-2003; its in-depth review; and proposal of 2nd programme of joint work; and wider issues and future. He concluded by inviting the MAB Council to endorse the second phase of the joint work, as contained in the relevant working document.

46. Comments from the floor on international cooperation included: the need for the report of this session of the ICC to be sent to MAB National Committees in a reasonable time in order for Committees to enact the recommendations; that what is done in the context of the Ramsar Convention, IUCN and the MAB Programme is important but is not enough, and that, for example, one Biosphere Reserve in each region or continent could serve as pilot project in order to demonstrate the synergies among the Ramsar Convention, the MAB Programme, and the work of IUCN in action; to reactivate the Ecosystem Conservation Group (ECG); to enhance cooperation at the local level; and to further cooperation with the CBD. With regard to the ECG, the MAB Secretariat and UNEP responded by explaining that the ECG, which was under the aegis of UNEP, was dismantled in 1992. Although resumed in 1998, its mandate was often perceived as having been taken over by the Environmental Management Group (EMG). The MAB Secretariat and UNEP are ready to explore the revitalization of ECG as a mechanism for coordinating ecosystem conservation related activities between the two Organizations and perhaps at the United Nations level. Such exploration should also consider how the ECG could work at the national and local levels. The Council adopted the second MAB-Ramsar programme of joint work.

#### **4. UNESCO ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES, MAB AND BIOSPHERE RESERVES – PROPOSALS FOR 2005-2010**

47. The Council considered proposals for the period 2005-2010 for UNESCO Ecological Sciences, MAB and Biosphere Reserves. The six-year vision would enable the Council to better respond to constraints and opportunities of UNESCO's strategic planning (six years) and programming and budgeting (two years) processes.

48. "Ecosystem management and sustainable use of biodiversity" was the proposed thematic focus of the 2005-2010 vision; a three-pronged planning and programming anchor focusing on ecological and biodiversity sciences, ecosystem approaches to human-biosphere interactions, and context specific learning and capacity-building for sustainable development in and around biosphere reserves was suggested.

49. Several continuing priorities for the development of actions and activities were discussed and encouraged. They include: improving global understanding of the current human-biosphere relations relative to that in 1971 when MAB was launched; synthesis of knowledge in combination with rapid assessments and studies to address United Nations-wide targets like MDGs and CBD-2010 and UNESCO's intersectoral and interdisciplinary emphases; capacity-building through scaling up MAB Young Scientists Research Awards, enhanced support to ERAIFT (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and similar African centres of learning and promoting specific South-South cooperation initiatives; and developing the MABNet as a prime tool and clearing house for information, data and knowledge content.

50. Global carbon issues and emerging carbon-trading options for influencing sustainable changes in biodiversity use were considered an area for the development of new actions. The need to make the World Network of Biosphere Reserves a learning network for conservation

sciences and adaptive ecosystem management practices was stressed. Council Members expressed unanimous support for promoting biosphere reserves as learning sites and laboratories for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development due to be launched in 2005 under the leadership of UNESCO.

51. The Council requested all Members, observer delegations and partners to send additional observations and comments on the proposals contained in document SC-04/CONF.204/3 to the Secretariat before 15 January 2005. The Secretariat will submit a draft work plan for 2005-2010 for consideration and adoption by the Bureau of the Council scheduled to meet in the first half of 2005. A progress report on the implementation of the work plan and any other recommendations of the Bureau will be submitted to the nineteenth session of the Council in 2006.

52. Several delegates including India and Egypt recommended that the Secretariat attempt to use clear and unambiguous phrases when expressing views linked to issues of governance and multilateralism. Capacity building in post-conflict situations must benefit all regions of the world. MAB National Committees, biosphere reserve coordinators and partners were invited to initiate dialogue with national level partners and donors to discuss ideas and concepts for project development and seek necessary Secretariat support as and when needed. The Council requested the Secretariat to send letters and communications necessary for promoting biosphere reserves as learning sites and laboratories for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development before the end of 2005.

## **5. WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES**

### **5.1 “Seville+5” recommendations follow-up**

#### **5.1.1 Preparation of the “Biosphere Reserve Handbook”**

53. The Council recalled that at its last session, it had recommended that a “methodological guide” be prepared for the MAB National Committees and those in charge of biosphere reserves with a view to helping them to establish and operate their biosphere reserves. It would be based on the two founding texts, the *Seville Strategy* and the *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*. The document would be illustrated with examples taken from different regions and contexts so as to facilitate the exchange of experiences.

54. The Council noted the progress made in the preparation of this document, now referred to as the “Biosphere Reserve Handbook”, outlined in document SC-04/CONF.204/4. The MAB-ICC encouraged the use of a regionally balanced set of examples illustrating the various aspects, which would serve as a stimulation to improve existing biosphere reserves and prepare new ones. The Council welcomed offers from members and observers to help with language translations of the Handbook, notably in Arabic and Russian. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to publish the Handbook as soon as possible in 2005.

#### **5.1.2 Quality economies**

55. The Secretariat introduced paragraphs 10 to 17 in document SC-04/CONF.204/4, and documents SC-04/CONF.204/INF.7 and SC-04/CONF.204/INF.8 concerning the MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves. These documents focused on the work of the Task Force since the last Council session, notably the Task Force

Workshop in Berlin 2002, the questionnaire addressed to biosphere reserve managers and coordinators, and the work of the Conservation Finance Alliance (CFA) that MAB joined in 2004. The Chair of the Task Force, Mr Engelbert Ruoss, introduced some preliminary efforts of the Task Force concerning elements of possible national biosphere reserve origin labelling schemes and invited all Council Members to attend the meeting of the Task Force on 27 October at 3 p.m. where these elements would be further presented and discussed. The Council took note of the documents and the information provided by Mr Ruoss and asked that the outcomes of the Task Force Meeting on 27 October be reported back to it under the agenda item “other matters” (see paragraph 173).

## **5.2 BRIM – Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring**

56. Two representatives of the Secretariat presented progress made in the implementation of the current BRIM Work Plan and referred to the rationale for its next phase, which was described in detail in the relevant working and information documents.

57. The Council adopted the second phase of the Work Plan on BRIM, which comprised the period between ICC 18 and ICC 19.

58. Comments from the floor on BRIM included: the emphasis that has been given to social monitoring of BRIM in Austria; the necessity of linking BRIM with ongoing activities at the international scale with complementary programmes, such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), as well as strengthening the links with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

## **5.3 Results of the MAB-ICC Bureau meeting**

### **5.3.1 New biosphere reserves, extensions and changes in zonation of biosphere reserves**

59. The Council took note that its Bureau had met on several occasions during its 18th session and had examined 27 proposals in total, of which 16 concerned new biosphere reserve nominations, 8 were revisions or clarifications for nominations already examined in previous years, and 3 were proposals for changes in zonation. The Council took note of the decisions and recommendations of the Bureau as follows.

#### **Taza Biosphere Reserve and Gouraya Biosphere Reserve, Algeria**

60. The MAB Bureau approved these sites as biosphere reserves. It recognized that the other biosphere reserves in Algeria (Tassili N’Ajjer, El Kala, Djurdjura and Chrea) and these two new sites were all national parks under Algerian law, zoned and functioning in a manner similar to biosphere reserves. For Taza and Gouraya, the five management zones of the national park had been clustered to correspond to the three zones of a biosphere reserve and were particularly active in harmonizing rural development, local recreation pressures and environmental protection.

61. The Bureau welcomed the fact that the Algerian authorities had responded favourably to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee to hold a national workshop on biosphere reserves in December 2004 to enhance knowledge of the benefits of the biosphere reserve concept, and in particular to develop a national strategy for developing a national network of biosphere reserves. The Bureau recommended that such a strategy should aim at representation of the ecological and cultural diversity within Algeria and in the context of the larger North African region. Such a strategy could also consider the possibility of regrouping

existing biosphere reserves/national parks following the Ecosystem Approach, taking account of the interrelations with the neighbouring towns and marine areas. A map should be prepared indicating the existing and potential biosphere reserves in the country.

62. The Bureau further recommended that this strategy be elaborated by Algeria and communicated to the ArabMAB network and the Secretariat.

### **Barkindji, Australia**

63. The Bureau noted that this nomination was being revised in the light of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves at its June 2004 meeting. The Bureau commended the work of the local company called “Barkindji Biosphere Ltd.” which was leading the preparation of this nomination. The proposed biosphere reserve would be developed in phases in time, expanding as additional land owners and land users agreed to join this initiative. However, the Bureau noted that as yet there was no clear endorsement of this nomination at the central Governmental level or at the level of the two States concerned (New South Wales and Victoria).

64. The Bureau therefore deferred this nomination and recommended that the Barkindji Biosphere Ltd. company be strongly encouraged to pursue its work in establishing this potential biosphere reserve, especially concerning revising the zonation and adding new areas to make a more complete site, which should be resubmitted when ready. It requested that the Australian authorities provide the Secretariat with written full endorsement of the future re-submitted nomination.

### **Pribuzhskoye-Polesie Biosphere Reserve, Belarus**

65. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. This site was a potential component of a future Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve together with the existing West Polesie Biosphere Reserve in Poland and the Shatsky Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine. This wider area contained ecosystems and traditional use areas, which were now becoming rare in the rest of Europe. The MAB Secretariat was currently elaborating a project with the three countries concerned focusing on the creation of a future Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve and an ecological network.

66. The Bureau recognized that this site consisted of relatively small protected areas and surrounding lands. The Belarus authorities were engaged on starting up an appropriate coordination structure for the entire area, together with the local administrations and local NGOs. A major focus would be on developing ecological tourism to create employment opportunities for young people.

67. Within the context of the project on the Polesie sub-region, the Bureau encouraged the Belarus authorities to:

- establish an appropriate coordinating structure for Pribuzhskoye-Polesie, and developing a sustained financing mechanism, in consultation with the MAB Secretariat and appropriate partners;
- ensure that the zonation of the future potential TBR was harmonized and that small scale projects on themes of common interest would be developed to enhance transborder cooperation.

68. The Bureau encouraged the authorities of the three countries to continue to develop the future potential Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the MAB

recommendations for transboundary biosphere reserves, such that a joint request for official recognition as a transboundary biosphere reserve could be submitted in the near future.

#### **Georgian Bay Littoral Biosphere Reserve, Canada**

69. The MAB Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It commended the Canadian authorities on this well-prepared, mature nomination, which was the result of a lengthy consultation process of the very numerous government, private and NGO stakeholders, reflecting interest in the terrestrial mainland and also in Lake Huron. The Bureau recommended that attention be given to avoiding any negative impacts from activities upstream of the core area in the extreme north of this site.

#### **Cabo de Hornos, Chile**

70. The MAB Bureau greatly welcomed this proposal as a new initiative from Chile, noting that this site could serve as a 'working model' for revising the sites designated as biosphere reserves before the 1995 Seville criteria.

71. The Bureau recognized the high potential of this site to contribute to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It wished to encourage the local authorities responsible for the preparation of this nomination in their current work to meet the Advisory Committee's recommendations to:

- expand this site to include the adjacent marine zone and revise the zonation scheme accordingly, with attention to ensuring that core areas are surrounded by buffer and transition areas;
- provide more information on the management plan/policy for the entire site and in particular on the structure being set up to coordinate the interests of all stakeholders, including the local communities, other government sectors, NGOs and the private sector.

72. The Bureau accordingly deferred this nomination and requested the Secretariat to send a letter to encourage the work being undertaken to revise and resubmit this nomination.

#### **Foping Biosphere Reserve, China**

73. The MAB Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It noted the important conservation value of this site at the national level, in particular as it was one of the three major habitats of the giant panda in China. The area also abounded in plant species (including medicinal plants) and had great potential for ecotourism and scientific research. The MAB Bureau recommended that the Foping site managers and the Chinese MAB Committee start a dialogue of collaboration with the four protected areas (Shanxi Changqing Nature Reserve, Natural Forest Conservation Area, Shanxi Zhouzhi Laoxiancheng Nature Reserve, and Shanxi Zhouzhi Nature Reserve) surrounding the core area in the North and the West which served as *de facto* buffer zones, and to report to the Advisory Committee on such collaboration at its next meeting in 2005.

#### **Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve, China**

74. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It noted that this site comprised the Chinese part of the highest mountain in the world, also known as Mount Everest, and its adjacent areas. In response to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Chinese authorities had confirmed that the core area was legally protected under the Regulations for the Management of Natural Reserves in China and had provided the MAB Secretariat with a copy of the Qomolangma Nature Reserve Overall management Plan for 1991-2000 which was still being used while a new Plan was being prepared.

75. The Bureau recommended that the national and local authorities strengthen collaboration with the Nepalese authorities across the political boundary (e.g. Sagarmatha National Park and World Heritage site) for the enhanced conservation and management of the overall area.

#### **Mount Kuwol Biosphere Reserve, Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

76. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It recalled that this proposal had been deferred in 2002 and welcomed the re-submission of this site following discussions with a member of the Secretariat from the UNESCO Jakarta Office. This revised proposal provided in particular additional information on the site, which now included a buffer zone and a transition area around the core area. The MAB Bureau recommended that the national and local authorities consider extending the core area as appropriate in the future, to promote the very rich cultural values of the site, and pay special attention to the ecosystem functions of the coastal wetlands of this biosphere reserve.

#### **Extension to the Wadden Sea of Schleswig Holstein Biosphere Reserve, Germany**

77. The MAB Bureau approved this extension to the biosphere reserve. It recognized that the site had been designated in 1990 prior to the “Seville” criteria and consisted of a national park without a transition area or any permanent inhabitants. This extension was the initiative of the communities of the Hallig Islands and was a good first step to creating a transition area for this Biosphere Reserve, although many other areas need to be added to make a complete transition area.

78. The Bureau took note that the periodic review for this site and also for the neighbouring biosphere reserves in the Wadden Sea in the Länder of Hamburg and of Lower Saxony were presently being prepared and would be completed for the Advisory Committee meeting in 2005. The Bureau therefore recommended that these periodic reviews be conducted in a coordinated manner, using this opportunity to advocate the biosphere reserve concept with the local communities and thereby encourage the creation of complete transition areas for all three sites.

79. The Bureau also recommended that the German authorities consider the possibility of making one consolidated biosphere reserve for the German Waddensee. In addition, on the basis of existing trilateral cooperation for the entire areas as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, the Bureau recommended that the German authorities envisage creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with the existing Waddensea Area Biosphere Reserve in the Netherlands (designated in 1986), and possibly, a site in Denmark.

#### **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, India**

80. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It noted that one core area (Nanda Devi National Park) was already a World Heritage site and there was currently a proposal to extend World Heritage status to cover the second core area (Valley of the Flowers National Park). The Bureau recommended that the Indian authorities should develop a management plan/policy for the entire biosphere reserve including the World Heritage site, and to submit a copy to the MAB Secretariat along with a more detailed topographic map of the area.

#### **Selva Pisana Biosphere Reserve, Italy**

81. The MAB Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It recalled that this nomination had been deferred in 2003 and that the Italian authorities had responded positively to its recommendations on improving the zonation. The Bureau welcomed the fact that the Municipality of Pisa was now participating in the biosphere reserve thus connecting the Migliarino-San Rossore-Massaciuccoli Regional Park with the urban planning process and the

socio-economic development of the region. This was particularly important in this cultural landscape with a focus on the sustainability of agriculture, forestry, tourism, and the maintenance of ecosystem functions.

82. The Bureau recommended that the Italian authorities:

- prepare an overall biosphere reserve coordination plan with the municipalities;
- take practical measures to achieve the stated biosphere reserve goals, for example on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- use socio-economic research findings in education programmes in order to minimize tourism impact on natural ecosystems;
- share experience concerning research and experiments on organic and environmentally friendly farming practices with other biosphere reserves in comparable regions.

### **Ría Celestún Biosphere Reserve and Ría Lagartos Biosphere Reserve, Mexico**

83. The Bureau approved these two neighbouring sites as biosphere reserves on the understanding that the Mexican authorities would consider enlarging each one and uniting them in the near future as one large bio-regional biosphere reserve. The Bureau recommended that the Mexican authorities be invited to hold a national workshop to examine the relationship between the national law and international biosphere reserve criteria, and the means of using the biosphere reserve concept to implement the Ecosystem Approach of the CBD, taking account of existing national 'biosphere reserves', Ramsar sites, etc. Such a workshop could help to elaborate a new national strategy for biosphere reserves for Mexico.

### **Kedrovaya Pad Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation**

84. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve, noting that it focused on the oldest State Reserve in the Russian Federation (1916) of special conservation importance, notably for the endangered Far East leopard. The Bureau noted that the Russian authorities had responded positively to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee to apply the biosphere reserve concept to larger Far East region, adding in particular a transition area of 180,000 ha. The Bureau encouraged the local biosphere reserve authorities to further promote the development function by providing new income opportunities for local people e.g. in eco-tourism and other rural development businesses.

85. The Bureau requested the Russian authorities to provide information on the progress of this new biosphere reserve for its next meeting in 2005.

### **Kenozersky Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation**

86. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It noted that this proposal had been revised in line with its recommendations in 2003 and now included four adjacent segments of Federal Forests as buffer zones in which sustainable forestry techniques were being demonstrated, which thus provided better protection to the core areas.

87. The Bureau recommended that the Russian authorities:

- further develop the existing working relations with the Karelian Republic authorities to ensure that the forests areas, adjacent to the core area in the west, were managed appropriately in order to best protect the core area against negative influences;
- set up an overall management plan or policy for the biosphere reserve.

88. The Bureau furthermore wished to encourage the ongoing discussions to extend the biosphere reserve to become part of a potential future Fenno-Scandinavian Green Belt Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

#### **Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation**

89. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It recognized that this site, located in a relatively uninhabited area, consisted of a national park that was zoned and functioning as a biosphere reserve, with a focus on providing new employment opportunities and environmentally friendly natural resource uses.

90. The Bureau recommended that the Russian authorities be encouraged to enlarge the biosphere reserve in the future to include in particular the areas protecting the sources of the Volga, Dvina and Dnieper rivers and to use this highly important feature as a marketing tool.

#### **Volzhsko-Kamsky, Russian Federation**

91. The Bureau noted that this proposal had been revised in order to start meeting the recommendation of the Advisory Committee to apply the biosphere reserve concept along this entire section of the Volga River in order to make an innovative ‘riverscape’ biosphere reserve. The nomination now consisted of four separate units along this section of the Volga River and a cooperation agreement had been signed between the Kazan City Council and the Volsko-Kamsky State Nature Reserve administration to set up and implement joint projects on conservation and natural resource management.

92. The Bureau deferred the approval of this nomination recommending that work should continue to further consolidate it along the lines indicated by MAB Russia, with particular attention to including the four units within a large transition area, setting up a coordination structure and elaborating a management plan or policy for the overall site. The Bureau also encouraged cooperation with MAB Germany to benefit from the experience of sites such as the Flusslandschaft Elbe Biosphere Reserve.

#### **The Karst Biosphere Reserve, Slovenia**

93. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve with the name of “The Karst Biosphere Reserve” to acknowledge its role as the origin and reference for all karst studies. It noted that the core area of this site – the Skocjan caves – was designated as a World Heritage site and a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The idea of creating a biosphere reserve was to manage, in an appropriate fashion, the above-ground activities so as to avoid pollution of the surface and underground waters.

94. The Bureau recommended that the Slovene authorities:

- continue work to establish a management plan/policy for the entire future biosphere reserve (and not just the Regional Park), and to inform the Secretariat accordingly;
- consider the possibility of creating a transboundary biosphere reserve with Italy, and possibly Croatia, to encompass the entire hydrographical basin of this karst system.

95. The Bureau furthermore recommended the Secretariat to facilitate exchanges and training with the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve in the USA, which had similar karst and cave features, and of which the core area was also a World Heritage site.

#### **Babia Biosphere Reserve Unit, Gran Cantabrica, Spain**

96. The Bureau noted that this proposal constituted another step in the establishment of the Gran Cantábrica Biosphere Reserve, following the indication of the Spanish Government, and

as approved by the MAB Bureau in July 2003. It also recommended that the management of this site be coordinated with the contiguous units of Somiedo and Valle de Laciana.

#### **Change of zonation in Menorca Biosphere Reserve, Spain**

97. The Bureau approved this proposal to extend the core area, including an additional area in the marine zone, in compliance with the recommendation of the MAB Bureau at the time of designation in 1993.

#### **Knuckles, Sri Lanka**

98. The Bureau welcomed the re-submission of this nomination, which covered lowland, semi-montane and montane tropical forests. The Bureau recommended that the Sri Lankan authorities be requested to provide further information, in particular with regard to:

- the specific conservation value of the site;
- the mechanism in place to encourage the active participation of local people so as to enhance sustainable development;
- the research and monitoring activities carried out in the area.

99. The Bureau furthermore recommended the preparation of a detailed zonation map of the proposed biosphere reserve indicating core area, buffer zone and transition area, in accordance with the international biosphere reserve nomenclature. To facilitate this revision, the Bureau also recommended that the Secretariat provide the Sri Lankan authorities with examples of other biosphere reserve nominations, and that further discussion on this and other potential nominations be held within the framework of the South and Central Asian MAB network (SACAM).

100. The Bureau deferred this nomination and recommended that it be revised based on comments made in paragraphs 98 and 99, above.

#### **Kanneliya-Dediyagala-Nakiyadeniya (KDN) Biosphere Reserve, Sri Lanka**

101. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve. It welcomed the submission of this nomination, which covered lowland, semi-montane and montane tropical forests. It acknowledged the efforts of the MAB National Committee of Sri Lanka to propose this nationally recognized ‘biosphere reserve’ for international designation within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It recommended that the zonation map be revised indicating core, buffer and transition areas, in accordance with the international biosphere reserve nomenclature: this could be done for example by labelling the ‘strictly protected zone’ as core area and labelling the other zones accordingly. Moreover, the Bureau recommended that the Sri Lankan authorities be invited to provide more information on the relation between the proposed KDN biosphere reserve and the existing Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve, which were part of the same eco-region and the subject of an UNDP-GEF project.

#### **Desnyansko-Starogutsky, Ukraine**

102. The Bureau welcomed this nomination, which offered potential to constitute the Ukrainian part of a future transboundary biosphere reserve with the Nerusso-Desnianskoe-Polesie Biosphere Reserve in the Russian Federation designated in 2003, and following the MAB Bureau’s recommendation at that time. The Bureau noted that creation of such a transboundary biosphere reserve across the Desna River Basin, including also a part in Belarus, had been agreed upon by the Chairs of the MAB National Committees of the three countries at a meeting in Moscow on 18-19 May 2004.

103. The Bureau considered however that this nomination from Ukraine needed to be reworked, and recommended that the Ukrainian authorities:

- revise the nomination to give more concrete information on how the site was fulfilling the conservation, development and logistic support functions;
- expand the transition areas to make them into more homogenous units by including the contiguous commercial forests, agricultural areas and small settlements;
- consider expanding the biosphere reserve to the west to cover more of the Desna River floodplain of particular interest, as for biodiversity and as a potential wetland of international importance, under the Ramsar Wetland Convention;
- develop an overall management policy for the site in line with the Seville Strategy;
- provide a zonation map showing the revised zonation.

104. The Bureau deferred this nomination and recommended that it be revised based on the comments in paragraph 103. The Bureau furthermore wished to encourage the creation of a future Desna River Basin Transboundary Biosphere Reserve involving Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

#### **Change in zonation of Dunaisky Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine**

105. The Bureau recalled the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on this proposed change in zonation to accommodate the construction of a navigation canal in the Bystroe arm of the Danube Delta, as given in paragraphs 67-74 of document SC-04/CONF.204/10.

106. The Bureau noted that on 3 September 2004, subsequent to exchanges of correspondence with the Romanian authorities, the UNESCO Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, had written to H.E. L. Kuchma, President of Ukraine, underlining the importance of receiving a response to these recommendations and in particular to ensure a dialogue between the two countries concerned within the framework of the transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR). On 21 September 2004, at the request of the Romanian authorities, an informal consultation had been held in the UNEP Geneva Office of the various conventions, agreements and programmes concerned (including MAB), relevant NGOs and representatives of Ukraine and Romania.

107. In the plenary session of the MAB Council, the representatives respectively of Romania and Ukraine presented their views on the project of the navigation canal. The presentation of Ukraine provided information in response to the Advisory Committee recommendations: this information was provided in written form by letter dated 25 October 2004 and was examined by the Bureau.

108. The Bureau took note of the proposed revised zonation as presented in this letter. It requested the Ukrainian authorities to provide the official version of the zonation, once finalized on 20 November in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, to the Secretariat for immediate transmission to the members of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves for technical evaluation. The Bureau requested that this evaluation be brought thereafter to its attention, together with the results of the Environment Impact Assessment of Phase 2 of the Project, for decision in relation to the international biosphere reserve criteria.

109. The Bureau expressed however its concern on the way in which this zonation had been revised unilaterally, and in particular without fully respecting the role of the Dunaisky Biosphere Reserve as a platform for dialogue, notably with the MAB National Committee and

the local populations, to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with economic development. It also expressed concern that the Ukrainian authorities had not honoured their engagement to cooperate with the Romanian authorities in the framework of the Danube Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, rendering it *de facto* non-functional. The Bureau urged the Ukrainian and Romanian sides to approve and implement the joint management plan prepared at the technical level. In this transboundary biosphere reserve context, the Bureau encouraged the Ukrainian authorities to increase its bilateral consultations with the Romanian authorities, including at the International Conference on the conservation of the Danube Delta announced for December 2004, and in other fora of relevant conventions and agreements. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to facilitate cooperation between the Ukrainian and Romanian parts of the TBR to enact the MAB recommendations for establishing and functioning of TBRs, as endorsed by the MAB ICC at its 17th session.

#### **Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve, Vietnam**

110. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve noting the significant biodiversity values and sustainable development opportunities of the Cat Ba Archipelago, and the considerable management challenges facing the wider Ha Long Bay-Cat Ba area. In this connection, the Bureau recommended that the Vietnamese authorities develop a joint management mechanism covering the wider Cat Ba Archipelago-Ha Long Bay World Heritage area.

111. The Bureau requested the Vietnamese authorities to provide additional information on the potential impacts of the rapidly developing tourism activity in the Ha Long Bay-Cat Ba area, as well as any information on the possible future relocation of local populations mentioned in the nomination form.

112. The Bureau requested that this information be made available for consideration at its next meeting in 2005.

#### **Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve, Vietnam**

113. The Bureau approved this site as a biosphere reserve, noting its significance both in terms of wetland biodiversity and its role in supporting the livelihoods of its human population. The Bureau commended the Vietnamese authorities on the comprehensive documentation provided with this revised nomination, deferred in 2003. Noting that the core area of the Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve had also been designated as a Ramsar wetland of international importance, the Bureau recommended that the Red River Delta Biosphere Reserve be considered as a model for development of MAB-Ramsar cooperation.

### **5.3.2 Coverage of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**

114. The Council noted that with these 19 additions, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves now consisted of 459 sites in 97 countries. The Council suggested that in the future the Bureau set deadlines for receipt of information that may be requested from Member States in relation to their biosphere reserve nominations.

115. The Council had a brief discussion on the optimum coverage of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Originally there was the view that at least one biosphere reserve should be established for each biogeographical province according to the Udvardy system of classification. Today this view needed to be expanded to take account of biosphere reserve dimensions other than the conservation of biodiversity, for example to enact the role of biosphere reserves in education for sustainable development, which implied that every

country could benefit from at least one biosphere reserve on its territory. The Council recommended that the questions be reflected in the Biosphere Reserve Handbook and discussed further by the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves.

### **5.3.3 Periodic review**

116. The Bureau examined the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves concerning twelve biosphere reserves designated for a period of over ten (10) years. These recommendations were made by the Advisory Committee at its meeting on 14-16 June 2004 on the basis of the periodic review reports received since its last meeting in July 2003. The Bureau endorsed the recommendations as presented in Annex 4 of this report, and requested that they be transmitted to the Member States concerned for follow-up.

### **5.3.4 Change in name of the Bookmark Biosphere Reserve, Australia**

117. The Bureau agreed with the request of the Australian authorities to change the name of this site to the “Riverland Biosphere Reserve” to reflect better local community interests.

### **5.3.5 Review of Progress of the Sahamalaza-Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve, Madagascar**

118. The Bureau recalled that in September 2001, the MAB Bureau had approved the designation of this site with the recommendation that the progress of this site be reviewed by the MAB Bureau during the 18th session of the Council in 2004. The Bureau recalled that the two main open questions were the preparation of a management plan/policy finalizing the zonation, and providing legal protection of the core areas. The Bureau welcomed the report of the Malagasy authorities giving information on these two points and in particular indicating that the draft Decree on the Creation of the Iles Radama/Sahamalaza Marine National Park was in the last stages of completion and adoption. The Bureau encouraged the Malagasy authorities with this work and requested that a further progress report on these two points be provided for its next meeting in 2005.

## **6. ECOSYSTEM-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

119. Before the MAB Council considered document SC-04/CONF.204/5 on “Ecosystem Related Activities”, the Chairperson of the MAB-ICC, Mr Gonzalo Halffter, proposed a new “Archipelago Reserve” concept. This concept would not substitute the classical biosphere reserve concept but would aim at a complementary approach for considering small and widely scattered areas (e.g. private reserves or areas protected by cultural and local traditions such as sacred natural sites) with high beta diversity, which could benefit from an ‘umbrella’ conservation approach. Eventually, the scattered areas could be linked through ecological corridors to ensure connectivity among such areas. Mr Halffter suggested the establishment of a small working group to further reflect on this concept.

120. Several countries, notably Brazil, Costa Rica and the Russian Federation, reacted positively on this proposal given already ongoing work and considerations in their countries that could be aligned to this concept. One delegate, however, suggested to take a cautious approach as the designation of corridors over large distances and privately owned lands by a United Nations agency may not always be welcomed by the local populations concerned. The Secretariat pointed out that a careful approach with regard to the naming of such a new concept was indeed necessary in order to avoid multiplication of the categories of reserves

known internationally. Further reflections on this concept could also be carried within the framework of the planned international symposium on “Conserving Cultural and Biological Diversity – the Role of Sacred Natural Sites and Cultural Landscapes” which will be held in Tokyo (Japan) in the context of the World Expo 2005. The Chairperson of the MAB-ICC was invited to work out a more detailed paper on the Archipelago Reserve concept for consideration by the Bureau and the Advisory Committee at their next sessions.

121. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-04/CONF.204/5, which provided information on progress achieved with regard to work on ecosystem related activities since the seventeenth session of the MAB-ICC.

## **6.1 Mountains**

122. The Council welcomed the new project “Global Change Research Initiative in Mountain Biosphere Reserves (GLOCHAMORE)” which is currently funded by the European Commission and is implemented as a joint endeavour of UNESCO’s MAB and IHP programmes as well as the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) involving IGBP, IHDP and GTOS in 28 biosphere reserves worldwide. The Council considered that research work on global (climate) change should comprise studies from the highlands to the lowlands so as to fully understand ecosystem dynamics and changes, and to elaborate future scenarios in the light of global warming. The delegates of Egypt, Indonesia and Mexico suggested that biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites in their countries be also included in this global study.

## **6.2 Drylands**

123. The Council took note of the many ongoing activities, workshops and projects in various dryland areas of the world as implemented by the international MAB Secretariat in collaboration with different partners such as ICARDA, UNU, GEF and the Flemish Government of Belgium. Important outcomes of a number of international MAB workshops feed into the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), e.g. the Convention’s work on traditional knowledge to combat desertification. Several new dryland projects had started since the seventeenth session of the MAB-ICC, such as the interregional project “Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD)”, the subregional project “Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective Management and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Dryland Biosphere Reserves in West Africa, and the subregional project “Sustainable Integrated Management of Arid and Semi-arid Regions of Southern Africa (SIMDAS)”. The delegates of Ghana and Indonesia suggested that ongoing dryland research activities in their countries be linked to present and future MAB projects.

124. The Council took note of the document presented by the Secretariat on SIMDAS, which involves combating desertification in the 14 SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and welcomed its implementation as an IHP-MAB transversal project.

125. The Council noted with satisfaction that UNESCO had provided \$200,000 in seed money (\$150,000 for IHP and \$50,000 for SC/ECO-MAB) for SIMDAS with a view to generating extrabudgetary funds. The Council noted that within the framework of that project, existing biosphere reserves, including transboundary reserves to be established, would serve

as demonstration and pilot sites for testing the ecohydrology approach and as reference sites for research work, notably by young academics.

126. The Council also noted with interest the existence of a proposed joint MAB-IHP project entitled “Integrated management of ecosystems and water resources for conservation and sustainable use of Okavango Delta-Kaharari Ecosystem (ODKE) – Support to SIMDAS”, submitted for financing in the framework of the UNESCO-Flanders Cooperation Funds-in-Trust.

### **6.3 Marine, coastal and small islands**

127. The Secretariat informed about the ongoing project on “Asia-Pacific Cooperation for the Sustainable Use of Renewable Natural Resources in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas (ASPACO)”, which is financed via extrabudgetary resources by the Government of Japan. For this project, which is being implemented in 22 countries of the Pacific region, a brochure has been produced, which was made available to all ICC Members.

128. The project emphasizes the role of biosphere reserves as catalysts for both conservation and development. It is implemented in cooperation with MAB-Japan, the International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems (ISME) and UNU. The overall duration of the project is 2001-2004.

129. ICC Members reacted very positively to this project and gave full support. They encouraged the Secretariat to seek further support for the future. In further detail, ASPACO and REDBIOS were mentioned as being programmes for the future of MAB, particularly due to their interregional, multilingual and multicultural qualities. These programmes were considered as being truly efficient since they focused more on environmental issues than on political or regional issues.

130. The Secretariat committed itself to seeking further extrabudgetary funding in order to continue these activities.

131. A member of the Secretariat presented progress made in the follow-up of the EuroMAB recommendations (subsequently endorsed by ICC 17) on the need to develop a marine agenda for the EuroMAB biosphere reserves. He informed Council Members of the plan to engage in a close cooperation with the European Association of Marine Research Stations (MARS) through the organization of a seminar in the spring of 2005, which will be possible thanks to the support of UNESCO-ROSTE.

132. The Council strongly supported the development of a marine research agenda for MAB, welcomed cooperation with MARS and stressed that this could constitute a model activity to be replicated in other MAB regions.

### **6.4 Freshwater**

133. A member of the MAB Secretariat introduced paragraphs 23 to 29 in document SC-04/CONF.204/5 on water and ecosystems, which informed on activities conducted under the topic “Land-water interactions: towards sustainable development”, a joint collaboration of the MAB Programme and the International Hydrological Programme (IHP). Following the presentation, a member of the IHP provided information on “Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy” (HELP) and its relationship to biosphere reserves and the MAB Programme. HELP aims to deliver benefits to stakeholders through sustainable and appropriate use of

water by directing hydrological science towards improved integrated management of catchment basins. With over 67 basins in 52 countries in the HELP global network, there exist opportunities for collaboration between HELP and the MAB Programme.

134. Council Members made comments on other examples of collaboration between MAB and IHP, namely: the workshops under the ECOTONE programme, which are being organized by UNESCO Jakarta Office; and a GEF project on integrated water management in the Central Amazon that is being implemented by UNESCO Brasilia Office. This project will have support from the Brazilian Government and the GEF. As an initial grant, approximately US \$300,000 will be made available to the UNESCO Brasilia Office in order to start project activities.

135. The Council requested that the MAB Secretariat explore additional possibilities to strengthen MAB and IHP cooperation in improving the management of freshwater ecosystems within urban territories in light of conservation of biodiversity and increasing the quality standards of drinking water.

136. Some Council members suggested that training courses be organized for biosphere reserves managers who work in wetland ecosystems in Europe.

## **6.5 Urban Ecosystems**

137. In examining the work of the MAB Urban Group, the Council referred to paragraphs 30 to 39 in document SC-04/CONF.204/5, as well as documents SC-04/CONF.204/INF.10; SC-04/CONF.204/INF.11; SC-04/CONF.204/INF.12 and SC-04/CONF.204/INF.14. The Secretariat made a brief introduction of the past and planned future work of the MAB Urban Group and recalled that the Council was invited to take a decision concerning the extension of the mandate of the Group for another two years, i.e. to September 2006. In its introduction, the Secretariat focused on the Group's work on the application of the biosphere reserve concept to urban areas and their hinterlands, and the MAB Bureau's examination thereof in July 2003. The good number of meetings and publications involving the Group was also highlighted, as were the ongoing work to assess plant conservation strategies in urban areas, and case studies on urban biosphere reserves, such as in Cape Town (in collaboration with CUBES) and in Dakar. The Chair of the MAB Urban Group, Ms Mirilia Bonnes, outlined the discussions on urban issues at the EuroMAB2002 meeting in Rome, and highlighted the strong interest expressed around the world concerning urban ecology, and applications of the biosphere reserve concept in urban areas.

138. The Council congratulated the MAB Urban Group for its work and decided unanimously to extend its mandate for another two years. Council Members encouraged the MAB Urban Group to continue its examination of applications of the biosphere reserve concept, and to promote urban ecology, and urban demonstration areas within the MAB Programme as tools for urban sustainability. The Council took note of the Group's planned participation in the organization of workshops during the International Conference on "Biodiversity: Science and Governance", UNESCO Headquarters, 24-28 January 2005, and the International Conference for "Integrating Urban Knowledge and Practice: Life in the Urban Landscape", Gothenburg, Sweden, 30 May-4 June 2005.

## 6.6 Tropical forests

139. The Secretariat began its presentation by pointing out that since 1972, MAB Project 1 “Ecological effects of increasing human activities on tropical and subtropical forest ecosystems” had been focused on the issues in tropical forests. The importance of that topic for MAB and the Programme’s contributions to knowledge of those ecosystems on all the continents where they are present is reflected in the long series of scientific meetings and high-level publications that UNESCO-MAB has organized, participated in or produced. The Secretariat noted in particular that one of UNESCO’s flagship capacity-building programmes, ERAIFT (Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests), was the concrete realization of special recommendation No. 4 of the N’Sélé regional seminar on “African tropical forests – a heritage in urgent need of protection” sponsored by MAB-UNESCO and ACCT (Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation) in cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa, N’Sélé, 18-23 March 1991).

140. The Council took note of all that information and of the prospects for development of the tropical forests issue as the MAB Programme’s contribution to reducing the loss of biodiversity by placing science and capacity building in the service of sustainable development. To that end, biosphere reserves, including transboundary reserves, could be demonstration and pilot sites for the application of the ecosystem approach, biodiversity education and the study of cultural diversity versus biological diversity.

141. The Council drew attention to the wide gap existing between the vast biodiversity of Africa and the crucial lack of centres to provide training in management of that biodiversity, and welcomed the existence of ERAIFT. The Council asked that more centres like ERAIFT be established in the region and approved the Secretariat’s plan to launch a network to connect ERAIFT with other training and research centres in the region, as is already the case of the project between ENEF (Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts) of Gabon and ERAIFT, financed by the European Union and Belgium. The Council recommended to the Secretariat that it gradually promote such linkages with many similar centres that exist in the three major tropical forest regions of the world – Amazonia, the Congo Basin and South-East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia) – to capitalize on the comparative advantages of such a collaborative network in terms of exchange of scientific data, experience and researchers.

142. The Council also endorsed the Secretariat’s suggestions for increasing MAB’s visibility, in particular with regard to its participation in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and in emerging initiatives like NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development), COMIFAC (Conference of Ministers Responsible for Central African Forests), the CBFP process (Congo Basin Forests Partnership), CAWHFI (Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative) and RAPAC/EU (Network of Central African Protected Zones) supported by the European Union.

143. The Council welcomed the Secretariat’s efforts to strengthen cooperation between the World Heritage Centre and the Division of Ecological Sciences by setting up a biodiversity working group, which addresses themes such as ecosystem management, ecological services, and forests.

## 7. IMPORTANT EVENTS

**7.1 International Symposium on “Tropical Forests in a Changing Global Context”, UNESCO/MAB-ARSOM (“Académie Royale des Sciences d’Outre-Mer”), Brussels, 8-9 November 2004**

144. The Secretariat informed the Council of the forthcoming international symposium on “Tropical forests in a changing global context” (Brussels, 8-10 November 2004), sponsored by the Belgian *Académie Royale des Sciences d’Outre-Mer* and UNESCO/MAB in the framework of the protocol agreement. The Council took note of the information.

**7.2 International Conference on “Biodiversity, Science and Governance – Today's Choice for Tomorrow’s Life”, UNESCO, Paris, 24-28 January 2005**

145. The Secretariat informed the Council of the forthcoming international conference, organized by the Government of the French Republic with support from UNESCO, for which 1,000 participants are expected. The conference will be organized into a plenary session and several workshops, four of which will be co-sponsored by UNESCO. A brochure on the conference was distributed during the Council’s session.

**7.3 UNEP-UNESCO First Intergovernmental Meeting on GRASP (Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2005)**

146. The Secretariat presented the joint UNEP-UNESCO project GRASP (Great Apes Survival Project), launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. The Council welcomed that joint initiative by two United Nations agencies, which was supported by the range countries, several donors and international NGOs. The Council stressed the importance of that programme for the conservation of biodiversity worldwide. In view of the effect of armed conflicts on wildlife, particularly in Africa, the Council recommended that the census of the great apes be undertaken once conflict was over. The Council took note of the convening in 2005 of the first intergovernmental meeting on GRASP in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) with a view to adopting the GRASP world strategy, work plan and statutes. The Council took note of Brazil’s interest in setting up a project modelled on GRASP.

**7.4 Other important events**

147. The Council took note of the planned International Symposium on “Conserving Cultural and Biological Diversity: The Role of Sacred Natural Sites and Cultural Landscapes” which will be held from 29 May to 2 June 2005 at the United Nations University in Tokyo within the context of the World Expo 2005 in Japan. The symposium is organized as a joint endeavour of the Science Sector (Division of Ecological Sciences, MAB Programme) and the Culture Sector (World Heritage Centre) to promote studies on the interrelationships of cultural and biological diversity.

148. The Council also took note of the planned International Scientific Conference on “The Future of Arid Lands Revisited” which UNESCO-MAB would organize in 2006 and which would be embedded within the “International Year of Deserts and Desertification” which had been proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly for 2006. Delegates from the Russian Federation and the United States of America suggested that previous work undertaken in the field of arid land studies, such as publications by Gilbert F. White and MAB Young Scientists Award winners, be valorized for the preparation of the conference.

149. Several Council members recalled that in their national and regional reports, they had also mentioned upcoming important events such as conferences and meetings that related to the MAB Programme; these included a conference on Desert Biome Management in December 2004 (Egypt), the Tenth Session of the COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2004 (Argentina), a meeting on desert management and environmentally-friendly products in April 2005 (Egypt), a conference on humid tropics in 2006 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO Conference on Humid Tropics in 1956 (Sri Lanka), a EuroMAB meeting in September 2005 to be held at the planned Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve (Austria), and a workshop on dryland management in the light of climate change in 2006 (India).

## **8. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING**

### **8.1 Global Initiative on Biodiversity Education and Public Awareness**

150. The Council was informed of the Global Initiative on Biodiversity Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for whose coordination and implementation in UNESCO the Secretariat has a focal point function. The Council noted with satisfaction that an implementation plan for the Global Initiative prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with CBD and a number of other partners had been endorsed by the seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) of the CBD convened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2004. The COP7 of the CBD had also instructed the financial mechanism of the CBD, i.e. the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to enable States to implement the actions contained in the implementation plan. The Council urged MAB National Committees to contact their counterparts coordinating GEF affairs to explore the development of projects and programmes. The Council noted that there must be considerable opportunities for such project development for potential GEF financing at the national level given the fact the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will be launched, under the leadership of UNESCO, in 2005.

### **8.2 Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (ERAIFT)**

151. The Council endorsed the document presented by the Secretariat on the development of ERAIFT, which had achieved excellent results since the Council's seventeenth session. The Council expressed its overall support for the ERAIFT model, which responded to the need to train *in situ* a new generation of managers and specialists capable of applying the ecosystem approach and of combining the most advanced data in the fields of ecology, economy and the new technologies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular MDG 1 (eradication of poverty) and MDG 7 (environmental sustainability).

152. The Council noted with satisfaction the important information concerning the awarding of diplomas by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, to DESS (*Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*) students at ERAIFT during his official visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 2003. The Council welcomed the substantial support provided to ERAIFT by Belgium and the European Commission for 2002-2007. The Council also welcomed the internationalization of student recruitment by ERAIFT with the help of extrabudgetary funds from those two new donors. In the same context, the signing of an agreement protocol between ENEF (Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts) of Gabon and ERAIFT (Democratic Republic of the Congo) in the framework of the European Commission

support project was very well received by the Council as a model of South-South cooperation to be promoted by the Secretariat. The Council noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with the recommendations made at its seventeenth session, cooperation ties had been established between ERAIFT and Columbia University in the framework of the Biosphere and Society programme (CUBES) and that ERAIFT had served as a reference for a feasibility study on the creation of training centres in biosphere reserves.

153. Taking account of the progress accomplished, the Council strongly recommended that ERAIFT continue as a “Regional flagship MAB Project” for the following period, at the same time using that project as a development model for other regional training centres for forests and other ecological systems, including arid lands and wetlands. The Council also approved the Secretariat’s intention to promote ERAIFT as one of NEPAD’s “centres of excellence”.

### **8.3 United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development**

154. Following a presentation by the MAB Secretariat on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which will officially be launched on 1 January 2005 and for which UNESCO has overriding coordinating responsibilities, the Council agreed on the fact that this Decade presented an enormous opportunity for the MAB constituency. The Council stressed that the Decade should be utilized to promote lessons learned in relation to sustainable development in the context of MAB through appropriate activities, the design of which should be facilitated by the MAB Secretariat and by MAB National Committees, and which should be implemented with the assistance of appropriate partners. The Council also agreed that the Decade represented an opportunity for building further capacity in this area.

### **8.4 MAB Young Scientists Awards**

155. The Secretariat introduced paragraphs 22 to 28 in document SC-04/CONF.204/6 concerning the MAB Awards, as well as the results of a questionnaire addressed to the previous Award winners that underlined the importance of the Awards in terms of promoting a new generation of MAB researchers. Council Members examined the specific questions included in the document that had been elaborated during the Bureau meeting in July 2003 concerning the Award Scheme together with suggestions for the establishment of non-financial Awards, such as MAB Diplomas and MAB Medals for young scientists, including from developed countries.

156. After a rich debate that highlighted the strong support for the MAB Young Scientists Awards in general, the Council decided to retain the features of the scheme in its present format and instructed the Secretariat to undertake a consultation using e-mail with Member States concerning their views and suggestions for how the scheme could be further strengthened, expanded, and possibly made more efficient in terms of its administrative requirements. The MAB Bureau, at its session scheduled for April 2005, should use the information provided through this consultation, which should be done using e-mail, as the basis for the preparation of concrete suggestions and the Council voted in favour of entrusting the Bureau to act thereon.

157. One delegate stressed the fact that it would be easier to mobilize the involvement of young scientists in the Programme, and financial support for their MAB research, if the mission statement of MAB was made more concrete. The Secretariat promised to look into this, as well as to give special attention to fund raising in favour of the MAB Awards.

158. The Council took note of the MAB Young Scientist Award Laureates selected by the MAB Bureau for 2005 (as listed in Annex 5).

### **8.5 Biosphere Reserve Management Training Centres**

159. The Secretariat briefly introduced paragraphs 29 to 33 in document SC-04/CONF.204/6 concerning Biosphere Reserve Management Training Centres as a generic concept for training and education programmes, networks and associated institutional structures related to biosphere reserves. The Council benefited from a presentation by the Coordinator of the São Paulo City Green Belt Biosphere Reserve (Brazil) concerning Eco-job Training Centres established for young people throughout the reserve, as well as the reserve's interdisciplinary Sub-Global Assessment under the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. These two examples highlighted the contributions biosphere reserves can play in terms of training of local stakeholders, as well as for undertaking complex research of high importance for education and policy-making for sustainable development involving networks of scientists and universities.

160. Members recalled that the issue of Biosphere Reserve Management Training Centres had been discussed in the Council before, and that a number of spontaneous training programmes and related networks had emerged in the last few years, such as in the Mediterranean involving biosphere reserves and academic institutions and organizations in Morocco, France and Spain. The extent to which such networks and programmes could be formally recognized by MAB was discussed, as were the issue of financing for biosphere reserve training activities and institutional structures. It was recalled that several training programmes already are recognized and promoted by the regional MAB networks, such as those developed by the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN). The delegate of India suggested that training centres be established in the vicinity of well-managed biosphere reserves so that the trainees have the benefit of field demonstration.

161. The Council welcomed the diversity of approaches to meet the training needs of various stakeholder groups developed in and by biosphere reserves, and for capturing the opportunities biosphere reserves provide for training and research for societies at large. The Council invited the Secretariat to take stock of this diversity by collecting information on ongoing and planned future training activities, networks and centres involving biosphere reserves and to make this information available on the MABNet. The MAB Bureau was invited to prepare for the next MAB-ICC, suggestions concerning how these training activities, networks and centres could be further strengthened and expanded, taking into account the needs and opportunities of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in this context. The track record of existing biosphere reserves concerning management issues should be taken into account when considering the establishment of such centres.

## **9. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY**

162. The Council recalled that at its seventeenth session, it discussed this policy and took note of the situation at different levels; i.e. biosphere reserves, MAB National Committees and the Secretariat. Recommendations of the seventeenth session of ICC included the need to make better use of biosphere reserves to develop information activities and the importance of developing the MABNet.

163. The Council reviewed document SC-04/CONF.204/7 on progress made since the seventeenth session and welcomed the Secretariat initiative to cooperate with the UNESCO Communications Sector for setting up community multimedia centres in selected biosphere reserves that are included in the UNESCO/UNEP-GEF Project for capacity-building for sustainable development in West Africa. The Council noted that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, to be launched in 2005 under UNESCO's leadership, is likely to open up similar opportunities for intersectoral cooperation in UNESCO, particularly with the Education Sector.

164. The Council noted with satisfaction that MABNet, one of UNESCO's earliest websites established in 1995, is due to commemorate its tenth anniversary in 2005. The Council noted that the tenth anniversary of MABNet coincided with the launch of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development and hence welcomed the Secretariat proposal to launch a MABNet based competition series, targeting a range of educational institutions and groups, for each year of the Decade. The Council reviewed the proposal contained in Annex 1 of document SC-04/CONF.204/7 and agreed to the outline of the proposal, including the proposed focus of the competition in the first year of the Decade in 2005, which coincides with the tenth anniversary of the MABNet, on video films.

165. The Council also reviewed the design of a revised MABNet web page design and content structure and expressed its satisfaction with the proposals of the Secretariat.

166. The Council endorsed the directions proposed in document SC-04/CONF.204/7 for the future development of the MABNet and agreed that the Web must become the primary content-bearer of all information, data and knowledge of ecological sciences, MAB and biosphere reserve initiatives. This would enable the easy transfer of web-based content to any part of the world to produce local language print versions in a cost-effective manner. Several Council Members recognized the power of the Internet and the Web as tools for information and communication, and even for distance learning, education and training.

167. The Council requested the Secretariat to report on progress made with regard to the status of the implementation of the proposals to the next session of the Bureau in 2005 and to the ICC session in 2006.

## **10. REPORT OF THE INCOMING BUREAU**

168. The Bureau informed the Council that it had met on several occasions during the week. As regards the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, it had examined the following points:

- new biosphere reserve nominations and proposals for extensions or for changes in zonation;
- the periodic review reports of 12 biosphere reserves designated for a period of over ten (10) years;
- the review of progress of the Sahamalaza-Iles Radama Biosphere Reserve in Madagascar;
- and changing the name of the "Bookmark Biosphere Reserve", Australia, to the Riverland Biosphere Reserve.

169. The texts of the Bureau's decisions and recommendations on these points are given in the ICC report under section **5. WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES**.

170. The Bureau also made its selection of the 2005 MAB Young Scientists Awards: the results are reported in Annex 5.

171. The Bureau decided that it should next meet on the occasion of the 171<sup>st</sup> session of the UNESCO Executive Board (18-28 April 2005) and requested the Secretariat to propose suitable dates as soon as possible. The Bureau would then take up several of the points raised during the ICC plenary session.

## **11. DATE AND VENUE OF MAB-ICC-19**

172. It was decided that the MAB Secretariat would consider this matter in consultation with Member States in order to find the most suitable dates for MAB-ICC 19 foreseen during 2006.

## **12. OTHER MATTERS**

173. Mr Engelbert Ruoss, President of the MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves (the "Task Force") presented the main outcomes of the open meeting on quality economies in biosphere reserves, which was held on Wednesday 27 October 2004 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. He indicated that 40 representatives had debated over issues in relation with National Biosphere Reserve Origin labelling Schemes and discussed the proposal of a logo for this purpose. He also recalled the complexity of and the difficulties encountered in relation to this issue; but he stressed the crucial interest for the World Network to work on these aspects in order to increase the visibility of biosphere reserves as well as the World Network, in particular for the benefit of local communities.

174. The Council took note of the work accomplished by the Task Force and requested that its report be included in the final ICC report, which is presented in Annex 6.

175. The delegate of Benin congratulated the Secretariat for having published on the MABNet that Prof. Wangari Maathai had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her activities concerning afforestation in Kenya (more than 20 million trees had been replanted) and he requested the Council that a special tribute be expressed in this connection. He suggested in particular that a letter of congratulations by the Chair of the Council be addressed to Prof. Wangari Maathai and that possibilities for Prof. Maathai to be a "MAB ambassador" be explored. The Council thanked the delegate of Benin for this initiative and agreed that a letter would be sent to Prof. Maathai in addition to that already sent by the Director-General of UNESCO.

176. The representative of Switzerland, on behalf of the Austrian Delegation, informed the Council of the Austrian government's invitation to host a meeting of the EuroMAB Biosphere Reserve Coordinators in Austria in late 2005. Other EuroMAB countries and the Secretariat were invited to contribute to the planning of this event. The Council thanked the Swiss and Austrian MAB Committees for this initiative to strengthen EuroMAB cooperation.

177. It was decided that the Secretariat should issue a MAB circular letter summarizing the main recommendations and conclusions of the 18<sup>th</sup> session of MAB-ICC.

### **13. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

178. The Rapporteur, Mr Daniel Amlalo (Ghana), invited delegates to review the draft report of MAB-ICC 18, which was adopted following amendments introduced by the Council.

### **14. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION**

179. The Chairperson thanked the Secretariat for the meeting documents prepared both for the Council and its Bureau. He also thanked the outgoing Chair and Bureau, all Members of the Council and all those involved in the preparations and smooth running of this session and in particular the interpreters.

180. The Secretary thanked the Chair, the Bureau and the Council participants for their encouragement and support stressing that this was his first Council session and that it had been a pleasure to serve the Council on this occasion and he looked forward to further improving the Secretariat's performance in the future. He also expressed his appreciation to colleagues of the MAB Secretariat as well as to those staff members working hard behind the scenes such as translators, interpreters, secretaries and technicians, etc. particularly those who worked during the night to make the draft report available for the morning of the last day of the session.

181. The Chairperson declared the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the ICC closed.

**ANNEX 1**

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## **ANNEX 2**

### **AGENDA**

1. Opening of the session
2. Report of the outgoing Chairperson
3. Election of the Bureau of the MAB Council
4. Adoption of the agenda and timetable
5. Report of the Secretary on programmes and activities since MAB-ICC-17
6. Presentation of national reports
7. Presentation of regional networks
8. Cooperation with international partners
9. UNESCO Ecological Sciences, MAB and Biosphere Reserves - proposals for 2005-2010
10. World Network of Biosphere Reserves
  - a. ‘Seville+5’ recommendations follow-up
    - i. Preparation of Biosphere Reserve ‘Handbook’
    - ii. Quality Economies
  - b. BRIM – Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring
11. Ecosystem related activities
  - a. Mountains
  - b. Drylands
  - c. Marine, coastal and small islands
  - d. Freshwater
  - e. Urban
  - f. Tropical forests
12. Important events
  - a. International Symposium on “Tropical Forests in a Changing Global Context”, UNESCO/MAB-ARSOM (“*Académie Royale des Sciences d’Outre-Mer*”), Bruxelles, 8-9 November 2004

- b. Conference on “*Biodiversity, Science and Governance - Today's Choice for Tomorrow's Life*”, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 24-28 January 2005
- c. UNEP-UNESCO First Intergovernmental Meeting on GRASP, March 2005

13. Capacity-building and training

- a. Global Initiative on Biodiversity Communication, Education and Public Awareness
- b. Regional Post-Graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (ERAIFT)
- c. UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- d. MAB Young Scientists Awards
- e. Biosphere Reserve Management Training Centres

14. Information and communication policy

15. Report of the incoming Bureau

16. Date and venue of MAB-ICC-19

17. Other matters

18. Adoption of the report

19. Closure of the session

## ANNEX 3

### REGIONAL NETWORK REPORTS

#### **IberoMAB**

Mr Castroviejo (Spain) reported on the last IberoMAB meeting held in September 2004 in Asuncion, Paraguay. Participants came from 15 countries throughout the region. During the meeting two field trips were organized to the existing Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve and in the upcoming Chaco Biosphere Reserve that would cover a substantial part of the North of Paraguay. He mentioned that the meeting took note of progress made concerning the establishment of MAB National Committees and new biosphere reserves in Latin America and the Caribbean region. He stressed that Dominica had officially joined the network. He recalled that the working languages of the IberoMAB network were Spanish and Portuguese. Mr Castroviejo said that IberoMAB would continue to need support from the MAB Secretariat and in this context he thanked UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Office in Montevideo. The next meeting of IberoMAB will be held in Mexico at the Institute of Ecology in Xalapa, A.C., together with a regional meeting tentatively entitled “Seville, Ten Years Later”. Finally, he informed the MAB-ICC about a new upcoming electronic newsletter of the network and gave certain examples of IberoMAB publications.

#### **NordMAB Network**

Mr Martin Ohman (Finland) reported on an international Conference held on 12-15 October 2004 in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve in Latvia, which had given rise to the formulation of a new NordMAB network of expertise on biosphere reserves. This entailed cooperation amongst the existing and potential biosphere reserves in the Nordic countries, the Baltic States and North West Russia. This initiative was an outcome of the EuroMAB 2002 meeting held in Rome, Italy. MAB Sweden has taken the lead, with the financial help of the Nordic Council of Ministers, to organize this NordMAB conference: it had been very successful with some 50 participants. Several themes had been identified for new cooperative efforts in the sub-region for which funding would be sought. Mr Ohman was confident that NordMAB would have much more to report on at the next MAB ICC session.

#### **AfriMAB**

In the absence of Prof. Olabiyi J. Yai (Benin), the outgoing MAB Bureau Vice-President for Africa, Mr Hector Posset, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Benin to UNESCO, presented the report on the AfriMAB regional network. Mr Posset first paid tribute to Dr Michel Batisse, the founder of MAB, for his contributions to reinforcing UNESCO’s image in the field of environment and sustainable development. His memory was an example for present and future generations. The Council took note of the diverse and numerous MAB activities in sub-Saharan Africa since the Council’s 17<sup>th</sup> session presented by Mr Posset. With help from the Secretariat, AfriMAB, in collaboration with the Ivory Coast MAB National Committee, organized a regional workshop on “Ecotourism and ecovillages in West Africa; myth or reality?”, Lamto, Cote d’Ivoire, 8-10 April 2002. This activity brought together fifty

participants from several West African countries with the expert responsible for tourism and environment for the Blue Plan. The objective of the workshop was to focus on biosphere reserves as pilot experimental sites for case studies demonstrating the opportunities and constraints for ecotourism in the region. The participants adopted the “*Lamto Declaration*” together with a medium and long-term action plan using biosphere reserves as sites with a comparative advantage for testing the sustainable tourism guidelines issued by the CBD. This activity was regarded as a significant AfriMAB contribution to the success of “2002 - International Ecotourism Year” declared by the UN General Assembly. Biosphere reserve periodic review workshops were organized with secretariat support on Kenyan biosphere reserves (Malindi, July 2002) and on Central African biosphere reserves (Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 22-24 December 2003). The Council noted with satisfaction the news of the creation of the first transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) in Africa: the “W” TBR covering more than one million hectares in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. The UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences officially inaugurated this TBR on 17 November 2003. The Council was pleased to note the excellent collaboration existing between UNESCO/MAB, the European Union ECOPAS regional programme and the private sector, through the “E7” project consortium. The Council also noted that countries in the region had put forward several initiatives for new biosphere reserves, including TBRs in sub-Saharan Africa for which nominations are being prepared. Among them are Mount Elgon TBR between Kenya and Uganda in East Africa, Djoudj and Diwling TBR between Mauritania and Senegal, and d’Arly-Pendjari TBR in West Africa, and in Central Africa a planned RBT between Cabinda, Angola, Luki BR, DRC and Dimonika BR, Congo, covering a characteristic Miombo ecosystem. This last project may receive GEF support through UNDP Angola. The Secretariat also received requests for support for creation of coastal biosphere reserves in Angola, Cape Verde and the Comoros. For the last two preliminary plans have been made. The Council noted the work of the Secretariat, which had resulted in funding of US\$ 2.4 million from UNEP/GEF to implement the regional project “Strengthening scientific and technical capacity for effective management and sustainable use of biological diversity in biosphere reserves in the arid and semi-arid zones of West Africa” for the next four years (2004-2008). The Round Table of Ministers responsible for biosphere reserves in the six countries concerned – Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal – adopted the “*Paris Declaration*” recognizing biosphere reserves as operational sites with the framework of NEPAD. The Council noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat had also succeeded in mobilizing €2,864,685 from several donors, notably Belgium (€1,273,685) and the European Commission (€1,591,000) to support ERAIFT for the period 2002-2007. This funding allowed UNESCO as the executing agency to diversify international student recruitment for ERAIFT courses. The representative of Benin thanked the Secretariat for their follow-up to Resolution 32C/DR.72 concerning the implementation of the SIMDAS “Sustainable Integrated Management and Development of Arid and Semi-arid areas of Southern Africa”, which involves the 14 southern African countries belonging to SADC. This is a joint IHP-MAB flagship project on the sustainable management of land-water interactions. The Council also noted the pursuit by the Secretariat of the publication series “Review of African medicines and pharmacopoeias” published by the CENPREBAF with support from UNESCO/MAB, IPGRI and GRIPT, as well as the contribution of the Natural Sciences Sector and particularly the Ecological Sciences Division and the Dakar, Nairobi and Libreville field offices to the successful “CONGO-EVENT”. The Council equally noted that the AfriMAB network had participated in all the meetings of the Steering Committee and the African Ministers of Environment Conference dealing with NEPAD.

## **ArabMAB**

Mr Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi (Lebanon), Chair of the ArabMAB Network, reported on the ArabMAB Network Activities for the years 2002-2004. Mr Ghassan congratulated Mr Driss Fassi for the success he has achieved during the period in which he chaired the Bureau. He reported on a recent meeting of the ArabMAB Coordinating council meeting held in Beirut in March 2004, during which the activities of the ArabMAB for the period 2004-2006 were discussed and fine-tuned, and during which the mechanism for funding the Network was analysed and submitted for further improvement. He also reported that three Bureau meetings were held to follow up the activities of the ArabMAB. One was held within the framework of the International Workshop on Combating Desertification and Rehabilitation of Degraded Drylands and Biosphere Reserves that was held in Aleppo (May 2002). The second was held immediately following in March 2004 and the third was held within the framework of the second workshop of Eco-hydrology in September 2004. Finally, Mr Ghassan informed the Council that two expert meetings were held in Damascus in May 2002 to outline the map of the proposed Transboundary reserve and on “Rehabilitation of Degraded Ecosystems in Arab countries” in March 2004, and that three ArabMAB countries (Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia) from the ArabMAB Network were contributing to the SUMAMAD Project (Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands).

## **South and Central Asian Biosphere MAB Network (SACAM)**

Sri Lanka, on behalf of the South and Central Asian MAB (SACAM) Network, informed on the results of the Second SACAM Network Meeting which had been held from 25 – 28 September 2004 in Zibakenar (Islamic Republic of Iran). The meeting had focused on “Sustainable Ecotourism in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas” and recommended the strengthening of capacity building and the exchange of experts within the sub-region so as to promote expertise on sustainable ecotourism. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed the establishment of a Regional Centre for Ecotourism Studies in that country, which was endorsed in principle by the SACAM countries pending the submission of a draft proposal on the mandates and functioning of the proposed centre. Sri Lanka also informed of the Iranian moderated website of the SACAM Network ([www.sacam.irunesco.net](http://www.sacam.irunesco.net)) and the publication of the first SACAM Newsletter as undertaken by the Maldives. The MAB National Committee of Bangladesh is currently exploring the hosting of the next SACAM Meeting in 2006, which would focus *inter alia* on the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems being one of the major concerns of the sub-region. The SACAM Network also welcomed future collaboration with the two other sub-regional networks in Asia, i.e. the South-East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SEABRNet) and the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN).

## **East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABNR), South-East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRNet) and the project on Asia-Pacific Co-operation for the Sustainable Use of renewable Natural resources in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas (ASPACO)**

Mr Iwatsuki (Japan), as a member of the former Bureau of the MAB-ICC, reported on the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABNR), the Ecotones Programme, the South-East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SEABRNet), and the ASPACO Project. As regards

EABRN, he summarized the results of the EABRN meeting held in Hustai Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia) in August 2003, and informed on the taskforce of EABRN on training, new publications of DPR of Korea and the next EABRN meeting to be held at Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea) in August 2005. The financial contribution of the Republic of Korea to EABRN development was acknowledged. For Ecotones and SEABRNet, Mr Iwatsuki recalled the 10-year scientific cooperation of Southeast and East Asia in degraded ecosystems and in coastal zones, and briefed the Council of the regional Ecotone workshop and SEABRNet joint meeting held in Cambodia in October 2003, which included a field evaluation of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve. Freshwater ecosystems and cooperation of IHP and MAB through SEABRNet and the Ecotone Programme, supported by funding from Japan, were underlined. The Project “Asian-Pacific Co-operation for Sustainable Management of Renewable Natural Resources in Biosphere Reserves and Similarly Managed Areas (ASPACO)”, which also benefits from Japanese funding over a four years’ period, will hold its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in Palau in December 2004. On-going projects were carried out such as in Siberut Island and Mahakam Delta (Indonesia), Can Gio and Red River Delta (Vietnam). Moreover, several new initiatives for biosphere reserve proposals are currently underway in the Pacific region coordinated by the UNESCO-Apia Office. Japan also mentioned the World Expo, which will be held in Aichi (Japan) in 2005; as the Expo’s mottos are “nature’s wisdom” and “celebrating diversity”, the MAB representative of Japan hoped for a strong involvement of the UNESCO-MAB Programme at the World Expo. Finally, the representative of Japan, expressed satisfaction over the recent development of MAB networks and biosphere reserves in the Asia-Pacific region, and welcomed the good support provided by the UNESCO field offices in the region.

## ANNEX 4

### PERIODIC REVIEW OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES DESIGNATED MORE THAN 10 YEARS AGO

The Advisory Committee examined the periodic review reports received by the Secretariat for 12 biosphere reserves, together with the summaries prepared by the Secretariat to facilitate this work. For this, the Advisory Committee broke into small groups by region, and reported back to the full Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee made the specific recommendations below, which would be transmitted to the MAB International Coordinating Council and to the State concerned.

#### CHINA

##### **Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria. However, the zonation scheme could be improved.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Chinese authorities:

- reconsider the zonation in line with General Development Plan of Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve, 2003, which defines the appropriate size of the different zones and recommends in particular a significant extension of the buffer zones;
- provide an updated zonation map, with a clear distinction between buffer and transition zones.

The Advisory Committee also recommended that the MAB Secretariat organize study tours, for relevant staff, to other biosphere reserves where human-elephant conflicts are being satisfactorily addressed.

#### EGYPT

##### **Wadi Allaqui Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the Wadi Allaqui Biosphere Reserve fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria. However the management plan/policy for the site needed to be finalized and the zonation revised to take into account the specific problems of grazing.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Egyptian authorities:

- be commended for the quality of the periodic review report;
- finalize the management plan/policy as soon as possible;
- promote increased cooperation among the two Egyptian Biosphere Reserves (Omayed and Wadi Allaqui);
- work towards improving the livelihoods of the local communities including by seeking external funding for the Wadi Allaqui Biosphere Reserve, such as under the Global Environment Facility;
- consider the reviewing of the zonation, in close cooperation with the local communities, to fully take into account the grazing system in order to:
  - take more fully into account the hydrographic limits of the wadis;

- ensure the integrity of core areas in terms of long term protection of biodiversity;
- provide a zonation map accordingly.
- consider discussing with the Sudanese authorities the possibility of establishing a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve when the situation permits.

The Advisory Committee also recommended that the MAB Secretariat fully involve the Wadi Allaqui Biosphere Reserve in relevant UNESCO-MAB activities, such as ArabMAB, the Arab Region Ecotechnie Network, ecotourism activities and transboundary biosphere reserves, as appropriate.

## GERMANY

### **Pfälzerwald Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the Pfälzerwald Biosphere Reserve fulfilled the three functions, in particular the development function, and the biosphere reserves criteria. The site could be considered as a model for sustainable development. The Advisory Committee also considered that the functioning of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve with *Vosges du Nord* in France was also very significant, with many joint activities.

The Advisory recommended that the German authorities:

- improve the functioning of the Biosphere Reserve association in particular to actively engage the responsibility of all the partners and to cooperate with all relevant authorities, institutions and stakeholders;
- revise the zonation to increase the core area and provide an updated zonation map accordingly.

The Advisory Committee also requested the MAB Secretariat to provide support to the biosphere reserve by providing information on best practices of approaches to ‘sustainable businesses’ in other biosphere reserves.

## RHÖN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Advisory Committee considered that the Rhön Biosphere Reserve fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria. However, the zonation could be improved to better fulfill to the conservation function.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the German authorities:

- be commended on the quality of the report and on the exemplary work in implementing the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework;
- revise the zonation to include more acidophilic beech forest in core areas, notably through the zonation of the Wildflecken military grounds within the biosphere reserve which are as yet ‘unzoned’;
- provide an updated zonation map accordingly;
- consider updating the “biosphere reserve framework concept” to engage additional economic sectors, and
- enhance responsibilities of all stakeholders, institutions and authorities for the biosphere reserve idea, taking the Canadian biosphere reserve ‘cooperation plans’ as a possible example.

### **South-East Rügen Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the site, although rather small, fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria. However, the biosphere reserve would be improved if the concept were to be applied to the entire island and its marine fringe, taking advantage of the plans to set up the entire island as a Nature Park.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the German authorities:

- be commended on the high quality of the report and on the innovative manner in which the biosphere reserve development function has been applied;
- pursue drawing up the action plan and revise the zonation to extend the core areas and the buffer zones, as recommended by the German MAB Committee;
- provide a zonation map of the marine zone;
- consider the possibility of expanding the biosphere reserve in the future to cover the entire island and its marine fringe, creating appropriate institutional mechanisms to engage the main actors in nature conservation, economic development (especially tourism) scientific research and monitoring, and environmental education;

## **GUINEA**

### **MONTS NIMBA BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

The Advisory Committee considered that the Monts Nimba Biosphere Reserve generally fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria, but that the protection and management of the site could be improved, in particular to take into account the many development problems incurred by the presence of refugees.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Guinean authorities:

- adopt a regulation to ensure the legal protection of the two core areas Bossou and Déré;
- encourage CEGEN (*Centre de Gestion de l'Environnement du Nimba*), SSMN (*Station Scientifique des Monts Nimba*) and IREB (*Institut de Recherche Environnemental de Bossou*) to closely cooperate in the development and implementation of a management plan or policy, in close cooperation with the local communities, taking advantage of the GEF project;
- consider the possibility of establishing a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve involving Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire (already a World Heritage site between Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea);
- be commended for on-going research programmes on great apes and, in this regard, facilitate the research results, especially within the framework of GRASP and the AfriMAB Thematic Group on scientific research;
- closely monitor the trends resulting from the mining activities and the settlement of refugees;
- reinforce education and awareness-building activities to promote participation and appropriation of the Biosphere Reserve by the local communities.

The Advisory Committee also recommended that the MAB Secretariat provide support to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia for the organization of a technical transboundary workshop, when the situation permits.

### **Massif du Ziama Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the Massif du Ziama Biosphere Reserve did not fully fulfill the three functions, since there were no inhabitants in the biosphere reserve.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Guinean authorities:

- consider extending the biosphere reserve to include the villages in a newly established transition area. Such an extension could be achieved by consultation with local communities, taking into account the recommendations of the study of the environmental impact of the asphalt road, and would not need a change in legal status;
- clarify the zonation according to international biosphere reserve criteria and provide an updated zonation map;
- be commended for the long-term studies undertaken on great apes and to use the results of these studies as the national scale for preserving great apes and for promoting ecotourism in the region;
- continue the research efforts in the site by encouraging graduate students to reinforce the 'logistic' function.

The Advisory Committee also recommended that the MAB Secretariat assist the Guinean authorities, with the involvement of the Guinean students at ERAIFT, in organizing a workshop on the zonation and the management of the biosphere reserve.

## **SPAIN**

When examining the four periodic reviews from Spain, the Advisory Committee noted that they were all located in the Province of Andalusia and that the questions raised by the periodic review should be discussed in the context of the Andalusian Biosphere Reserves Network.

### **Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve generally fulfilled the three functions but that the zonation scheme needed improvement and a management plan or policy was required.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Spanish authorities:

- explain the current zonation in accordance of international biosphere reserve criteria and terminology, and clarify the respective figures for each category of zone, indicating the relation with the Nature Park;
- provide an updated zonation map accordingly;
- prepare a management plan or policy for the biosphere reserve.

### **Doñana Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve did not fully fulfill the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria. In particular, there was no transition area and there was no specific authority or mechanism to manage the biosphere reserve as a whole.

The Advisory Committee also expressed its concern about the various threats to the site from upstream agricultural and industrial activities. In this regard, the Committee wished to commend the Spanish authorities for the measures taken under the Doñana rehabilitation project following the Aznacollar accident.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the Spanish authorities:

- establish a mechanism to coordinate biosphere reserve issues amongst all stakeholders, authorities and institutions;
- in order to reconcile the conservation and economic development of Doñana and its region, consider enlarging the biosphere reserve to cover the whole delta and appropriate areas upstream;
- and use the biosphere reserve as a platform for a dialogue amongst all the stakeholders, in line with the sustainable development plan for Doñana and its surroundings giving specific consideration to water management and mining activities.

### **Marismas Del Odiel Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the site was not large enough to be a truly functional biosphere reserve and should be extended. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Spanish authorities:

- extend the biosphere reserve, and in particular enlarging the outer transition area, including marine zones and the urban centres, in order to respond to the criterion of “approaches to sustainable development at a regional scale”;
- consider the establishment of a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve with Portugal;
- provide a progress report for the next Advisory Committee meeting.

### **Grazalema Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that the biosphere reserve generally fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere criteria. However, improvements could be made by a better zonation scheme and extension of the site.

The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Spanish authorities:

- extend the biosphere reserve to the limits of the Natural Park;
- revise the existing zonation in line with international biosphere reserve criteria and terminology;
- ensure adequate legal protection of the core areas;
- provide information on the management policy or plan and on coordination and communication mechanisms in order to improve coordination among administrations in charge of the management.

## **SRI LANKA**

### **Sinharaja Biosphere Reserve**

The Advisory Committee considered that Sinharaja Biosphere reserve generally fulfilled the three functions and the biosphere reserve criteria, and in particular provided good examples of means to ensure local community participation. However, there was no established transition area.

The Advisory Committee took note of the specific recommendations made during the periodic review process, and which concerned in particular:

- the extension of the participatory management model to new areas in the southern buffer zone;
- the integration of large plantations (both private and state owned) into the participatory management process;
- the regular evaluation of the participatory management process with the possible creation of an award for the community based organizations which contributed to forest management, and increasing of their entrepreneurial development;
- the dissemination of results of pilot studies;
- the focus on ecotourism;
- a better understanding between researchers and the Biosphere Reserve staff.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the Sri Lankan authorities:

- be commended on the way the review had been conducted in association with local stakeholders;
- take into consideration the detailed recommendations which were made during the national periodic review process;
- revise the zonation, considering the possibility of including the adjacent Handapnella Plains within the biosphere reserve to enhance biodiversity conservation, as recommended by field biologists during this review and establishing a transition area;
- provide an updated map, and rename the zones according to the international biosphere reserves criteria;
- encourage and strengthen cooperation within sub-regional and World networks and with the KDN future biosphere reserve (in the process of designation).

The Advisory Committee also recommended that the MAB Secretariat promote the experience of Sinharaja within these networks.

## ANNEX 5

### 2005 MAB YOUNG SCIENTISTS AWARD LAUREATES SELECTED BY THE MAB BUREAU

**Mr Frantz Smith, Belize**

*“Phytoplankton of aquaculture effluent canals and a pristine site on the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site”.*

**Mr Rogrigo Jesus Medeiros, Brazil**

*“Management of Biodiversity in the Mata Atlântica Biosphere Reserve: Integrated Conservation Models and Benefits for Communities of the Sustainable Use of Biological Resources of Forest Ecosystems from the Region”.*

**Ms Latinka Topalova, Bulgaria**

*“Fire and environment: ecological and cultural aspects. Through conflict to sustainable management - case study in the Douпки-Djindjiritza Biosphere Reserve, Bulgaria”.*

**Ms Zheng Han, China**

*“To Promote Biodiversity Conservation through Tibetan Sacred Mountain Belief - The Case of Yading Biosphere Reserve, Sichuan, China”.*

**Mr Yun Chol Nam, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea / République populaire démocratique de Corée**

*“Impacts on ecosystem diversity by human activities in the Mt. Kuwol area”.*

**Ms Liseth Carolina Perez Alvarado, Guatemala**

*“The Ichthyofauna of Refugio de Vida Silvestre Bocas del Polochic and Lake Izabal watershed: Composition, Distribution and Ecology”.*

**Mr Ali Bali, Iran**

*“Case study on non-sustainable use of upper watershed forests of Golestan National Park and its effect on the livelihoods of local communities”.*

**Mr Qasem Alnewash, Jordan**

*“Towards Strategic Environmental Education in the Dana Biosphere Reserve”.*

**Mr Iddi Mwanyoka, Tanzania**

*“Evaluation of community participation in water resources management: the case study of the East Usambara Biosphere Reserve”.*

**Ms Dilfuza Egamberdiyeva, Uzbekistan**

*“Comparative analysis of the dynamics and functions of rhizosphere soil microbial community in two ecosystems of the Chatkal Biosphere Reserve”.*

## ANNEX 6

### REPORT FROM TASK FORCE MEETING

**Meeting report delivered by Mr Engelbert Ruoss to the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the MAB-ICC on Friday, 29 October 2004, concerning the Open Meeting of the MAB Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27 October 2004**

Some 40 representatives of various Member States attended the meeting, which also benefited from the participation and comments of the representatives of the UNESCO Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs, and the Bureau of Public Information.

Members of the Task Force on the Development of Quality Economies in Biosphere Reserves presented the meeting participants with the Task Force approach to the notion of quality economies and to the state of the art of the discussion in connection with biosphere reserve labelling schemes of commercial goods and services and their producers and providers. An informal draft of recommendations was submitted to the meeting participants concerning national biosphere reserve origin labelling schemes, the discussion on which I will shortly report to you and that I suggest be annexed to the Council report.

According to the Task Force, the goal of quality economies in biosphere reserves is to raise awareness of opportunities provided through sustainable development to increase economic benefits for local people, as well as to raise awareness of the value of conservation of nature and culture.

The discussion that followed the introductions of the Task Force Members focused primarily on the need for, difficulties and opportunities involved in the adoption and management of a common biosphere reserve origin label. Indeed, the discussion underlined the many complex issues and difficulties involved in creating branding, as well as quality labels, which implies defining and measuring product quality, which is both costly and difficult to do. It was emphasized that a logo that recognizes the origin of biosphere reserve products actually implicitly also implies standards of sustainable development, because all biosphere reserves should be managed in line with the MAB Seville strategy. A biosphere reserve in itself therefore implies, albeit indirectly, a 'certification' of higher quality or sustainability of goods and services.

The participants agreed that the main benefit in creating a common origin label would be to increase visibility and recognition of products and services from biosphere reserves, as well as to promote networking among the sites. The point was also made that transparency and credibility in relation to the process of implementing sustainable development would strengthen the biosphere reserve concept and the World Network. Participants considered that the further development of the quality economy concept was an important new dimension of the MAB Programme and that it should focus on improving prosperity of local stakeholders as well as promoting conservation and sustainable development.

The Task Force will suggest that interested biosphere reserves consider prototyping the process on the local level and that biosphere reserves consider launching case studies on national biosphere reserve origin labels to promote quality economies and to start the process of elaborating national criteria through a local stakeholders' decision process for the use of their labels. This would help us to get know-how on the feasibility of implementing such a common label. The Task Force will provide interested member states with the logo produced by the designer Daniel Felder from Lucerne, who has agreed to the free use of the logo throughout the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

The meeting participants encouraged the Task Force to continue the work on quality economies and labelling, to elaborate case studies based on a common label, to harmonize the use of a logo through the Member States by defining a framework for its application and to develop a more detailed concept in co-operation with the UNESCO Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs in order to present criteria, minimal standards and guidelines for a UNESCO logo for Biosphere Reserve commercial products and services.

The Task Force asked the MAB Council to take note of the progress, as well as the report of the Task Force Chair connected to the discussion on national biosphere reserve origin labelling schemes and to encourage Member States to co-operate on the development of national labelling schemes under their authority in support of quality economies to the benefit of local people.

29 October 2004, Engelbert Ruoss, Chair of Task Force on Quality Economies