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### International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme Twenty-ninth session

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#### **ITEM 9 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: PROPOSALS FOR NEW BIOSPHERE RESERVES AND EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS/RENAMING 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 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 23 to 26 January 2017.

2. The members of the Advisory Committee examined 28 proposals for new biosphere reserves (including four transboundary sites and one re-submission of proposals for new biosphere reserve) and 12 requests for expansion/modification and/or renaming of already existing biosphere reserve and formulated their recommendations regarding specific sites in line with the recommendation categories as follows:

- 1) ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval:*** the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional information is needed. For already existing sites, the proposed changes are recommended for approval.
- 2) ***Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information:*** the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve or the proposed changes for already existing sites are recommended for approval **subject to** receiving the specific information as requested by the Advisory Committee. If the MAB Secretariat receives the information by 15 May 2017, it will be considered by the MAB ICC at its 29<sup>th</sup> session to be held from 12 to 15 June 2017 and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR.

3. The MAB Secretariat received three letters from three US sites (Desert Biosphere Reserve,

California Coast Range Biosphere Reserve and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) for voluntarily withdrawal. It also took note that two of these sites (California Coast Range and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) are aiming to submit renewed nomination forms at the next 30 September 2017 deadline.

4. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the attached recommendations of the IACBR as well as the additional information received by the MAB Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information. The Bureau will recommend for the consideration of the MAB ICC final decisions on all sites included in this document.
5. The MAB ICC is invited to decide on the new sites for inclusion in the WNBR and extensions/modifications and/or renaming of biosphere reserves already included in the WNBR that could be approved.
6. The MAB-ICC is invited to take note of the decision of three US sites authorities (Desert Biosphere Reserve, California Coast Range Biosphere Reserve and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) for voluntarily withdrawal.

#### **New nominations recommended for approval**

7. **Mono (Benin).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Benin authority. The proposed site is located in South-western part of Benin. The landscape is a mosaic of landscapes and ecosystems that are not yet included in the national protected area network: coastal areas with mangroves, wetlands, savannah, and forests including sacred forest, and flood plain, as well as farmlands used for small-scale palm oil production, coconuts and other crops. The biodiversity flagship species are sea cows, hippos, various monkeys, reptiles, fishes and birds. The core areas cover 595 ha and are made of four community-based conservation areas surrounded by buffer zones totalling 9,462 ha. Most part of the buffer zones are part of the conservation units, or state-owned riverbanks, and marine area (3,580 ha). The transition area comprises 115,655 ha and is made of settlements, roads and crops where almost 179,000 inhabitants are located inside the transition area and the immediate surrounding of the perimeter of the Biosphere reserve. The management structure with a prominent involvement of local communities is a model of empowerment of local stakeholders. In addition, the proposed biosphere reserve provides an obvious opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.
8. The Advisory Committee commended the Benin authorities for the quality of the proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.
9. The Advisory Committee invites the Benin authority to provide further detailed information on the implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone.
10. **Mono (Togo).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Togo authority. The proposed site is located in South-eastern part of Togo and covers a total area of 203,789 ha. This is a hotspot of biodiversity and encompasses two Ramsar sites. The landscape is a mosaic of coastal ecosystems, mangroves, wetlands, savannah, forests and flood plain, as well as farmlands used for small-scale palm oil production, coconuts and other crops.
11. The biodiversity flagship species are sea cows, hippos, various monkeys, reptiles, fishes and birds such as pelicans. The core areas, surrounded by buffer zones totalling 33,915 ha, cover 13,901 ha including 13,155 ha of national park and protected areas, 52 ha of pool complex for hippos and three ha of sacred forests. Part of buffer zone is a corridor

connecting key ecosystems without strictly protected status to the core areas. The transition area comprises 165,368 ha, and is made of settlements, roads and crops. With at least seven languages, various religions the area is also a hotspot in terms of cultural diversity. Presence of sacred forest and isolated sacred trees testifies the vitality of traditional biocultural practices in the region. About 1,835,000 inhabitants are located inside and in the immediate surrounding of the perimeter. The management structure with a prominent involvement of local communities is a model of empowerment of local stakeholders. In addition, the proposed biosphere reserve provides an obvious opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.

12. The Advisory Committee commended the Togo authorities for the quality of the proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.
13. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to create a Protected Area in the lagoon system in the future in order to secure this important wetland and thus, to create an additional core area in this coastal ecosystem.
14. The Advisory Committee invites the Togo authority to provide further detailed information on the implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone.
15. **Mono (Benin/Togo)** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Benin and Togo authorities. The proposed site is located in the southern part of Benin and Togo and covers a total area of 346,285 ha. Situated mainly in the alluvial plain and the deltaic and coastal zones of the Mono River, the proposed biosphere reserve is a mosaic of ecosystems composed mainly of: mangroves, savannah, forests including sacred forests, lagoons, coastal wetlands, floodplains, riverine forests, sacred-protected forests, marshes, freshwater habitats, as well as human-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlements. The area of the proposed biosphere reserve is home to about .2, 000,000 inhabitants and the main activity is small-scale farming (oil palm trees and coconuts), livestock grazing (nomad herds), forestry and fishing.
16. The Advisory Committee commended the Benin and Togo authorities for the quality of the proposal and for the efforts to protect biocultural diversity in the area. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve proposal is an initiative from the two countries and considered that the transboundary biosphere reserve was a key tool for developing the principles of the MAB Programme into a cooperation programme, which promotes peace, scientific exchange and shared ecosystem management. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the multistakeholders transboundary coordination structure. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the two countries to pursue the scientific and technical cooperation in the field and the Coordinating Council of the proposed transboundary biosphere reserve to hold regular meetings. It also acknowledged the support from GIZ in the nomination process.
17. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts of the countries to protect biocultural and traditional practices. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.
18. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to create a Protected Area in the lagoon system in the future in order to secure this important wetland and thus, to create an additional core area in this coastal ecosystem.
19. The Advisory Committee invites the national authorities to send by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat further detailed information on:
  - implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control

of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone

- funding and decision-making process within the coordination secretariat of the proposed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.
20. **Savegre (Costa Rica).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Costa Rican authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the central Pacific coast of the country, 190 km south of the capital San José. It has a total area of 312,914.32 ha and comprises the area within the watersheds of the rivers Savegre, Pacuar, Naranjo, Barú, Cañas-Paquita, Hatillo Nuevo, Hatillo Viejo and Portalón.
  21. The core area covers 32,417.65 ha (terrestrial: 6,544.24 ha; marine: 25,873.41 ha), the buffer zones 199,306.63 ha (terrestrial: 75,679.37 ha; marine: 123,614.61 ha; island: 12.65 ha) and the transition zone 81,190.04 ha.
  22. The proposed biosphere reserve borders the existing La Amistad Biosphere Reserve in the north and east, and the Cordillera Volcánica Central Biosphere Reserve in the north. This biosphere reserve would represent the first and only reserve of the country to contain an important marine-coastal component.
  23. This site has a high value in terms of ecosystems, biodiversity, water resources and connectivity. Due to its varied topography, as well as its heterogeneity of microclimates, it is one of the most biodiverse sites in the country, being home to 20% of the country's total flora, 54% of its mammals (*Tapirus bairdii*), 59% of its birds and about 330 species of butterflies. The area is composed of two areas with a high level of endemism in Costa Rica, the upper parts of the Cordillera de Talamanca and west of Panama, and the basal forests of the South Pacific. It contains 71 species of endemic plants (e.g. *Passiflora gilbertiana*, *Bartlettina silvicola*, *Pseudima costarricense*, *Sarcaulus spp.*, *Pitcairnia halophila*), palm species (*Chamaedorea piscifolia* and *Chamaedorea incrustata*) and trees (*Matisia tinamastiana* and *Lacmellea zamorae*).
  24. The reserve has a population of approximately 50,000 inhabitants, who live mostly in the transition zone with a few inhabiting the buffer area. The main productive activities are agriculture and livestock (about 75%). Crop production is significant in areas with higher altitudes, and includes plantations of apple, plum, pomegranate, blackberry, strawberry and avocado, as well as milk production and trout farming. Coffee and livestock are farmed between 800 and 1,500 m. Below 800 m (the area with the lowest forest cover and therefore greatest intensity of land use), the main economic activities are oil palm, forestry, vanilla, annual crops, cattle rearing and artisan fishing. Ecotourism has increased significantly during recent years, and has become a source of socio-economic growth in the region.
  25. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended this site to be **approved**. The Advisory Committee recommends implementing a management committee and plan, and to include the institutions and the different stakeholders to ensure the sustainable management of the marine ecosystems included in the biosphere reserve.
  26. **Moen (Denmark).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Denmark (the first since 1977). The proposal consists of a series of islands and islets in a shallow sea and includes a Ramsar site, with several internationally protected bird species migrating in the site. The proposal is located in the southern Baltic Sea, contains the white cliff of Mons Klint, and is an enclave connected to the cities of Copenhagen, Malmoe, Hamburg and Berlin. Landscapes include woodlands, grasslands, pastures, wetlands, coastal areas, ponds and steep hills, and the Aborrebjerg, one of the highest points in Denmark (143 m).
  27. The proposed area is of a total surface of 45,118 ha, including marine areas. The proposed

area is characterized by a number of small villages, scattered farms and residential areas with a total number of population of 10,250 inhabitants. It is part of the municipality of Vordingborg (45,806 inhabitants). Main activities are trade, agriculture, fishing and tourism. The initiative also aims to develop economic possibilities for young people to develop a future in the area.

28. The Advisory Committee welcomed the goal of the biosphere reserve which is to “living and working in harmony with nature” and the objective to become an example in implementing sustainable future, including developing activities such as eco-tourism. It also took note of the existing research and monitoring activities with focus on rural development and tourism. It also welcomed the governance structure of the Biosphere Partnership which includes all key stakeholders and commended the high democratic and participative methods used to engage stakeholders, including the advisory board.
29. The Advisory Committee took note that some of the core areas are not fully surrounded by a buffer zone, including one marine core area. It welcomed the additional information provided on why some of the core terrestrial and marine areas are only partially buffered. For the marine core area, creating a buffer zone would reduce the size of the core area and as the biosphere reserve authority does not have jurisdiction over the international water. As regards the core terrestrial areas, de facto buffer zones are designed by land owners who are cooperating and supporting the biosphere reserve proposal but do not wish at this stage to have their private lands officially mapped as a buffer zone.
30. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the site be **approved**.
31. **Bosques de Paz (Ecuador/Peru)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal for the first Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in South America submitted by the Ecuadorian and Peruvian authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the existing Bosque Seco Biosphere Reserve in the southwest of Ecuador and the Noroeste Amotapes – Manglares Biosphere Reserve in the northwest of Peru.
32. The total area is 1,616,988.42 ha with a core area of 237,638.76 ha, buffer zone of 478,165.28 ha and the transition zone of 901,184.38 ha.
33. Following the Declaration of Peace between Peru and Ecuador in 1998, both countries began a phase of strengthening their fraternal ties, trust and cooperation in diverse areas, favoring especially the populations of the Border Integration Zone (ZIF). The countries signed different agreements and diverse activities were carried out by both nations. Both countries participate at the UNESCO Project ‘Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the South-East Pacific Region (BRESEP)’ which supported the creation of this transboundary biosphere reserve financing of national and binational workshops.
34. The proposed biosphere reserve includes territories from the western foothills of the Andes, with heights that goes from 0 to 3,080 meters, that has generated a unique biological diversity with a high degree of endemism. The northern region of Peru presents about 26% of endemic plant species. The area include the seasonally dry forests of Ecuador and Peru that are biologically important because they form the heart of the Endemic Region of Tumbes, one of the biodiversity hot spots of the world. This region is one of the most important and threatened Endemic Bird Areas. At present, there are 59 species endemic to the Tumbesina Region, fourteen of which are threatened.
35. The proposed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve has 617,260 inhabitants. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement, the families of the border have been strengthening and sustaining a social, cultural and economic dynamic. In small towns, 50% of families are binational families. One of the most important alternatives that are the basis for

development in the border area and proposed as a Biosphere Reserve is electricity generation through clean energy. Livestock activities and tourism are also a main economic activity in the area.

36. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.
37. **Majang Forest (Ethiopia)** The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for this well prepared nomination by the Gambala National Regional State to protect a combination of nationally and Community protected Afromontane forest lying in one of the most fragmented and threatened regions in the world. The area has both Ramsar and World Heritage designations and is rich in biodiversity including 550 higher plants, 33 mammals, 130 birds and 20 amphibians, with 39 of the species belong to the IUCN Red List. The Advisory Committee appreciated the detailed presentation of the ecosystem services of the area and the good quality maps provided and multi-stakeholder approach used for the nomination process.
38. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts to protect cultural diversity and traditional livelihoods of the Kobo and Jang people in traditional bee keeping and the Social Empowerment through Group Nature interaction (SEGN) initiatives in environmental education programme for youth that links cultural and biological diversity.
39. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to reconcile the estimated population of the area in all sections of the dossier (225,490 or 224,925) and to provide a copy of the specific law on the biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017.
40. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.
41. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to integrate sustainable tourism development and conflict resolution in the future management plan.
42. **Black Forest (Germany)**. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the south of Germany and borders the agglomerations of the High Rhine and Oberrhein. It contains the most diverse low mountain ranges of Central Europe, silviculturally shaped forests (spruce), lowland and mountain hay meadows and lowland moors. The proposed total surface is 63,235 ha, 70 % of the area of which is forested. 38,000 inhabitants are living in the proposed area with main activities such as agriculture (mainly grazing), as well as secondary and tertiary sector. The proposed area is characterized by a unique cultural identity with customs and handicrafts, and promoting these is an important goal of the biosphere reserve proposal. An impressive amount of research has been and will be conducted. Research includes exploration of human-environment relationships in grassland rich forest landscapes and the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies. The proposed biosphere reserve supports innovative and diverse activities for demonstrating sustainable development, including sustainable tourism, promotion of a research network and adaptive strategies to climate change.
43. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the high degree of involvement of local stakeholders and their support towards the designation.
44. The Advisory recommended that the proposal be **approved**.
45. The Advisory Committee commended the German authorities for the quality of the nomination form and further recommended that this nomination form is used as a model to be shared in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

46. **San Marcos de Colón (Honduras).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Honduran authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located 192 km from Tegucigalpa and 12 km from the Nicaraguan border at an altitude of 500 m to 1,700 m. The reserve covers an area of 57,810 ha with a core area of 4,069 ha, a buffer zone of 22,411 ha and a transition area of 31,330 ha.
47. There are several endemic species of fauna some of which are present only in small populations. The area also includes species of mammal such as the northern tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*), the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and the white-faced monkey (*Cebus capucinus*).
48. Significant biological diversity has been recorded among bird species with 129 families registered. However, the highland guan (*Penelopina nigra*) and the Red-tailed hawk are endangered. A total of 18 families of herpetofauna have also been observed. In terms of flora, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the national authorities have classified guayacan trees (*Guaiacum sanctum*) as being under serious threat.
49. The biosphere reserve contains 18 villages that are home to 26,350 inhabitants. The natural characteristics and peculiar temperate climate of the area enable the development of agricultural activities such as horticulture, fruit and coffee production, the growth of ornamental plants, and cattle rearing and dairy production. These activities contribute to the development of a variety of other productive activities that enhance the economic growth of the reserve.
50. The area is also known for its saddlery products (belts, harness, boots and hats). Other activities include the production of basic grains, the processing of milk products, the production of vegetables, and products derived from maize.
51. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**. It is requested to further specify the management committee and management plan, as well as a topographic map with the limits of the core area bordering with Nicaragua.
52. **Tepilora, Rio Posada and Montalbo (Italy).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal from Italy located in Sardinia. The proposal presents very diverse landscapes, including mountainous areas to the west and flat strip to the east, rivers, and coastal areas. It includes the Montalbo massif. 50,000 people are living in the 17 municipalities with very diverse human concentration (from 251 to 11,000 inhabitants). Specific form of singing “canto a tenore” was listed in UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
53. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the rich history and culture of the proposed area, and the connection between humans and nature, documented through different cultural activities and events in the local language (sa limba). The total surface area proposed is 140,495 ha.
54. The Advisory Committee noted that the main objective of the proposed site is to encourage the local residents to engage in sustainable development, by valorizing the traditional activities and ecotourism. It also took note of the ongoing research and monitoring with cooperation with the Sardinian universities of Cagliari and Sassari. The proposed biosphere reserve is committed to development of sustainable tourism that would support local economy also in inland areas with providing services outside the season’s peaks and also strengthening the identity of local people and assure possibilities for involvement of young people. The proposal contains information about several projects aiming to high quality

education for youth dealing with conservation and biodiversity, promotion of local food consumption, recycling and pedagogical farms. Several monitoring and research programmes were developed by national and regional research institutions and universities dealing with geology, biology, ecology, climate change, prevention of hydro-geological risk, environmental monitoring, technological development and energy consumption.

55. The proposed governance is designed in innovative and democratic way. The coordinator of the proposed biosphere reserve will be Parco Naturale Regionale di Tepilora and newly established MAB Office with government officials and representatives of Centres for Environmental Education and Sustainability. Scientific and Management Committees will be established to assure scientific and participatory approach. Local communities and stakeholders will be represented in Permanent Advisory Assembly that will approve Management Programme, its three-yearly updates and annual assessment of results.
56. The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for the clarification provided to the technical questions and recommended that the site be **approved**.
57. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the nomination form and encouraged the authorities to continue with the process of preparing comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve and to share with the WNBR the outcomes of the implementation of “UNESCO MAB Brand & Story Toolkit”.
58. **Sobo, Katamuki and Okue (Japan)**. The proposed Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve is characterized by Kyushu's precipitous mountains that include Mt. Sobo. The site is a part of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range which in itself serves as a “natural history museum of Japan”. Total area of the Biosphere Reserve is 243,672 hectares. The core area occupies 1,580 ha, buffer zone 17,748 ha, transition area 224,344 ha.
59. Forests cover 85% of the total area of the proposed site. Sustainable use has been carried out in various forms, including wood production, shiitake mushroom cultivation, charcoal (*binchotan*) production, and traditional bamboo work.
60. Due to the high forest biodiversity, research on fauna and flora in the Sobo-Katamuki Mountain Range has been conducted for quite a long time and the area has become an important base of biodiversity in the region.
61. Six municipalities in the surrounding areas of the Sobo-Katamuki Mountain Range have been playing a central role in promoting Education for Sustainable Development that takes advantage of nature and culture, and in implementing sustainable use of resources.
62. The established Sobo-Katamuki Biosphere Reserve Oita/Miyazaki Council is planned to be restructured after the biosphere reserve designation to facilitate more efficient and practical nature conservation, academic research, and sustainable use. “Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve Management Plan” has been formulated, reviewed and approved by the Council and will go into effect immediately following biosphere reserve designation.
63. The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission and commended the authorities of Japan for the very well written proposal with a clear zonation. It commended on-going forest restoration efforts. The Advisory Committee noted that the percentage of the core zone is rather small (0.65%) in comparison with the total area of the proposed Biosphere Reserve. It also noted that the areas of prefectural natural parks are not in the buffer zones. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to increase the core area by adding other areas of the quasi-national park and to increase the buffer zone by adding prefectural natural parks.” With this in mind, the Advisory Committee recommended that Sobo, Katamuki and Okue be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.

64. **Minakami (Japan).** The proposed site includes the central divide of the island Honshu formed by 2,000 meters high mountainous backbone including the Tanigawa mountain range. Large differences in the environment between the eastern and western slopes as well as between the mountainous and the lowland areas create a distinct biological and cultural diversity. Total area of the proposed biosphere reserve is 91,368 hectares. The core area occupies 9,123 ha, buffer zone 60,421 ha and transition area 21,824 ha. The population is 21,345 and all dwelling in the transition area.
65. The area includes 1,776 species of vascular plants, 64 species of mammals, 161 species of birds, 12 species of reptiles, 18 species of amphibians, 18 species of fish, and 2,866 species of insects. 65 species of the vascular plants are endangered plants listed on the Red List (RL) of Ministry of Environment (2015). Many globally important species groups are seen in the area.
66. In the proposed buffer zone and transition area, there are secondary forests of deciduous broad-leaved trees where local residents have traditionally produced wood for fuel.
67. Main economic activities are agriculture – high quality products, and tourism. The proposed Minakami biosphere reserve site is a tourist spot. Main activities in the transition area include outdoor sports such as mountain climbing, skiing, and rafting; green tourism such as orchards; and the Onsen (hot springs). In around Mt. Tanigawa-dake serving as the buffer zone, mountain climbing and skiing are popular, while ecotourism is making the use of its history and culture with great consideration given to the valuable natural environment.
68. Most of the proposed territory belongs to one town of Gunma Prefecture - Minakami Town currently facing several social challenges including the population decrease and decline of agriculture production. The sustainable development programmes elaborated for the proposed biosphere reserve shall solve these problems.
69. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination and commended the authorities of Japan for the very well elaborated proposal and recommended that Minakami be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.
70. **Altyn Emel (Kazakhstan).** The proposed site is located in the central part of the Ili intermountain basin. Total area of the proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve is 535,909.4 hectares. The main core area occupies 54,767.5 ha, buffer zone: 252,885.8 ha, transition area: 228,256.1 ha. All zones correspond to the territory of Altyn Emel state national nature park which is one of the largest protected areas in Kazakhstan and is extremely important for the conservation of biological diversity of the region. Flora of proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve today includes 825 species of vascular plants. In addition to rare and endangered species, there are a lot of endemic plants that are unique to the reserve. Fauna of invertebrate animals includes of 1,658 species. Fauna of vertebrates in the reserve consists of 393 species.
71. Ecosystem diversity is composed of various zonal and intrazonal types such as different types of desert, riparian forests of the floodplain of Ili river, deciduous and spruce forests, salt marshes, etc. It also includes the most valuable wetlands of Ili river. Protection regimes and zoning of the reserve allows to minimize harmful effects of human activities on ecosystems and, at the same time, to develop ecotourism.
72. The unique value of the proposed biosphere reserve is justified by the rich historical, natural and cultural heritage of the area. The most important of them - a monument of national importance "Singing Dunes", Saki mounds "Besshatyr", petroglyphs "Tanbalytas" and other objects.

73. The natural conditions of the proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve and surrounding areas are very diverse for the development of diversified agriculture and tourism. The Kazakhstan segment of the Great Silk Road lies in the region.
74. The transition area with 4,000 inhabitants allows main types of traditional economic activity of land users, providing stable use of nature resources, but prohibiting or limiting types of nature use and economic activity, negatively influencing ecological systems. This zone is used for living by local population, for development of economy, culture and education and provides function of stable development of the territory.
75. Potential of the region is connected with a development of eco-tourism and recreational tourism, as well as with cattle breeding and plant growing.
76. The area is managed through Altyn Emel State National Park administration and Biosphere Reserve Coordination Council created in 2015. The Council is a collegial public body created to introduce policies of effective management and sustainable use of biosphere reserve's resources, alternative activities, resource-conserving and resource-restoring technologies.
77. The Advisory Committee noted that within the UNDP/GEF Project a research of social-economic situation in rural settlements of the proposed reserve was carried out.
78. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination. It encouraged the national authorities to develop an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve area after its designation.
79. The Advisory Committee recommended that Altyn Emel be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.
80. The Advisory Committee invited the national authorities to send by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat further information as follows:
- Revise all maps to contain the information in English.
  - Zonation map: change colors of sub-zones and increase a font size in the legend to be well readable.
  - Ecosystem map: increase a font size in the Legend to be well readable.
81. **Gadabedji (Niger).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the well-prepared nomination by Niger. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the Center of the country and straddles the regions of Maradi, Zinder and Agadez. It covers an area of 1,413,625 ha of which the core area is 69,023 ha, buffer zone, 163,925 ha and transition area, 1,180,657 ha. The area lies in the biogeographical zone between the Sahelo-Saharan biome in the North of the Niger and the Sudanian biome in the South. It is one of the first protected areas in the country, legally protected as a forest reserve and as a wildlife sanctuary by a government Order.
82. The area comprises of a mosaic of savannahs, depressions, pits and sand dunes. The fauna is diverse and includes 11 species of large mammals like the dorcas gazelle, rufifron gazelle, patas monkey, burrowing squirrel, pale fox, golden jackal and several birds as dendrocnyges, armed and helmeted ducks and a large colony of storks black.
83. The population of the proposed biosphere reserve belongs to two main ethnic groups (the Tuaregs and the Peulhs) with almost 20,500 inhabitants whose main activity is pastoralism including nomadic lifestyle.
84. At present, the managing authority of the area is the coordinator and his collaborators

appointed by the national authorities (reserve management unit). There are no formal consultative or decision-making bodies in place yet. However, the mayor of Gadabedji signed the nomination form. Thus, the Advisory Committee recommended to formalize and to increase the involvement of local communities and researchers in the management of the area.

85. Concerning the logistic function, the Reserve Management Unit is implementing monitoring and environmental education programmes. Few research activities are ongoing and no infrastructure is available.
86. The Advisory Committee considered that there is significant potential for biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, research, monitoring and education. It recommended that the site be **approved**.
87. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to fully implement the management plan in order to formalize the multi stakeholders' consultative platform and to foster sustainable development initiatives.
88. **Castro Verde (Portugal)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Portuguese authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in southern Portugal, in the hinterland of the Baixo Alentejo region, and covers a total area of 56,944.22 ha. The core area covers 6,005.22 ha, the buffer zone 26,562.70 ha and the transition zone 24,376.30 ha.
89. The proposed biosphere reserve encompasses the most important cereal steppe area of Portugal, which, in turn, is one of the most representative of the Iberian Peninsula and all of Europe. Cereal steppe or pseudo-steppe is one of the most threatened rural landscapes of the Mediterranean region. The area has a predominantly flat territory of sub-humid to dry ombroclimate located for the most part in the thermo-Mediterranean level, in some places reaching the meso-Mediterranean level.
90. The list of plant species includes trees and shrubs of plain, leathery and persistent leaves, such as holm oak, cork oak and the *Nerium oleander*. The area has a high degree of endemism in its flora, including 11 Iberian and Mediterranean examples. Two rare endemic Lusitanian species, *Linaria ricardoj* and *Armeria neglecta*, also occur only in the region covered by the proposed biosphere reserve (Alentejo). In terms of fauna, there is a structured and diverse bird community numbering around 200 species, including steppe birds such as the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*). Other endemic species include the emblematic Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*), one of the most endangered birds of prey in Europe and one of the rarest in the world.
91. With an estimated population of 7,276 inhabitants (National Census of 2011), the area has a low population density (12.8 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>). Much of the population lives in the town of Castro Verde (4,199 inhabitants), while the remaining inhabitants are distributed among a score of small and medium-sized villages and some isolated houses.
92. Despite the decline in agricultural employment over recent decades, extensive farming of dryland cereals continues, associated with livestock rearing as a means to maximize sources of income.
93. The mining complex of Neves-Corvo is a major employer in the region, and one of the most important mining centres in Europe, as well as one of the most important extractive industries in Portugal. All the activities and services connected to this complex, and the associated trade, construction and public works, have been instrumental in the reorganization and revitalization of the local economy.

94. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved** and encouraged the authorities to further develop an action plan and management committee.
95. **Khakassky (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, in the Republic of Khakassia, located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, and famous for its rich and high biodiversity and ecosystems. The mountain-taiga areas occupy more than 80 % of the territory.
96. The total proposed area is about 2,029,000 ha with 5,557 permanent inhabitants. The proposed biosphere reserve will be managed by a Coordinating Council, including the Chairman of the Council of Elders of Khakass people. The Advisory Committee also took note that the research and environmental policy of the site will be elaborated by the Scientific and Technical Council of the Khakassky Reserve.
97. It noted as well that social and economic development of the site is linked to traditional and sustainable nature management (such as sustainable forest management and agriculture), wild-honey farming, beekeeping, and tourism (ecotourism, recreational, rural, and educational tourism).
98. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the reserve plans to develop and implement innovative programs for sustainable livelihood of the local population (support and develop environmentally oriented small companies, promote local organic products and local crafts and folklore). It also welcomed that the proposed site plans to work out training programs for the local population that will include traditional souvenir making, business activities, and organization of ecotourism.
99. The Advisory Committee welcomed the biosphere reserve purpose to be a social, economic, cultural and educational center that promotes new types of sustainable activities and revival of national culture with the goal to provide additional income to the region's economy. It also welcomed the plans to design ethnical and environmental programs aimed at preserving indigenous culture and traditional nature management of Khakass peoples.
100. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.
101. **Great Altay (Russian Federation / Republic of Kazakhstan)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this joint transboundary proposal from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan, composed with the Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation designated in 2000) and the Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan designated in 2014).
102. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve of a total surface of 1,543,807 ha consists of core areas of 269,822 ha, buffer zones of 711,070 ha and transition areas of 562,915 ha with 24,400 inhabitants.
103. It commended the three-year participatory planning process (ecosystem-based, adaptive and participatory management approach) that led to the joint nomination form and acknowledged the long-term technical cooperation with several initiatives and activities to promote and foster transboundary nature conservation in the Altai region.
104. The Advisory Committee took note that the proposed joint area is used for livestock, grazing, red deer (maral) farming, fodder production and apiculture. Forestry activities include sanitary cutting and thinning cuts as well as restoration of degraded forest stands. Tourism, hunting, fishing and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is widespread.

105. It also welcomed the Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Vision, translated into a strategy with different objectives such as the Promotion of transboundary understanding and cultural exchange; the Generation of alternative job opportunities and income and the Development of regulated eco-cultural tourism. It also noted with appreciation the numerous joint activities and task forces such as on 'Biodiversity Conservation' which oversees the development of common or coordinated conservation and restoration policies as well as policies for restoration of degraded areas. It also welcomed the increased number of initiatives focusing on the revival and distribution of traditional knowledge, such as the "Ethno-ecological museum of the Altain culture" of the Katunskiy State Nature Biosphere Zapovednik and its educational activities. Nevertheless the Advisory Committee considered the deadline of 2040 for most activities fairly long and encourages the authorities to shorten the period for this ambitious strategy in order to align with the timeline for the implementation of the Lima Action Plan.
106. It welcomed the activities of the International Coordination Council "Altai – Our common home" formed in 2003 aiming at the development of the border regions, sharing cultural and natural heritage and on the improvement of living conditions. It also welcomed the establishment of the 'Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Board' to oversee the coordination of the joint activities.
107. The Advisory Committee also well noted that the Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve may act as a model region for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in close linkage with sustainable development of local communities in the transboundary Altai region, South Siberia.
108. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the authorities to continue joint action towards a comprehensive transboundary conservation and management of the ecosystems of the Altai region and pursue a plan for establishment of potential quadrilateral transboundary biosphere reserve among the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Mongolia and the People's Republic of China.
109. **Garden Route (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination of this complex of diverse protected ecosystems in the Cape Floristic biodiversity hotspot region located along the southern coast of part of the country. With a total area of 698,363ha (212,375 ha core, 288,032 ha buffer, 197,956 ha transition) and a population of 450,624, the area includes the Tsitsikamma Marine protected area, Wilderness Lake Ramsar site, Garden Route National Park and two World Heritage sites, the Nelson Bay Cave and the Lankloof Valley, this later being critically endangered.
110. Floral diversity includes plateau forest, shrubs and herbs of relevance for indigenous groups such as the KhoiSan people while faunal diversity includes the endangered Knysna seahorse, two near threatened fish species (Eastern Cape redfin, *Psuedobarbas afer* and the Cape kurper, (*Sandelia capensis*) and large mammals like elephants, rhinos and buffalo.
111. The Advisory Committee recognized the wide range of stakeholders and partners involved in sustainable development initiatives in the area and the various agreements prepared in this regard that had led to the development of eco-tourism and community support in craft and agro-processing. The development of touristic corridors among the various sections of the area and the development of local tourism organizations in collaboration with the local and district municipalities was laudable.
112. The Advisory Committee appreciated the relevance of the six meteorological stations in the area for climate change monitoring and the collaborative research programme with

various stakeholders including Nelson Mandela University.

113. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.
114. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the independent body established for the management of the proposed biosphere reserve to explore in addition to tourism other substantial livelihoods opportunities for disadvantaged user groups and to involve them in management of the area. The Advisory Committee looked forward to receiving the management plan after it has been finalized.
115. **Jebel Al Dair (Sudan)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination file of the Jebel Al Dair site for becoming a biosphere reserve.
116. Jebel Al Dair builds on an existing National Park (established in 2010) and is constituted of the Al Dair massif, composed of dry savannah woodlands, forested ecosystems and a network of streams. The Jebel Al Dair is one of the few remaining area with rich biodiversity in the semi-arid North Kordofan. The main objective of the site to become a biosphere reserve is to secure the ecosystem services in order to allow a sustainable economic and socio-cultural development of the area that rely on natural resources for their livelihoods. The site counts 220 bird species, as well as 22 mammals and reptiles species such as greater kudu, baboons, rock hyrax, most of them endangered. Among the 112 plant species, 95 are of medicinal and aromatic use. The proposed site includes several small villages and cultural practices are reported to be linked to sites in the Jebel.
117. A comprehensive management plan has been provided and the Advisory Committee congratulated the Jebel Al Dair authorities for the highly participative approach that has been followed for establishing this management plan. This included a stakeholder consultation workshop, consultative meetings with local communities and/or their representatives, a socioeconomic survey, the establishment of various committees with respectively concerned stakeholders, 10 training courses for rangers, and the future involvement of local communities in the management conservation process.
118. Regarding the zonation of the proposed site, clarification should be provided about the overlapping of the Jebel El Dair National Park with the proposed biosphere reserve: where are the limits of the national park within the total area of the biosphere reserve? In the current nomination file, it remains unclear, how the different surfaces of the national park (315 km<sup>2</sup>), the core area of the proposed biosphere reserve (1,672 km<sup>2</sup>) and the buffer zone and transition area (respectively 987 km<sup>2</sup> and 3,715 km<sup>2</sup>) relate to each other.
119. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee recommended that Jebel Al Dair be **approved** as a biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee understood that due to meteorological conditions at the time of the submission of the nomination file, Jebel Al Dair was not accessible and authorities could not complete the “Endorsement” part of the nomination file. The Advisory Committee requested authorities to provide all the necessary supporting signatures and to submit additional information about zonation by 30 September 2017.

**New nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information**

120. **La Selle - Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo (Dominican Republic / Haïti)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the authorities of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve includes the existing biosphere reserves of La Selle in Haiti designated in 2012 and Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo in the Dominican Republic, designated in 2002.
121. These biosphere reserves represent ecological corridors that are divided by a political

and administrative frontier. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve presents an opportunity to allow better management of the environment, taking into account the ecological dimension necessary for the survival and welfare of people and communities.

122. Although both biosphere reserve seems to be functioning well and the proposal is well prepared, an accompanying letter of agreement signed jointly by the highest authorities of both countries is missing. Therefore, the proposal of the creation of this trans-boundary biosphere reserve is **approved pending**, the missing agreement will be sent before 15 May 2017.
123. **Karatau Biosphere Reserve (Kazakhstan)** The proposed site is located in the central part of the Karatau ridge, which is a branch of North-Western parts of Tien Shan on the territory of South Kazakhstan region. The total area is 151,792 hectares. The core area (the area of Karatau state nature reserve) occupies 34,300 ha, the buffer zone 17,492 ha and the transition area 100,000 ha with 83,000 inhabitants.
124. The area represents an extremely important natural complex for conservation of West Tien Shan biodiversity. Flora of higher vascular plants of Karatau ridge along its length counts 1,710 species and subspecies from 578 genera and 108 families. By the number of endemic species Karatau occupied the first place among all Middle-Asian regions. A rare and threatened population of Karatau Argali is present only in Karatau. Out of 26 mammal species chosen as indicator for West Tien Shan, the Karatau region hosts 20. Avifauna consists of 118 species.
125. UNDP/GEF projects enabled *i.a.* to carry out a complex research of the region and assess environmental and economic impacts on cultural and social life of local people.
126. Lands of the buffer zone are not withdrawn from the main land users, they consist of the lands of agricultural purpose and are administered by agricultural organizations and private bodies. Within the buffer zone an economic activity in some parts of the protection zone (haymaking, cattle pasture) is carried out by agreement with state authority and under the control of the administration of state nature reserve. Eco-educational, tourism and recreational activities are conducted on the territory of biosphere reserve's buffer zone, as well as scientific research.
127. Around 83,000 people live in the transition area of the proposed biosphere reserve. The majority of the lands adjacent to the nature reserve are in state possession and given for constant or temporary land-use. The largest land users in the transition zone are agricultural enterprises. The potential of the region is connected primarily with the development of cattle breeding and plant growing, as well as with eco-tourism and recreational tourism.
128. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal. It encouraged the national authorities to develop an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve area after its designation. However, it noted that sustainable development programmes are not described in details.
129. The Advisory Committee recommended that Karatau be **approved pending** the receipt and approval of the following information by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat:
- Provide detailed description of sustainable development programme(s).
  - Revise all maps to contain all the information in English and increase a font size in the Legend to be well readable.
130. **Termit and Tin Toumma (Niger)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this proposal by Niger. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the East of Niger and straddles the regions of Agadez, Zinder and Diffa, particularly in a Sahelo-Saharan

zone in the Central-East of Niger. It covers an area of 33,712,442 ha of which the core areas: 2,354,000 ha, buffer zone: 7,644,106 ha and transition area 23,714,260 ha. The legal status of the two core areas and their surrounding buffer zones is national nature reserve, with less restriction in the buffer zone.

131. The area consists of desert zones with a population belonging to Toubous, Arabs, Tuaregs and Peulhs totaling 2,800 inhabitants, whose main activity is pastoralism, including nomadic lifestyle.
132. The biodiversity of the area is important with animal species including among others, Nager dama, *Ammontragus lervia* and for the birds, the vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*. It also includes sahelian species such as the Dorcas gazelle, the mancette, the desert cheetah and many other birds and reptiles. As plant species, *Acacia sp.*, *Salvadora persica*, *Balanites aegyptiaca* and *Boscia senegalensis* are found.
133. For the management of the proposed biosphere reserve, in addition to the coordinator and his collaborators appointed by the national authorities (management unit); a consultative body is in place including representatives of local stakeholders (Advisory Committee) and the Scientific Council.
134. The Advisory Committee noted the ongoing oil exploitation activities in the area without any precision (in core, buffer or transition areas). It recommended that the site be **approved pending** that the oil exploitation is not impacting the conservation function of the biosphere reserve. The country is therefore requested to provide the clarification of the location of oil exploitation and the provision of environmental and social impacts assessment documents and/or outcomes as well as further information on how the local populations are involved in the management of the site by 15 May 2017.
135. **Itaipu (Paraguay)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Paraguayan authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the Eastern Region of the country and covers a total area of 1,040,780 ha. There are six core areas (property of Itaipu Binational) that cover 36,505.717 ha, while the buffer zone covers 27,604.49 ha (53% of which is terrestrial and 47% aquatic). The wide transition zone covers 933,738,791 ha and incorporates private property used for agriculture and cattle, urban areas, groups of farmers and indigenous people, and remaining forest cover.
136. The proposed biosphere reserve comprises an area of semi-deciduous subtropical forest, also known as the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. This forest forms part of the Global 200 list of ecoregions identified by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the global conservation organization, as priorities for conservation.
137. The Atlantic Forest is one of the most important ecosystems for the conservation of biological diversity on a global scale, due to its high endemic species, richness of species and the original cover, which is scarce following the accelerated destruction of the habitat for agricultural purposes. The Upper Parana Atlantic Forest is home to vertebrates including large predators such as harpies (*Harpia harpyja*), crested eagles, jaguars (*Felis concolor*), pumas (*Panthera onca*), and large herbivores such as tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*), species of deer (*Mazama sp.*) and two species of peccaries (*Tayasu sp.*).
138. The permanent population amounts to over 450,000 people and may double during high season. It consists of indigenous communities, and Paraguayan and 'brasiguayos' settlers (Paraguayan descendants of Brazilians who immigrated in the last decades of the twentieth century).
139. This mixture of different cultures sharing the same territory has created an interesting environment for the management of conservation works and sustainable development, due to the diverse forms of productive activity, architecture, customs and gastronomy, among

others. These cultures also speak a variety of languages including Castellano, Guaraní and Portuguese), as well as a particular mixture of Guaraní and Castellano known as ‘Jopara’ (pronounced yopará) (sometimes associated with Portuguese in this border area).

140. The Advisory Committee recommended the site to be **approved pending** provision by the authorities of clear data on the total area of the whole proposed biosphere reserve and of each zone (core, buffer and transition) by 15 May 2017. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to work together with the bordering Bosque Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve in Paraguay and Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve located on the Brazilian side of the Itaipu Dam.
  
141. The Advisory Committee encourages communicating about the history, concept and importance of the MAB Programme and its biosphere reserve using the official documents of the MAB Programme. The Advisory Committee further recommends establishing new ecological corridors that connect the fragmented core areas.
  
142. **Indawgyi (Republic of the Union of Myanmar).** Indawgyi Lake is the largest freshwater lake in Myanmar. It consists of a large open lake area, floating vegetation areas, surrounded by herbaceous marsh, semi-inundated swamp forest and seasonally flooded grasslands. The hills surrounding Indawgyi Lake basin are covered by subtropical moist broadleaf forests that harbour a number of threatened forest birds and mammals, including endangered primates.
  
143. 166 bird species have been recorded for the lake and its surrounding catchments. This amount contains 56 waterbird species, 79 wetland dependent bird species and 31 forest bird species. The proposed biosphere reserve also holds important habitats for mammals such as grassland for the endangered hog deer and forests hosting Eastern Hoolock gibbon and Shortridge langur. 93 fish species are presently known from the lake and its basin. This includes regional endemic species and 6 species new to science, discovered in 2015, which could be restricted to the Indawgyi Lake basin.
  
144. The proposed site has a total area of 133,715 ha. The core areas occupy an area of 45,170 ha. The buffer zones have a total area of 27,578 ha. The forest buffer zone includes community-forestry sites and forests with regulated access and utilization by local communities. The transition area has an area of 60, 967 ha and is the alluvial plain between the lake and the watershed and consists mostly of agricultural land for paddy rice production. Since these farmlands immediately surround the Lake and its associated wetlands, all agrochemicals applied to the farms will likely impact the lake. The transition area will have a central function to educate all relevant stakeholders, pilot and support sustainable development intervention with a focus on organic farming, responsible tourism, waste and wastewater management systems, and renewable energy for local households and developing solutions to manage environmental impacts from gold mining.
  
145. Local communities have been involved from the beginning in the biosphere reserve nomination process. The process has fully considered indigenous and customary rights of local indigenous communities and the nomination would not lead to any involuntary access restrictions for local people.
  
146. Biosphere Reserve Management Unit is to be formed at District level. Its composition and responsibilities will be defined after a successful nomination.
  
147. The Advisory Committee noted that the Indawgyi Lake became a Ramsar site in 2016 and that the national authorities consider this site to be proposed as the World Natural Heritage site.
  
148. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination. It encouraged the national

authorities to develop a comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve after its designation.

149. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved pending** the authorities to send detailed information on the legal protection status of the areas outside the proposed biosphere reserve in its eastern and south-western parts, and if they are not legally or functionally protected, a rationale of that typology of the zoning. This information shall be submitted by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat.
150. **Kizlyar Bay Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation which encompasses Kizlyar Bay (one of the biggest bays of the Caspian Sea), which is a key part of one of the largest migratory routes of birds in Eurasia, with breeding, migration and wintering of more than 280 species of birds.
151. It represents a diversity of water, coastal and arid ecosystems of Caspian Depression and the North-Western Caspian (plain and coastal wetlands; plain deserts, semi deserts and steppes). It contains high biodiversity of marine, coastal, desert-steppe ecosystems, including populations of globally threatened animals (Caspian seal, many species of birds and sturgeons). The entire marine area of the proposed site lies within boundaries of a special North Caspian Protected Fishery Zone which status is close to that of nature sanctuary.
152. The proposed biosphere reserve covers the total area of 354,100 ha for a total population of 1,600 permanent inhabitants. The purpose is the improvement of socio-economic welfare of local people by the maintenance and development of traditional, eco-friendly forms of nature management, including sustainable fishery, land use (grazing and haymaking), seasonal autumn hunting, recreation, and ecotourism, with special attention paid to the maintenance and development of traditional forms of economic activity and fishery. The Advisory Committee welcomed the establishment of the Scientific-Technical Council and the Community Council, which includes representatives of communities and local authorities of Tarumovka and Kizlyar Districts of Daghestan.
153. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the strong support from the authorities and stakeholders. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the well-prepared nomination file.
154. The Advisory Committee recommended the site to be **approved pending** receiving additional information to explain why there is no buffer zone adjacent to the core area in the eastern part by 15 May 2017. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the national authorities consider the establishment of core area also on Tyuleny Island in the future.
155. **Metsola (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, at the border of Finland located on the eastern side of the West Karelian Upland. The proposal comprises the Kostomukshsky Reserve and contains one of the oldest north-taiga intact forests in Northwest Russia. The proposed area is 345,700 ha with 30,000 permanent inhabitants, and with forestry, fishing and agriculture as main activities.
156. The Advisory Committee noted that the primary goal of the area is to conserve north-taiga forests, essential for the reproduction of many aboriginal bird species such as grouse, lamellirostral, coastal birds, diurnal birds of prey. It also noted the importance of the culture and historic environment of the area where the Kalevala epos was created. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the designation is expected to enhance tourism and to

create employment in Kalevala Town, Voknavolok Village and the City of Kostomuksha. It further noted that the social and economic development is linked to sustainable forestry, agriculture and local activities such as fishing, hunting and collecting non-woody forest products.

157. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that a Coordination Board will manage the proposed area, including scientists and NGO representatives and that it will supervise the activities of the institutions and organizations located in the proposed area, respecting the legislation for the sustainable development of the region.

158. The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for the additional information provided on cooperation with Finland and on the environmental impact of iron production facility. The Advisory Committee welcomed and encouraged the on-going cooperation with Finland.

159. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal be **approved pending** the receipt of the following information by 15 May 2017:

- a map with zones using the terminology according to the Statutory framework as regards the buffer zones;
- detailed information about the size of core areas, buffer zones and transition area;
- more detailed information on the management plan for the proposed area, since only bullet points with general topics were provided.

160. **Backo Podunavlje (Serbia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Serbia. The proposed site 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.

161. The Advisory Committee noted that the proposed site has the same zonation as the one proposed in 2014 which was deferred. It also noted that at the time of the previous submission as part of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the creation of the transboundary was 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.

162. The Advisory Committee took note that it had not received any information nor reply as regards the previous recommendation and the information requested by the MAB Council (MAB Council final report 2014):

163. “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”.

164. The Advisory Committee warmly welcomed the additional information provided where the authorities expressed their willingness to continue the process of transboundary cooperation, which lays the basis for the possible future establishment of the whole Mura Drava Danube region as one ecological complex and common cultural heritage. The

Advisory Committee took note that this biosphere reserve proposal by no means depart from the idea of transboundary cooperation across the transboundary biosphere reserve Mura Drava Danube. The Advisory Committee also commended the authorities for mobilizing funds for the project “COOPMDD” through the interregional Danube transnational programme in 2016.

165. The Advisory Committee finally noted that some core areas are not fully surrounded by buffer zones and requested additional information on the rationale.
166. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved pending** the submission of additional information on why some of the core areas are not fully buffered or provide rationale for the absence of the buffer zones as well as to provide additional information on the status of the boundaries discussions at the international level with Croatia by 15 May 2017.

### **Extension, rezoning or renaming of already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval**

167. **Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve – Extension and renaming of former Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve (Australia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of the extension and renaming of the Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve located in the state of Western Australia, which was originally designated in 1978. However, this site being a pre-Seville site has not been fully functioning as a biosphere reserve due to the lack of an appropriate buffer zone and transition area.
168. The Australian authorities submitted the extension and renaming of the site in 2015 to improve the functionality according to the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The total area of this site was 1.529 million ha: comprising 296,390 ha as core area; 140,797 ha as buffer zone; 1,092,208 ha terrestrial transition area and 157,286 ha as marine transition area.
169. However, after careful examination, the MAB Council in 2016 decided that this extension and renaming be deferred and encouraged the national authorities to resubmit the nomination taking into account the recommendation to rezone this area such that the buffer would be contiguous with the core area and to submit a new zonation map accordingly.
170. The Advisory Committee commended the Australian authorities for their extensive consultation with the Biosphere Implementation Group including representation from government, local industry and community stakeholders which resulted into the proposed zonation being now as follows: core area - 164,102 ha, buffer zone - 180,755 ha, and transition area - 1,184,720 ha as shown in the accompanying maps being submitted with this re-submission. The total area is 1,529,577 ha.
171. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal of the extension with the re-name “Fitzgerald Biosphere” be **approved.**
172. The Advisory Committee invited the Australian authorities to provide a sound rationale to the new zonation and change the relevant information in the revised document taking into account this new zonation. The Advisory Committee encouraged to reconsider the areas covered with native vegetation to be maintained as buffer zones.

### **General recommendations to Bulgaria**

173. The Advisory Committee warmly welcomed the intense efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to update their sites to meet the statutory framework criteria. It also very much appreciated the road map and the submission of four nominations proposals based on 8

existing biosphere reserves. It furthermore very much welcomed the on-going dialogue and consultation with stakeholders described in the new proposals. It requested that an update of the road map be provided in order to assess the status of the other 8 sites, especially for the sites where consultation with local communities have indicated that they were not supported or against the proposal to update the biosphere reserve. It requested that this information and the update of the road map be provided to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

174. **Central Balkan Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) - Extension and renaming.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal located in the central part of the country which contains four existing biosphere reserves (i.e. Steneto Biosphere Reserve, Tsaritchina Biosphere Reserve, Djendema Biosphere Reserve and Boatin Biosphere Reserve, all designated in 1977). The proposal is a follow up of the periodic review reports examined by the MAB Council in 2016. The proposal includes the central and higher portions of the Balkan Mountain Range. The core area is made of the Central Balkan national park and contains rare and endangered wildlife species as well as cultural sites. It contains the most important old beech forest massif (71% of the national park) of the country. Main activities include transhumance, grazing, walking tourism. The total proposed area is 369,000 ha with 129,647 inhabitants.
175. The Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made by the authorities to involve the stakeholders through consultations and the support of the five municipalities as well as the interactions between the different authorities of the three proposed zones through the establishment of a Partnership council and a consultative council. It noted with satisfaction that one of the purpose of the biosphere reserve is to provide and stimulate opportunities for development of environmentally friendly livelihoods and nature-based tourism.
176. The Advisory Committee noted that part of the core areas is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone, nevertheless, the Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function of the core areas concerned is not threatened since the adjacent territories are included in the NATURA 2000 network.
177. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension and renaming be **approved**.
178. The Advisory Committee encouraged further negotiations with local communities that have not yet replied officially to become part of the biosphere reserve.
179. **Chervenata Stena Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination for this site established in 1977. The proposed area of 65409 ha is located in the south Bulgarian mountain. It contains landscapes of mid-mountainous deciduous as well as coniferous forests, as well as high mountain meadows. These forest landscapes and mountainous rocks are emblematic and gives the name of the proposed site: the red wall. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the support of the local communities, local NGOs, business and the series of meetings that were held in the municipality of Asenovgrad which constitutes the transition area in the proposed nomination. The total number of inhabitants is 60,680.
180. Main activities include organic agriculture, stock breeding, ecological tourism. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that several activities in the proposed biosphere reserve include sustainable development of the Asenovgrad municipality, the improvement of the quality of environmental education, including training and the stimulation of scientific research. A consultative (managing) body would be put in place involving all stakeholders.
181. The Advisory Committee appreciates the efforts made through the Operational Program Environment 2007–2013, as well as the efforts made to use the biosphere reserves territory

for local socio-economic development, notably through the establishment of small family-run guesthouses and the promotion of local organic production. These operations benefit from the nearby presence of the Bachkovo Monastery, the second largest of Bulgaria.

182. The Advisory Committee noted that part of the core area is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone. However, the authorities provided rationale for the absence of formal buffer zone, as the adjacent area belongs to the municipality that has not yet agreed to be part of the biosphere reserve. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function of the core area is not threatened since the adjacent territories are included in the NATURA 2000 network.
183. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved**.
184. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to further negotiate with the local community that has not yet agreed to be part of the proposal.
185. **Srebarna Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal located in the north east part of the country, including the former Srebarna Biosphere Reserve. It noted that the proposed total area is 52005 ha with a total population of 61 365 inhabitants.
186. The proposed area has high biodiversity value (including Dalmatian pelican) and has been listed as a World Heritage Site, Ramsar site and also Natura 2000 site. It also noted the long term importance of the lake, the most studied in terms of hydrology and biodiversity in Bulgaria. The existing biosphere reserve has been extended to include the Silistra municipality, which contains many historical sites and host numerous cultural events and traditional festivals. Traditional activities include agriculture, organic farming, small scale husbandry, fishing, bee keeping, woodcarving. It noted that the management of the proposed biosphere reserve will be done by a partnership council and that the mayor will establish a consultative council. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the planning of activities such as the development of local institution, centres of information to share good practices, entrepreneurship activities as well as the involvement of local communities in monitoring and scientific activities to stimulate the sustainable development of the region.
187. The Advisory Committee took note that part of the core area is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone and thanked the authorities for the clarification. It therefore considered that the adjacent community of Srebarna plays an active role in ensuring the buffer zone function as the village is legally bound by the management plan of Srebarna Managed Reserve adopted with an order no. RD-565/13 October 2016 of the Minister of Environment and Water.
188. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved**.
189. **Manu Biosphere Reserve (Peru) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Manu Biosphere Reserve, submitted by the Peruvian authorities. The biosphere reserve, designated in 1977, is located between the Cusco and the Madre de Dios regions.
190. The biosphere reserve is one of the few protected natural areas in the world that harbours such a large diversity of ecosystems, from high grasslands to tropical rainforests to cloud forests. Its core zone protects the entire sub-basin of the Manu River. Due to the diversity of ecosystems, its importance has also increased the interest of the State and the international scientific community. It is one of the most biologically diverse places of Peru, since it contains almost all the ecosystems, flora and fauna of the Peruvian Amazon; 10%

of the world's bird species; 5% of their mammals. In 1987, UNESCO inscribed it in the list of World Natural Heritage, because of its enormous value for the conservation of biological diversity.

191. The area has cultural and natural tourist attractions, which are developed under the planning and management instruments approved by the local authorities and the regional tourism management within the framework of the development plans.
192. Native agricultural products that are used in a traditional way by native communities without the use of agrochemicals are being commercialized at local and regional level.
193. The Peruvian authorities propose to extend the Manu Biosphere Reserve from 1,881,200 ha to 2,438,956.04 in order to update and enlarge its buffer zone to 269,385.05 ha and the transition area to 453,275.77 ha.
194. The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension proposal and recommended it to be **approved**. The advisory committee encouraged the inclusion of the local communities and other stakeholders in the management system and action plan.
195. **Masurian Lakes Biosphere Reserve - Extension and renaming of former Lake Łuknajno Biosphere Reserve (Poland)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as regards the extension and renaming submission of Lake Łuknajno Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976 in northern Poland. The site is located within the geographical region of Masuria. The proposal was approved in 2016 pending the continuation of the process for establishing the transition area in the southern part of the lake through mutual social agreement between local authorities, and the receipt and approval of an updated zonation map.
196. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as regards the zonation map and the transition area for the extension and renaming, especially as regards the clarification on the zonation in the southern part of the lake.
197. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension and renaming be **approved**. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the authorities to establish the stakeholders based biosphere reserve coordination board and finalize the biosphere reserve management plan by September 2018 and inform the Secretariat on the finalization.
198. **Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve (Spain) – Extension**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve, submitted by the Spanish authorities. The biosphere reserve, designated in 1983, is situated in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere in the Gulf of Cadiz, located in the southwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula. The physical and natural characteristics of this area determine both its biodiversity and the life forms of its inhabitants.
199. The proposal to increase the Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve from 7,158 ha to 18,875.29 ha (core: 1,051 ha; buffer: 5,699 ha; transition: 12,126 ha (5,697 ha terrestrial and 6,429 ha marine area), would enlarge the surface area by 11,717.29 ha and achieve an adequate transition zone that solves the deficiency that could have a smaller area. Two municipalities (Aljaraque and Punta Umbria) are located in the area, both of which have maintained a close territorial, economic, historical and cultural relationship with the river and its marshes.
200. The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension proposal and recommended to be **approved**.

201. **Lake Manyara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the well-prepared application for extension of the area located in the East African Rift Valley, which was designated in 1981. With a total area of 346,741 ha (64,443 ha core, 79,345 ha buffer, 203,018 ha transition) and a population of 257,147, it includes the Lake Manyara National Park, Burunge Wildlife Conservation Area, and has a history of community-based conservation and social dynamism with the presence of the Maasai pastoralists since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The area is one of Africa's fastest growing tourist destinations. It is home to 59 floral species and 46 faunal species including the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) and the common genet (*Geneta geneta*), with 42 of the animal species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened species.
202. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the initiative taken to prepare a framework for a general management plan for the entire area and for the provision of gender-disaggregated data on the communities. The Advisory Committee noted the increasing population resulting in changing land uses in the area that could compromise the pastoral lands of the Maasai people.
203. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria and recommended that the extension be **approved**.
204. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer zone to protect the entire core without comprising the access rights of local communities, to send the general framework for the preparation of the management plan to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2018 and to develop an integrated management plan for the entire area as soon as it is finalized.
205. **Serengeti-Ngorongoro Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the request for extension of this area designated in 1981 and congratulated the authorities for the high level of stakeholder consultations in the preparation of the request. The area covers 4,397,314 ha (1,988,506 ha core area, 883,218 ha, 1,525,595 ha transition) and includes the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in the north of Tanzania. It is also home to the indigenous Maasai people with a fast-growing tourist industry.
206. The ecosystem supports about 1.5 million wildebeest, 900,000 Thomson gazelle and 300,000 zebra as the dominant herds. Other herbivores include 7,000 elands, 27,000 topis, 18,000 heartbeests, 70,000 buffalos, 4,000 giraffes, 15,000 warthogs, 3,000 waterbucks, 500 Hippopotamus, 200 black rhino, 10 species of antelopes and 10 species of primates. The large herbivores support 5 major predators individuals including 4,000 lions, 1,000 leopards, 225 cheetahs, 3,500 spotted hyenas and 100 wild dogs.
207. The Advisory Committee observed collaboration among various stakeholders in the management of the area and the diversity of approaches used including the formation of village environmental management committees. The Advisory Committee noted the increasing incidence of encroachment and poaching and the fact that some sections of the core were not protected by a buffer.
208. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria and recommended its extension to be **approved**.
209. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer to protect the entire core without comprising the access rights of local communities and to develop an integrated management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.

**Extension, rezoning or renaming of already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information**

210. **Uzunbudzhak Biosphere Reserve - Extension (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal for this site established in 1977 and following the examination of its first periodic review by the MAB Council. The proposed total area is 78,425 ha, with 3,699 people and the landscape is among the most representative for Europe, with temperate forests with evergreen laurel undergrowth. It includes the Strandja national park, very rich in biodiversity and karst caves. It includes the municipalities of Malko Turnovo and several villages. It noted with high appreciation the vision for the biosphere reserve, including to become a unified territory with economic sustainable development, the building of an environmental education centre as well as a friendly environment for partnership and cooperation.
211. It also noted with appreciation the involvement of the local communities including the local council's decision to support the nomination form. It noted the plan to establish a council of partners including all main institutions responsible for the three zones to be based in Malko Turnovo. It also welcomed the implementation of the project entitled 'Collaboration for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Local Development in Strandja, which was conducted between 2009 and 2012, and aimed at demonstrating benefits for local people.
212. The Advisory Committee noted that some core areas are not fully surrounded by buffer zones. It welcomed the additional maps showing that the Natura 2000 network is providing the buffer function nearby the core areas but however requested the authorities to formally establish these buffer zones and that this is made visible in a revised zonation map.
213. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved pending** receipt of the creation of formal buffer zones surrounding or adjacent to the core areas with support of the Council of partners, formal endorsements and to receive this information and corresponding updated zonation map by 15 May 2017.
214. **Meggido Biosphere Reserve (Israël) - Renaming of former Ramot Menashe Biosphere Reserve.** The Advisory Committee took note of the rationale for changing the name of Ramot Menashe to Meggido, based on the fact that the name of the biosphere reserve differs from the name of the administrative region to which some communities belong. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the objective of the name change would be to strengthen the identity of the communities living in the biosphere reserve and to increase their connection with its principles and their engagement to implement activities. It further acknowledged that "Megiddo" carries symbolic attributes and that this could strengthen the self-image of the biosphere reserve inhabitants.
215. The Advisory Committee recommended that the change of name be **approved pending** receipt of signed approval of all stakeholders involved in the biosphere reserve.
216. **East Usambara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission for extension of this area following recommendations of the periodic review received in 2016 after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. This site, designated in 2000 is representative of mountain ecosystems includes patches of tropical forests and forms part of the Eastern Arc Mountains, one of 35 global biodiversity hotspots. The mountains constitute an important water source for neighbouring communities and Tanga city.
217. With a total area of 83,994 ha (30,468.70 ha core, ha 21,963. 68 buffer, 48,000 ha transition...) and a population of 184,253, the biosphere reserve includes the Amani and Nilo Nature Reserves and the recently gazetted Derema corridor. Endemic species include

the Usambara eagle-owl (*Bubo vosseleri*), the Usambara akalat (*Sheppardia montana*), the Usambara weaver (*Ploceus nicolli*) and the iconic endemic African violet (*Saintpaulia ionantha*). The Amani botanical garden established in 1902 has over a thousand trees and shrubs from all over the world.

218. The Advisory Committee noted the ethno-botanical values of the area and the cultural relevance for worship to indigenous groups as well as the livelihood training for local communities to achieve a green economy.
219. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for diversity of stakeholders such as NGOs, government and foreign institutions, involved in research and monitoring.
220. Based on existing information, the Advisory Committee recommended that the extension of the site be **approved pending** the submission of the following information to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:
- the available management plans of the core areas;
  - information on the management of the enclave;
  - copy of the management plan framework of the entire biosphere reserve;
  - justification for the absence of buffer zones around some of the core areas.