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**ITEM 10 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: PROPOSALS FOR NEW BIOSPHERE RESERVES AND EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO BIOSPHERE RESERVES THAT ARE PART OF THE WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES (WNBR)**

1. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions to biosphere reserves that are already part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) were considered at the last meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 17 to 20 March 2014.
2. The members of the Advisory Committee formulated their recommendations regarding specific sites in line with the recommendation categories as follows:
  - *Nominations recommended for approval:* the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional information is needed.
  - *Nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information:* the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve subject to receiving the specific information as requested by the Advisory Committee. If the latter is received by the Secretariat **by 15 May 2014**, it will be considered by the next session of the MAB-ICC to be held from 10-13 June 2014 and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR.
  - *Nominations deferred:* the proposed site is deferred as it does not meet the criteria for biosphere reserves as stipulated in the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves and/or major clarifications with regard to the application of the Framework to the proposed area is requested by the Advisory Committee. The relevant National Authorities are therefore invited to revise the nomination and/or provide the requested clarifications for examination by the Advisory Committee at its next meeting.
  - *Nominations rejected:* the proposed site is rejected as it is not sufficiently compatible with the principles of the MAB Programme.
3. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the attached recommendations of the IACBR as well as the additional information received by the Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information and nominations recommended to be deferred. The Bureau will recommend for the consideration of the MAB ICC final decisions on all sites included in this document.
4. The MAB ICC is invited to decide on the new sites for inclusion in the WNBR and extensions of biosphere reserves already included in the WNBR that could be approved.

## Recommendations of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves:

### Nominations recommended for approval

**Mt. Chilbo (Democratic People's Republic of Korea).** The Advisory Committee took note of this site which covers a total surface area of 50,340 ha consisting of 2,930 ha as core area, 26,500 ha as buffer zone and 20,910 ha as transition area. The Advisory Committee took note of this site which covers a total surface area of 50,340 ha consisting of 2,930ha as core area, 26,500ha as buffer zone and 20,910ha as transition area. Democratic People's Republic of Korea has reported that the site has been "formed at the coastal area of the East Sea of Korea by fault movement and volcanic eruption during the period of the late Neogene and the early Quaternary". It is of great significance in biodiversity conservation for its distribution of 16 species of plants endemic to Korea and 30 species of nationally and globally threatened plants and animals. This site is described as a very important storehouse of genetic diversity with 132 species of medical herbs, 67 species of wild vegetables, 16 species of wild fruits, and notably a specialty mushroom *Tricholoma matsutake* (pine mushroom, it is highly priced due to its distinct spicy-aromatic odour which is of great economic and scientific value.

Tourism in the buffer zone and agriculture and fishery in the transition area are the main economic activities in the proposed biosphere reserve. It has 160 tourist attraction sites and has a developed infrastructure for tourism and handles myriad of visitors every year. The site's potential to develop and implement an ecotourism industry is mentioned in the nomination file. Many historical remains and relics have been well preserved in the Mount Chilbo Reserve. For example Kaesim temple built in 826 and about 11 natural monuments. It is envisaged that this and other assets which attract people to the site will help it fully implement the function of logistic support through the promotion of public awareness on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. It is reported that plans are underway to create a demonstration site for conservation and suitable development in the transition area and organize the regular field training and lectures for land management staff.

Local community and public authorities' participation is described. However, no cultural and social impact assessment has been conducted yet. The Advisory Committee noted that no management policy or plan for the biosphere reserve has been established. The Committee recommended that a proposed management plan for the biosphere reserve be developed and submitted one year from the notification of nomination approval. The Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

**Bosque Seco (Ecuador).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposed biosphere reserve by Ecuador. The area is located in south-western Ecuador, it covers approximately 501,040 ha of which 317,600 ha comprises dry forests and scrub similar to that of the Noroeste Biosphere Reserve in Peru. The dry forests located within the proposed biosphere reserve are the most extensive and best preserved in the country. Their rarity makes them a conservation priority as 97% of dry forest ecosystems are on the verge of extinction. The proposed reserve is also home to one of the highest concentrations of endemic birds in South America. Fifty-one species have been identified in addition to fifteen endemic species of trees and shrubs, and three endemic species of mammals. The area has been classified as the Tumbesino Endemism Centre and forms part of the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot. It also includes significant population of flagship species, such as the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) and mantled howler (*Alouatta palliata*).

The proposed area covers eight counties in the provinces of Loja and El Oro, inhabited by 106,000 people. The main economic activities are livestock rearing and agriculture (coffee,

fruit and corn). Numerous manifestations of culture and identity are expressed through regional productive systems (e.g. bordered systems, livestock management and albarradas) and local crafts. The area also encompasses more than 100 heritage sites, including the Puyango Petrified Forest – the largest of its kind in the world – and the city of Catacocha, an Ecuadorian national heritage site. The proposed biosphere reserve would guarantee ecosystem services of water regulation for the Catamayo-Chira and Puyango Tumbes bi-national basins.

The Advisory Committee concluded that this proposal meets the criteria for biosphere reserves and that there is a great potential to create a transboundary biosphere reserve with Peru. The Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

**Mont-Viso/Area della Biosfera del Monviso (France/Italy).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of the signed political agreement between the two countries to establish the Mont-Viso / Area della Biosfera del Monviso transboundary biosphere reserve, as a follow up of the recommendation of the 25th session of the MAB-ICC.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal be used as a model for transboundary biosphere reserve proposal. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.

**Minami-Alps (Japan).** The total surface area for this site is 302,474 ha consisting of 24,970 ha as core area, 72,389 ha as buffer zone and 205,115 ha as transition area. This site is formed from the Mountain area, enclosed on two sides by the south-flowing Fuji and Tenryu Rivers.

It includes the Koma Mountains, the Akaishi Mountains (hereafter termed the “Minami Alps”) and the Ina Mountains. Recorded plants growing at altitudes above 800 meters in the Minami Alps include 138 families and 1,635 species of tracheophytes, 51 families and 248 species of mosses, and 15 families and 98 species of lichens. The flora of the Minami Alps is characterized by a relict distribution of plants that have migrated south along the Japanese archipelago in the ice age when it was connected by land to the continent. The fauna in this area include 15 families and 39 species of mammals, 35 families and 102 species of birds, 4 families and 9 species of reptiles, 4 families and 9 species of amphibians, 4 families and 10 species of fish, 16 families and 45 species of shellfish, and 179 families and 2,871 species of insects.

The great mountains, which are the main attraction of the Minami Alps, have hindered interactions among the areas in the Minami Alps foothills, and so, as a shared asset of these mountains, interactions among the regions will be expanded, protection and sustainable use of this superb natural environment will be fostered jointly, and an attractive region will be created which draws on the natural beauty of the Minami Alps.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the good quality of the proposal. The Committee recommended that this site be **approved** and encouraged the national authorities to develop elaborate sustainable development programmes in order to enhance the objectives of the biosphere reserve.

**Katon-Karagay (Kazakhstan).** The proposed Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve is situated in the upper part of Bukhtarma, Belaya Berel and Chyornaya Berel Rivers, including Southern slopes of Listvyaga and Katunskiy Ridges (with the eastern summit of Belukha mountain), ridges of Bukhtarma river's left bank: Sarymsakty, Tarbagatay (Southern Altai part) and Southern Altai. The northern section includes part of Katunskiy Ridge and has altitudes ranging from 2000m to 4506m (Belukha Mountain); Southern part stretches from 850m

(Bukhtarma River Valley) to 3487m (Southern Altai Ridge). Abundance of meadow herbs and flowers comprises more than 1000 species of higher vascular plants, as well as mosses, lichens and fungi. Flora of Kazakhstan Altai includes 2,450 species of 693 genera and 131 families, including: Southern Altai – 2,052 species (83.8%) of total species number of Kazakhstan Altai of 608 genera (87.7%) and 116 families (88.5%). The total surface area amounts to 1,631,940 ha consisting of 126 432 ha as core area; 855 508 ha as buffer zone and 650, 000 ha as transition area.

Local population, living in the transition area of biosphere reserve, practices mainly breeding of cattle, sheep, deers, horses and Siberian stags. Plant production is an additional activity and the main plantations are occupied by fodder, perennial and annual herbs and cereal fodder cultures (barley, oat) for feeding cows, Siberian stags, horses and sheep in winter period. Private farms are dominating in cattle-breeding sector of the region. The majority of those farms have small numbers of animals – less than 40 sheep. In the structure of land use the largest agricultural territories are located in Belovskiy rural district (39.6%), slightly smaller agricultural lands in Korobikhinskiy (14.5%) and Belkaragay (12.2%) rural districts, and the smallest in Urylskiy, Zhambylskiy, Chernovinskiy, Katon- Karagayskiy rural districts (from 7.9 to 9%).

The authorities are encouraged to develop a management plan that is inclusive of the core area, buffer zone and transition area. This management plan should include a design for sustainable grazing of cattle. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

**Crocker Range (Malaysia).** The proposed site covers an area of 350,584 ha and it is located in the south of Mouth Kinabalu (a World Heritage Site) in Sabah. Some 144,492 ha make up the core area, which consists of 139,919 ha of Crocker Range Park (CRP) and three forest reserves totalling 4,573 ha that are legally protected. An area of 60,313 ha is demarcated as the buffer zone and 145,779 ha for the transition area. The core area as described in the nomination form is covered by natural vegetation which is ecologically connected. Limited studies on flora has been conducted; however, six permanent plots dedicated to ecological monitoring have been established and more than 300 plant species had been recorded as of August 2011.

Two endemic *Rafflesia* sp. are found in the Crocker Range. A total of 737 plant species have been recorded in the Trus Madi in the eastern vicinity of the Crocker Range. With regard to fauna, the number of species recorded in CRP and its surrounding area includes: 101 mammals, 259 birds, 47 reptiles, 63 amphibians, 42 freshwater fishes. CRP is also a habitat for some endangered species, e.g. orangutan, sun bear and clouded leopard. The development and logistic function of this proposed biosphere reserve was clearly described. Community and local authority participation and involvement in the design and management of a biosphere reserve were also described. The issue of the existence of a local community in the core area was mentioned and described as contentious. The authorities, however, believe that sustainable human activities are important even within parks; therefore, the Enactment has been modified to accommodate the community in the CRP with some conditions (Section 59(1)(g), Park Enactment 1984, Amendment 2007). A local non-statutory regulation called the “Tagal system” is used as a “cultural tool” to practice sustainable fishing. Approximately 76 villages (19% of all the villages) in the proposed site are currently practicing the Tagal system and this non-statutory regulation has been incorporated into the Sabah Inland Fisheries and Agriculture Enactment 2003.

The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for a well-prepared nomination. The Committee noted the importance of this site for biodiversity conservation. The Advisory committee congratulated national authorities for extensively involving the local communities

in the nomination process for this site. They are encouraged to continue monitoring the activities of the inhabitants in the core area to ensure that the conservation functions are not compromised. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

**Inlay Lake (Myanmar).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first biosphere reserve nomination in Myanmar. Covering a total area of 561,199ha the site is situated in Taunggyi District, Southern Shan State. The core area is 29,178 ha, the buffer zone covers 114,041 ha and the transition area is 417,980 ha. The Inlay Lake wetland ecosystem is home to 267 species of birds, out of which 82 are wetland birds, 43 species of freshwater fishes, otters and turtles. In addition, fresh water fish from the inland wetland constitute the major protein food source of the people of Inlay.

In addition to its ecological importance, Inlay Lake is also unique for the socio-cultural aspects of local inhabitants, in the way they have adapted their lifestyle and livelihoods to their biophysical environment. Most of them earn their income by traditional methods of hydroponic farming, fishing and shifting cultivation. The farmers practice one of the most famous types of agriculture in the world, floating island agriculture, locally called 'Yechar', which is a form of hydroponic farming.

Inlay Lake and its watershed provides several ecosystem services on which local people depend directly or indirectly; they include: clean air, clean water, cooler climate, tranquility and serenity, fish stocks, ecotourism resources and tourism destinations, part of water supply system for hydropower plant, sustainable livelihoods and community support. There is a significant population of people (60,000) residing in the core area of the proposed Inlay Lake Biosphere Reserve.

The Advisory Committee noted with concern the significant human population in the core area and recommended limiting the visitation of tourists to this area in order to maintain its conservation and protection objectives. The Advisory Committee further urged the authorities to strictly maintain the livelihood activities of the population within the core area at the traditional level. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved**.

**Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs (United Kingdom).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal by United Kingdom, the first since 1977, which is located in the south-eastern coast of England and includes the city of Brighton. The proposed site covers an area of 38,921 ha. It comprises part of the South Downs National Park and is home to 371,500 permanent inhabitants. Chalkdown land makes up the principal terrestrial landscape of the area, with a coastline dominated by impressive chalk cliffs in the east and an urbanized plain in the west. The Advisory Committee recognized the ecological value of this site which supports more than 200 species that are on international conservation lists (IUCN and EC CITES) and more than one thousand locally rare species. Due to its variety of rare wildlife habitats, rich heritage and proximity to London, tourism is a particularly important sector with up to 12 million visitors per year. Other economic activities are farming and commercial sea fishing.

The Advisory Committee commended the efforts made to promote sustainable development in the area as well as the involvement of a diversity of stakeholders from different backgrounds and knowledge in its management and particularly highlighted the active work of The Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership encouraging local cooperation with initiatives like the 'HERE HERE' campaign. This partnership was created specifically to apply for the status of UNESCO biosphere reserve and it is composed of an extensive spectrum of public, educational, community, voluntary and private sector organizations.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the high quality of this proposal and recommended that Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.

**Bioma Pampa-Quebradas del Norte (Uruguay).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this proposal by Uruguayan authorities. The proposed Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 110,882 ha and comprises a mosaic of different ecosystems. They include a primary forest with subtropical jungle, which represents the southernmost vestige of the 'Atlantic Forest' environment. The pampa biome is rich in temperate grasslands and is an important nesting area for many bird species. At present, however, only 0.7% of the grasslands are protected and the ecosystem faces significant threats to its conservation.

Rare species of amphibians and reptiles in the area include the Uruguayan frog (*Hyla uruguayana*), the Toad of Devincenzi (*Melanophryniscus devincenzii*) and the South American rattlesnake (*Crotalus durissus terrificus*). The proposed biosphere reserve is also inhabited by a small number of people living in settlements of ten to fifty houses amid a rural environment. The villagers are predominantly smallholder farmers who engage in agricultural activities. Socio-cultural development of the biosphere reserve will be linked to the promotion and enhancement of gaucho traditions.

The Advisory Committee recommended the following to the national authorities:

- Submission of a map with more detailed zonation;
- Provision of a management plan;
- Consider greater coordination with the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this site be **approved** and added that there was a great potential to create a transboundary biosphere reserve with the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve in Brazil.

### **Nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information**

**Ohrid-Prespa Watershed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Albania/the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for a transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) by Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, located in the Ohrid and Prespa regions. The landscape of the proposed transboundary area is a balanced combination of water bodies (the Ohrid and Prespa Lakes) and surrounding mountain reliefs while flat areas border the external limits of the territories (stretching across three countries: Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece). With a total surface area of 446,244 ha and an estimated total of 455,000 inhabitants, the proposed area includes part of Lake Ohrid and its surroundings in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that is currently inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as part of Lake Ohrid in Albania which is currently being considered as a possible extension of the existing natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region World Heritage Site.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the strong involvement of local institutions during the nomination process and welcomed the plan to establish a platform for exchanging experiences of protected areas between experts, practitioners and the local population. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the decision to adopt a two-step approach in the transboundary biosphere reserve nomination process, 'leaving the doors open' to Greece to join at its earliest convenience.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the individual national biosphere reserves of Ohrid-Prespa Watershed in both the Republic of Albania and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia **be approved pending** receiving the detailed description of the national coordination and management structure, involving a diversity of stakeholders, which will be managing the national biosphere reserves in respective countries. The Advisory Committee strongly recommended to both countries to continue the cooperation and joint work between the two biosphere reserves.

With regards to the designation of the area as a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal **be deferred** until Greece is willing to join in, as the watershed and ecosystem management approach would benefit from all countries sharing this ecosystem to cooperate and work together from the start.

**Sila (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of this proposal, which was deferred in 2013. It recognized that the site contains a wide variety of natural environments and habitats and, due to its morphological and geographical characteristics, hosts approximately 1 000 types of vascular plants and over 210 species of vertebrates. It is a hotspot of great importance for the Mediterranean Biogeographical Region, selected by IUCN and WWF as a centre of plant diversity in the world. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in Calabria, in southern Italy, and comprises 357,294 ha, including 71 municipalities, with almost 230,000 permanent residents. Agriculture has been the traditional activity but, recently, nature tourism has been playing a fundamental role in the local economy, with more than 500,000 visitors per year.

The Advisory Committee commended the initiatives to involve stakeholders during the nomination preparatory phase as well as the creation of the partnership assembly. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the progress made in terms of harmonization of existing planning tools, the development of a Long Term Economic and Social Plan of Sila National Park and contiguous area (PPES) and the implementation of the MaB-Sila Observatory.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the Italian authorities for the quality information communicated and recommended the site for **approval pending** receipt of the following elements:

- Clarification on the zonation, specifically the rationale for the western and eastern white spots not belonging to the proposed biosphere reserve, as well as the difference between the buffer zone and core areas as regards Natura 2000 regulations;
- Detailed information about land use in the surrounding area, including possible human pressures on the proposed biosphere reserve;
- More detailed information on the involvement of social scientists as well as how the scientific production/knowledge will benefit the biosphere reserve management;
- More detailed information on how the coordination structure led by the national park authority will practically engage the community living beyond the boundaries of the national park and how the coordination of the activities will be carried out in the entire proposed biosphere reserve.

**Tadami (Japan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal which encompasses a site with a total area of 78,032 ha consisting of 3,557 ha as core area, 51,333 ha as buffer zone and 23,142 ha as transition area. The Tadami site is located at the eastern edge of the Echigo Mountains, the western edge of Fukushima Prefecture, and the southern part of the Tohoku region in Honshu. Geographically, it consists of large relief mountains of more than 600m, middle relief mountains of 400-600m, low relief Mountains of 200m-400m, a gravel plateau and the floodplains of the Tadami River and Ina River basins.

In terms of flora, 140 families and 1,109 species of tracheophytes are confirmed in Tadami Town which is about 96% of the proposed Tadami site. Records for fauna in about 96% of the site includes 15 families and 32 species for Mammals, 44 families and 145 species for Aves, 6 families and 13 species for Amphibian and 4 families and 10 reptile species. More than 2,000 species are confirmed for insects.

In 2007, Tadami Town announced an initiative “The Capital of Mother Nature” targeting local residents to re-recognize the value of the large natural environment of the Tadami area, as the inheritance of the next generation. This announcement was publicized both inside and outside the town, and Tadami Town is working on implementing each proposed measure.

The Advisory Committee observed that there are two categorizations of the buffer zone in this nomination. The Committee therefore recommended that the zonation be revised such that buffer zone A (identified as the yellow portions) be incorporated as part of the core area. Alternatively, buffer zones A and B could be merged into one categorization of buffer zone. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site **be approved pending** the implementation of the above recommendation.

**Ak-Zhayik (Kazakhstan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new nomination from Kazakhstan. The proposed site occupies mainly wetlands of the Ural River delta and adjacent territories along the Caspian Sea coast, which are located on one of the largest migration routes, stretching from Eurasia –, across the Caspian and Black Seas – to Eastern Africa. The total area is 396,346 ha consisting of 36,577 ha as core area, 129,769 ha as buffer zone and 230,000 ha as transition area. The proposed area is included in the Ramsar Convention's List of wetlands of international importance and is a concentration site for more than 240 migrating bird species, about 110 of which are waterbirds, including 18 specially protected species. Besides, this area is a nesting site for about 70 waterbirds, eight of which are specially protected natural objects. It is also a haven for a rare bird – Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelicanus crispus*, VU) – with population of the colony reaching more than 600 nesting pairs (12% of the global population).

The proposed site is located on the lands of Makhambet district and Atyrau city of Atyrau oblast. The population of its 11 settlements is more than 17,000 people, 98% of them are Kazakh and 2% are Russian, Tatar and other ethnicities; population density is 23 people in 1km<sup>2</sup>. The economic orientation of the region is fishery and animal stock production. The area has productive landscapes that are good for cattle breeding as well as fisheries and hunting.

The Advisory Committees requested the national authorities to submit a management plan covering the transition zone and emphasizing sustainable development. The national authorities are encouraged to consider merging the two clusters by creating an ecological corridor between them. The Advisory Committee recommended that this site **be approved pending** the implementation of these recommendations.

**Aksu-Zhabagly (Kazakhstan).** This proposed site is located in the Western end of Talasskiy Alatau and Southern part of Karatau in Western Tien Shan. The total area of the site is 357,734 ha. The core area is 131,934 ha, the buffer zone 25,800 ha and the transition area is 200,000 ha. It has 48% of the total diversity of birds in the region, 72.5% of vertebrates, 221 out of 254 fungi species, 63 out of 80 moss species and 15 out of 17 of the vegetation types of Western Tien Shan and 114 out of 180 plant formations.

Major land use of the region is agriculture. There are several crops growing on agricultural land: on the rain-fed area – cereal cultures (wheat and barley); on irrigated arable lands – forage cultures (corn, clover, alfalfa). Local people usually breed cattle, sheep (South-

Kazakh Merino), goats, horses (trotters and Donskaya breed) and poultry (chicken and turkey). At present, the territory of the buffer zone is visited by scientists and amateurs interested in flora and fauna, as well as ordinary sightseers. In accordance with ten routes for scientific and educational tourism, visitors move through the reserve on trails and roads, and for the rest-stops they use previously constructed field bases and traditional camping sites. Currently, the potential of eco-tourism for educational purposes is still insufficiently developed, although Aksu Zhabagly is one of the famous tourist spots for birdwatchers from all over the world.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this site **be approved pending** the implementation of the following:

- Enlarging the buffer zone for the protection of the core area;
- Undertaking activities that would enhance sustainable development functions of the site;
- Preparing and submitting a management plan which is inclusive of the core area, buffer zone and transition area.

**Mura-Drava-Danube (Serbia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Serbia, as a part of the future proposal of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve spanning five countries: Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia, and which constitutes a second step after the designation in 2012 of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve shared by Hungary and Croatia. The proposal is located in the northwestern part of Serbia and comprises 176,635 ha. Situated mainly in recent and historical alluvial zones of the central Danube plain, the proposed biosphere reserve is a mosaic composed mainly of remnants of historic floodplains and human-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlements. The floodplain includes alluvial forests, marshes, reed beds, freshwater habitats, alluvial wetlands, as well as flood-protected forests with significantly changed hydrology dynamics. The area of the proposed biosphere reserve is home to 147,405 inhabitants located in 26 settlements with main activities are agriculture, forestry and industry.

The Advisory Committee commended the Serbian authorities for the quality of the proposal. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve proposal is an initiative from the five countries which signed a ministerial declaration in 2011, stating that nothing in the Declaration or its subsequent document shall prejudice in any manner the delimitation between the State signatories.

The Advisory Committee took note of the boundaries discussion being held at the international level between Croatia and Serbia. The Advisory Committee considered that the transboundary biosphere reserve was a unique tool for translating the mission and vision of the MAB Programme into a cooperation programme which promotes peace, scientific exchange and shared ecosystem management. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the scientific and technical cooperation in the field between the five countries to continue and the coordinating council established by the five countries to hold regular meetings. It also acknowledged support from WWF in the nomination process.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** receipt of the following information:

- The joint zonation map for the entire future transboundary biosphere reserve, designed by all five countries;
- The joint transboundary biosphere reserve nomination form filled in by all five countries;

- Clarification of the role of the scientific panel within the coordinating council of the proposed biosphere reserve;
- Clarification on how the various projects and research outcomes will be integrated in the functioning of the proposed biosphere reserve.

**Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this very well prepared and documented proposal of a relatively large cluster biosphere reserve (3 184 723.5 ha). The Advisory committee acknowledged its unicity at global level as it is the only place in the world where three recognized biodiversity hotspots (Fynbos, Succulent Karoo and Maputoland-Tongoland-Albany) converge. The area also includes a coastal/marine component (0.1% of core area) which serves as a nursery for marine species. It encompasses three units of UNESCO World Heritage site.

The biosphere reserve nomination process which started in 2005 has been highly participative. The proposed biosphere reserve is facing deep rooted socio economic challenges (high unemployment, wide-spread poverty, sprawling informal settlements with inadequate services, rising HIV and crime rates) that the biosphere reserve will contribute to solve in building grassroots models of pro-poor enterprise and employment development connected to biodiversity.

The number of formal and published research that has been conducted in the Gouritz region in recent years is growing. The proposed biosphere reserve will have a vital role to play in the compilation of a database and set up of a monitoring system. Environmental awareness raising and training activities targeting schools, communities and associations have been implemented throughout the years. The governance structure has been established since the last submission, but more information is needed.

However, the advisory committee noted that the zonation pattern should be improved in order to avoid transition area included in buffer zones. The budget refers to one single source and does not explain how additional resources will be mobilized. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be approved pending** the receipt of the following information:

- Clarification and justification of zonation with regards to the function of biosphere reserve;
- Further information on sustainable financing scheme;
- Further information on the functioning of the governance structure.

### **Nominations recommended for deferral**

#### **Algeria (general recommendation)**

The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination of Belezma Biosphere Reserve, Tlemcen Biosphere Reserve and Theniet El Had Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee commended the country's effort in preparing these three dossiers. Having examined these nominations, the Advisory Committee strongly recommended that the Algerian authorities review the concordance of their national parks with biosphere reserves, especially with regard to the zonation. The authorities are encouraged to seek support from the MAB Secretariat and the UNESCO Cairo Office to organize a capacity-building workshop on biosphere reserves and improve their nomination files.

**Belezma (Algeria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal covering the existing Belezma National Park situated in the province of Batna on the slopes of the Belezma

mountain range. Covering some 26,250 ha, Belezma is host to a rich flora and fauna, several species of which are endemic and/or threatened, and provide opportunities for traditional land use, tourism and recreation. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Seville Strategy.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal **be deferred** and that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
- Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation;
- Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the proposed Belezma Biosphere Reserve should be provided;
- A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system.

**Tlemcen Mountains (Algeria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal covering the existing Tlemcen National Park situated in the Tlemcen Province, encompassing rich biodiversity, valuable archeological sites, cultural landmarks and caves receiving large numbers of visitors. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Seville Strategy.

Therefore, the Committee recommended that the proposal **be deferred** and that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
- Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation;
- Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the proposed Tlemcen Biosphere Reserve should be provided;
- A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system, with special emphasis on the tourism sector.

**Theniet El Had (Algeria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal covering the existing Theniet El Had National Park situated in the Ouarsenis mountain range located in the west central Atlas of Algeria. This site includes several plants of regional or national and international interest. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that the complete overlap of the national park with the zoning of the future biosphere reserve was sub-optimal and not entirely in line with the Seville Strategy.

Therefore, the Committee recommended that the proposal **be deferred** and that the Algerian authorities consider submitting a revised nomination based on the following suggestions:

- The proposed biosphere reserve should extend outside the national park, in order to better engage with economic and urban development issues and stakeholders, including public and private bodies;
- Maps should be improved for readability, especially in respect of the zonation, as well as in terms of biophysical, geological and vegetation data;
- Additional information on the participation of local communities in the management of the proposed Theniet El Had Biosphere Reserve should be provided;

- A management plan for a large biosphere reserve should be prepared, together with a management effectiveness evaluation monitoring system.

**Valdes (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee took note of this nomination from Argentina. The proposed site encompasses the Patagonian Steppe, Hill Plains and Plateaus and Argentine Sea eco-regions. It is home to significant biodiversity, including highly fragile terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the conservation of which is crucial for addressing the vulnerabilities of key species. Both the Patagonian steppe eco-region and the Argentine Sea have been recognized as important sites and inscribed on WWF's Global 200 list. The marine coastal areas are suitable habitats for the feeding and reproduction of many bird and marine mammal species. Particular bodies of water, such as the Golfo Nuevo and San José, function as crucial sites for the reproduction of species like the southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*).

The Valdes Biosphere Reserve will incorporate the Peninsula Valdés Natural Protected Area, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999; San Jose and Playa Fracaso, nominated Ramsar sites in 2012; the El Doradillo municipal protected area and the natural protected areas of Punta Loma and Punta León. According to the 2010 National Census, 214,196 inhabitants in the Viedma and Rawson departments will benefit from the creation of this biosphere reserve. The most important economic activities in the region are livestock rearing, tourism, fisheries, industry (aluminium, porphyry), the port movement and, more recently, wind power generation.

The Advisory Committee pointed out that there was no marine transition area and only a very small terrestrial transition area. The Advisory Committee further noted that there was no clear composition of the management committee for the biosphere reserve. Lastly, the Advisory Committee noted that only a small-scale map of the biosphere reserve had been provided.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal **be deferred**, as the zonation has to be re-defined, including the transition area surrounding the buffer zone in both the terrestrial and marine areas. In addition, the national authorities are requested to re-define clearly the composition of the management committee and to provide a larger-scale map.

**Hanma National Nature Reserve (China).** The proposed site covers a total surface area of 107,348ha, which consists of a core area of 46,510ha, a buffer zone of 37,250ha and a transition area of 23,588ha. This site located in Inner Mongolia is described as the core part of the Taiga distributed in China. The natural vegetation is intact, owing to very limited interaction with humankind. The cold temperate coniferous forest is the most well-preserved forest type in China and is of high scientific value. The vegetation plays a significant role in protecting water resources, performing water purification, maintaining the ecological safety (balance/equilibrium) in the Heilongjiang area and along the Jiliuhe River, as well as supporting the rare wildlife.

Forest products from this site, such as bilberry, blueberry and other wild fruit, contribute to the socio-economic development of the communities in the area. With the development of tourism, Hanma Nature Reserve has been searching for a path to build tourism as the pillar industry. Authorities believe that development of ecological tourism in Hanma Nature Reserve will not only be beneficial economically but also environmentally and socially. By way of logistic support, it is planned that the proposed site will cooperate with universities, colleges and research institutions to study jointly the structural functions and succession process of forest ecological systems and wetland ecosystems at the proposed site. Another aim of the logistic support is to help determine a practical plan for the reasonable

development and sustainable utilization on the premise that the various ecological system structures are not damaged.

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the conservation value of this site. However, it observed that its zonation did not conform to the zonation criteria prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It also noted that the participation of local communities had not been well demonstrated. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that this nomination **be deferred**.

The Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to re-submit this nomination with a new zonation that had a buffer zone surrounding the core area and to expand the transition area to include a permanent human population.

**Samothraki (Greece).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this proposal, which was deferred in 2012. The proposed site is located within the Aegean Sea and comprises the entire island of Samothraki, with a total surface area of 22,853 ha. The site is a mountainous island with its highest peak culminating at 1,611m above sea level, making it the second-highest island in the Aegean Sea. The mountainous terrain creates a variety of habitats that host a large number of species thanks to two distinct microclimates: a northern side that is more humid with related vegetation cover and a drier southern side with a typical Mediterranean climate. The human presence on the island since prehistoric times has created cultural landscapes and left many monuments of international interest on the island, making it a highly valued tourist destination nowadays. The main activities of the total permanent population of 2,860 are agriculture, settlements and trade. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation of the involvement of local associations in designing the proposed site.

However, the Advisory Committee considered that the zonation was still not meeting the criteria, with the legal status of the core area still being unclear and the governance and funding of the proposed area yet to be defined. It further encouraged the Greek authorities to address these issues and work on the zonation, governance and budgetary aspects and to seek support from the MAB Secretariat and the EuroMAB Regional Network.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be deferred**.

**Po Delta (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal located in northern Italy, which comprises 139,398 ha, covering 16 municipalities populated by 120,000 inhabitants. The proposed area represents a plain morphology, the current structure of which is produced by the Po River's action and recent human activities. The proposed area is the only delta in Italy, created by the confluence of the main branches of the river; coastal dune systems and sand formations, lagoons, fishing ponds, marshes, fossil dunes, canals and coastal pine forests, vast brackish wetlands and cultivated lands dominated par rice farming. These landscapes provide a unique identity and an extremely significant heritage of biodiversity due to their range of habitats. The proposed Po Delta Biosphere Reserve is an important tourist destination. Together with agriculture and fish farming, tourism is the main economic activity of local communities. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the efforts to involve local stakeholders in the consultation process.

However, the Advisory Committee considered that the status and management of the core area needed clarifying and that the decision-making process within the Institutional Coordination Board was unclear, even though the board was supported by Thematic Technical Roundtables. It further noted that the governance structure was very complex and did not seem manageable; nor had any common vision for the proposed area been defined. The added value of the proposed biosphere reserve was not clear, as most of the actions

included in the Action Plan referred to existing, binding management plans (Natura 2000, Environmental Plan of the Veneto Regional Po Delta Park, Area Plan of Po Delta “Piano d’Area–Regione Veneto”). Concerning research projects, the Advisory Committee considered that the social science studies in the whole area were missing, especially taking into account the fact that most of the proposed area was composed of farming systems. Lastly, the committee noted the lack of information on water management issues and challenges, as well as the lack of discussion on water quality, despite the fact that the proposed biosphere reserve area is mainly composed of wetlands or irrigated cultivated lands.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this site **be deferred**.

**Ledro Alps and Judicaria (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal by the Italian authorities. The proposed area is located in the Trento region in northern Italy, between the Dolomite World heritage Site and the famous Lake Garda, with a total surface area of 47,427 ha. The site is representative of the southern slopes of the central-eastern Alps, comprising different healthy habitats (Alpine meadows, forest, grasslands, moorlands) alternating with traditional crops. Its strategic location contributes to a rich and varied biodiversity and to creating a corridor running north–south across the Alps, establishing territorial continuity between protected areas from the Po valley to the northern Alps. The proposed area includes two settlements around Lake Ledro and Lake Carera recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is also a high valued tourist destination, with tourism representing the main source of income for a permanent population of 15,845. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the existence of a research network and the numerous promotional and communication efforts carried out in the proposed area; it did, however, note with concerns the petition transmitted to the UNESCO MAB Secretariat by numerous citizens of the municipalities and cities in the proposed area.

The Advisory Committee questioned the relevance of the zonation, including the protection status of the core areas, and also the role of the transition area as an ecological corridor between the two core areas. It also considered that the main scientific research described focused on conservation aspects and that there seemed to be conflicts with the hunters in the proposed area. It also noted that there was no clear description of the governance and decision-making system of the proposed area, nor any comprehensive information on how the governance would work. It also questioned how tourism would be managed and how the new plan for the park would be integrated in the proposed site.

The Advisory Committee recommended that Ledro Alps and Judicaria **be deferred**.

The Advisory Committee encouraged the Italian authorities to address the above issues and to engage in full consultation with local stakeholders, in order to get full support for the designation of the proposed area as a biosphere reserve.

**Karakoram Pamir (Pakistan).** This proposed site is characterized by steep and jagged peaks, glaciers stretching for miles, alpine meadows and pastures, scattered patches of coniferous and birch forests, lush green high valleys and deep narrow gorges. It contains the largest ice mass outside the poles in the form of the world’s longest glacier system, including 40 large and many small glaciers. Among the famous glaciers of Karakoram are Siachen, Batura, Baltoro, Biafo, Hisper, Hoper, Kuksil, Yazghil, Momhil and Malanguti.

It covers a total surface area of 2,569,000 ha of which 1,132,700 ha occupy the core area, 671,800 ha the buffer zone and 764,800 ha the transition area. The rich biodiversity of the typical mountain ecosystem of Karakoram Range is of immense socio-ecological significance and value for biodiversity conservation on local, national, regional and global scales.

Biologically, the area falls in the Central Asian phytogeographical region, with over 400 flora species ranging from endemic herbs and *Poa* sp. grasses to coniferous forests. Among the fauna species, mammals are of great importance and the proposed biosphere reserve area is known to have significant populations of 33 globally important mammalian species including species which are threatened and/ or endemic to Karakoram region.

The Advisory Committee noted the submission of this nomination and acknowledged the continuous effort of Pakistan to increase the number of its biosphere reserves. Whilst appreciating its rich fauna and flora and immense socio-ecological significance and value for biodiversity conservation at all levels, the Advisory Committee found that the northern and eastern sides of the core area were not surrounded by a buffer zone and a transition area, contrary to the recommendations of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In addition, the management plan for the two national parks forming the core area may not be tailored for the core area of the proposed biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee recommended that the management plan of the proposed biosphere reserve consider integrating the management of these three zones.

The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that this nomination should **be deferred**.

**Daghestansky (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission, which is located in Daghestan Republic and comprises 207,600 ha. The proposed site is composed of two clusters: Kizlyar Bay and Sarykum Barchans, containing rich biodiversity in marine, coastal, desert-steppe and arid foothill ecosystems. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that this area contained one of the largest migratory routes of birds in Eurasia, as well as large number of flora and fauna species. The total permanent population living in the proposed biosphere reserve is 1,200 whose main activities are agriculture, stock-raising and fishing.

The Advisory Committee considered that the proposed zonation with the two clusters was inadequate for fulfilling the criteria and ensuring proper functioning of the proposed biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Russian authorities to resubmit a proposal with a zonation that could join the two clusters and including evidence of the implementation of scientific research in management, education and awareness-raising, as well as evidence of the participatory process and governance for the entire area.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal **be deferred**.

**Magaliesberg (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of this very consistent and well-documented proposal covering an area located between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg in the east and Rustenburg in the west. This area is endowed with scenic beauty, unique natural features, rich natural and cultural heritage value, significant biodiversity and archaeological interest. This biosphere reserve encompasses the Cradle of Humankind, which is part of a World heritage site with 4 million years of history.

The proposed site's primary activities are agriculture, mining and tourism. It is adjacent to major urban infrastructure, the impacts of which will be reduced through the biosphere reserve management plan. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation that the consultation process for delimiting the biosphere reserve's contours has been completed since the last submission. However, the zonation scheme still needs improvement. In particular, with regards to the Pelindaba nuclear research centre, even though it has been defined under the category of "highly disturbed area or areas with high impacts" and removed from the biosphere reserve area, it still remains physically in the middle of the proposed site.

With regard to the logistic function, research coordination and a monitoring programme for biosphere reserve should be put in place. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the site **be deferred**.

The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the authorities to resubmit a nomination that will address the following elements:

- Improvement in the zonation pattern, namely the core area and buffer zone, in order to fulfill the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- Exclusion of Pelindaba and the surrounding area from the biosphere reserve proposal, possibly by using natural boundaries, for example rivers.

**Macizo de Anaga (Spain).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged this nomination submission by Spain. This site is located in the northeastern part of Tenerife, Canary Islands. It represents the island's oldest geological formation with a peak of 1,024 m. This area is an ecological unit separated from the rest of the island. It features a diverse geographical space that ranges from urban areas located on the coast to the summit. In terms of environmental value, its remarkable cultural uniqueness is of local, regional, national and international interest.

The proposal is an example of collaboration, primarily between different municipal governing bodies (Cabildo Insular de Tenerife, the councils of the three municipalities of the Canary Islands and Sustainable Holy Cross Foundation). In addition, the proposal has also been supported by a local community. However, the Advisory Committee strongly recommended that the marine and coastal areas be included in this biosphere reserve proposal to highlight the connection between marine/coastal and inland ecosystems. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee requested the submission of the official approval by the national authorities.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that this proposal **be deferred**.

### **Nominations recommended for rejection**

**Corridor Milan – Ticino (Italy).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged this proposal, which is located in the southwestern plain surrounding the city of Milan in northern Italy. The total surface area proposed is 15,755 ha, mainly composed of cultivated fields intercalated with farmhouses, typical of the Po Valley landscape. The extended cultivated plains mixed with traditional farmhouses, urban nuclei and woodlands represent the main features of the landscape. The network of canals and springs is also a fascinating human-made system that today presents a cultural landscape rich in biodiversity. There are about 130,000 permanent inhabitants, whose livelihoods depend mainly on the industrial and services sectors.

The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation that the proposed biosphere reserve management aimed to reduce the urbanization process and develop ecotourism and sustainable farming systems. The proposed biosphere reserve would constitute an example of the implementation of sustainable development applied to an agro-ecosystem. However the Advisory Committee considered that the lack of legal protection status of the core area, the insufficient justification of the buffer zone and transition area delineation, the absence of stakeholder involvement, and the deficiency in the governance concept and decision-making process weakened the overall project.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee considered that the site did not meet the Statutory Framework criteria and recommended that this proposal **be rejected**.

It recommended that the Italian authorities investigate whether other designations, such as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems of the FAO, may fit better with their aims.

### **Extension, renaming or changes in the zonation of biosphere reserves**

#### **Laguna Oca del Río Paraguay Biosphere Reserve (Argentina), extension and renaming.**

The Advisory Committee acknowledged the extension proposal from Argentina. This proposal follows recommendations made by the International Coordinating Council in 2000 to extend the core area, buffer zone and transition area, as their present dimensions do not allow the area to fulfill the three functions of a biosphere reserve.

The proposed new area will integrate the city of Formosa, the Laguna de Herradura and the Riacho Salado as far as Mision Laishi, through a biodiversity and cultural corridor named 'The Way of Water', which will pass through the Paraguay River and its tributaries. The total area will be extended from around 12,000 ha to 61,763.39 ha. The proposed new name for the biosphere reserve is Laguna Oca y Herraduras del Río Paraguay.

The Advisory Committee recommended that this extension and the new name be **approved**.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities:

- Submit clearer maps about the actual extension of the areas and the proposed extension;
- Re-evaluate the importance of the buffer zone along the river as an element connecting different landscapes and contributing to maintaining biodiversity and ecological restoration in the urban, rural and natural environments;
- Elaborate a management plan for the modified biosphere reserve.

**Rhön Biosphere Reserve (Germany), extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension submitted by the German authorities to the site designated in 1991. As part of the German central upland range, the Rhön Biosphere Reserve comprises an upland region formed as a result of volcanic activity in the Tertiary period. With the extension of 58,113 ha, the biosphere reserve will comprise a total surface area of 243,323 ha (with an altitudinal gradient of 770 m between approximately 180 m and 950 m above mean sea level). Its uniqueness and beauty results in a diversity of landscapes, hosting endemic species such as Rhönquellschnecke (*Bythinella compressa*), the wild cat (*Felis silvestris*), black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) and red kite (*Milvus milvus*). As of October 2010, the biosphere reserve counted a population of 135,285, the majority of whom live in rural settlements. As a result of the extension and inclusion of some small towns, the population across the three federal states will increase to 225,768 and the population density of the entire area from an average of 71.6 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> to 87.7 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, the main economic activities of whom are forestry, agriculture and tourism.

The Advisory Committee congratulated the German authorities for the well-prepared proposal for extension and considered that the extension met the Statutory framework criteria. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved**.

**Shiga Highland Biosphere Reserve (Japan), extension.** The Advisory Committee noted the submission of the extension application for this biosphere reserve, which was designated in 1980. The size of the core area is the same as when this biosphere reserve was first designated; the buffer zone covers 17,569 ha, which is an increment of 58%, and the new delineated transition area 12,021 ha.

The International Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for demarcating a transition area for the site and recommended that this application for extension be **approved**.

The Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to indicate how the core area is protected, as it is not protected by a buffer zone, and to submit a revised management plan covering the extended areas.

**Montseny Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension.** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the proposal for the extension of the Montseny Biosphere Reserve in Spain. This site is a first-generation biosphere reserve that was nominated in 1978. The extended core area and buffer zones follow the zonation of the National Park Montseny revised in 2008. The extension incorporates also the transition areas not previously included. The Advisory Committee noted that this extension proposal is a follow-up to two previous periodic reviews, the last one received in 2011. In 2011, the Advisory Committee encouraged the national authorities to provide additional information on the management plan for the biosphere reserve and its implementation. This detailed proposal for extension describes the harmonization process of the different management structures and plans in line with the Committee's recommendations. Additionally, the extension has been made in close consultation with local communities and with the municipality's support.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension **be approved pending** the submission of the official approval by the national authorities and the identification of the biosphere reserve's management authorities before the next MAB-ICC to be held in June 2014.

**Mancha Humeda Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension.** The site encompasses a gently rolling plain located between 600 m and 700 m above sea level, rich in Tertiary deposits and scattered with a great number of wetlands arising from the seasonal flooding of rivers and from the numerous upwellings of the Manchego aquifer in the depressions, known in the area as "eyes".

The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension proposal from Spain. This biosphere reserve was designated in 1980 and in 2002 submitted a periodic review. After the assessment of that periodic review, it was concluded that this biosphere reserve was not fully functioning according to the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and that it suffered from overexploitation of water resources. The Advisory Committee was of the opinion that the integrated approach of a biosphere reserve was nevertheless the best way to combat the threats to water resources and also recommended that the Spanish authorities improve the global management plan for the whole biosphere reserve, in order to integrate conservation and sustainable use, paying particular attention to sustainable use of water resources and the development of a coordinating structure to bring all stakeholders together.

The extension enlarges considerably the transition area and includes some readjustment to the buffer zones and core areas, increasing the size of the biosphere reserve from 25,000 ha to 418,087 ha. This extension proposal and re-zoning are a significant improvement, as they will provide disconnected wetlands areas with better protection. Moreover, their designation as core areas surrounded by buffer zones is homogeneously encompassed by a transition area integrating areas set aside for urban development. The Advisory Committee recommended that this extension be **approved** with the provision that a transition area in the southern part of the biosphere reserve be delineated.