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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: learning laboratories for sustainable development

BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS MODELS OF APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) is made up of 507 sites in 102 countries to-date. The Seville Strategy (UNESCO, 1996) has given the impetus to promote biosphere reserves as sustainable development models. More particularly, Goal II of the Seville Strategy "Utilize the biosphere reserves as models of land management and of approaches to sustainable development" lays down the foundation for developing biosphere reserves as place specific illustrations of sustainable development principles and practices.

Since Seville, the MAB programme has been used more and more in many countries as reference and monitoring systems for participatory approaches to undertaking conservation initiatives with the support of local communities, with a view to promoting a process of development and industrialization based on economies of quality that value knowledge and value-added products and services at the local level.

With the launching of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in 2005, the MAB programme and Member States are reinforcing the use of biosphere reserves and their networks as learning sites for sustainable development by a) using biosphere reserves as sites for supporting the emergence of the 'Science of Sustainability' where evidence-based experimentation in policy making is encouraged and b) sharing the practices and values of biosphere reserves as well as better define their services, products and

tools that enable sustainable development for the benefit of national decision makers as well as the international community.

BIOSPHERE RESERVES AS LEARNING PLATFORMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ARTICULATING NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONS

The MAB programme is seen by many countries to have a special responsibility in the area of education, training and public awareness. Countries are undertaking activities in biosphere reserves in order to enhance the general public's interest and concern for the environment and sustainable development. There are indeed many biosphere reserve outreach, education and awareness initiatives that are

facilitating the communication linkages between government agencies and local communities, and the public at large. There exist numerous initiatives for sharing of information to improve the dialogue between government agencies and resource managers, landowners, economic development groups, conservation groups and academic institutions. Many references are made to books, training manuals, catalogues, bulletins, newsletters targeting specialists, videos, TV programmes ...

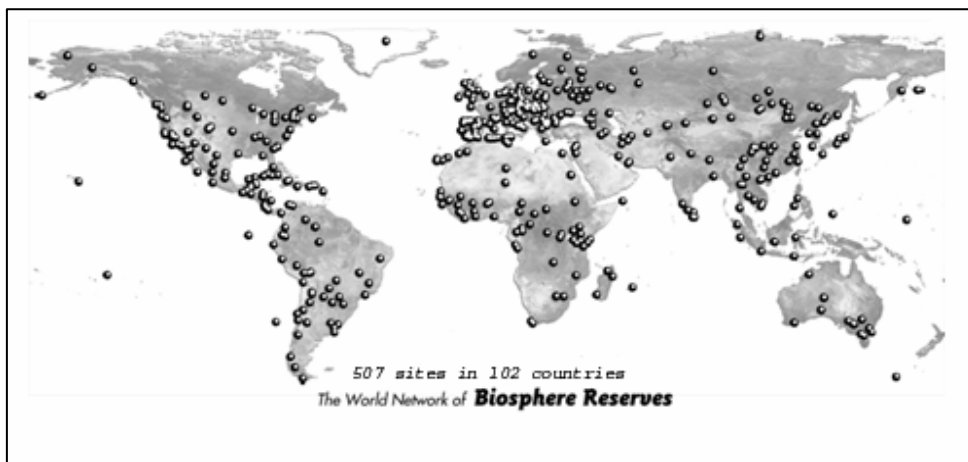
The UNDESD should capitalize on UNESCO biosphere reserves, serving as place specific experiments to work out a balance between conservation (i.e. protection and use) of biodiversity and socio-economic improvements for communities using knowledge, learning and participatory governance and management approaches. Biosphere reserves are learning platforms for intersectoral and interdisciplinary co-operation which can



**The 3rd World
Congress of Biosphere
Reserves
Biosphere Futures,
UNESCO Biosphere
Reserves for Sustainable
Development**

Man and the Biosphere

Man and the Biosphere



generate a new series of learning resources for the UNDES D.

The crucial issue for the MAB programme and the WNBR to address is how to mobilize these bridging individuals and institutions which can effectively play the role of linkages between different networks and levels, and thus be effective communication channels for sharing WNBR's practices for sustainable development. UNESCO is providing a unique platform for governments to meet with scientists, for scientists to meet with educators, for universities to meet with schools, for science to meet with culture...

The WNBR has to leverage this unique opportunity and make a difference in the international sustainability agenda, by demonstrating how it is possible to design sustainable activities and programmes in a biosphere reserve, which are linking up a diversity of stakeholders (citizens, managers, scientists, researchers, schools, decision makers, media...) as well as scales (local to international), and to use the available resources and networks within UNESCO to truly act as a sharing platform for sustainable development.

THE WAY TO MADRID: BIOSPHERE FUTURES, UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

During the 19th session of the International Co-ordinating Council of the MAB programme (MAB-ICC), held in October 2006, the Spanish Minister for Environment, Ms. Cristina Narbona Ruiz, announced Spain's offer to host the 3rd World Biosphere Reserves Congress entitled "Biosphere Futures, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development". These issues will be discussed during the Third World Congress of Biosphere

reserves, which will be held in Madrid. One of the major tasks of the Congress is to assess the progress made since 1995 in biosphere reserves with respect to biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, human migration, economic sustainability, and the role that biosphere reserves can play as learning laboratories. The discussions will guide the Madrid Action Plan (2008–2012), which will define the role of biosphere reserves in the 21st century both for the conservation of natural and cultural resources as well as for demonstrating sustainable development.

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To find out more:

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