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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
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Report

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**REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL  
OF THE MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME  
ON ITS ACTIVITIES 2008-2009**

**OUTLINE**

**Source:** Article X of the Statutes of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

**Background:** The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) of the MAB Programme comprises 553 sites in 107 countries, including eight transboundary sites and one intercontinental site (Spain/Morocco). MAB is implemented by government institutions through National Committees and regional networks, with the support of UNESCO field offices and the MAB Secretariat in Paris. At its 21st session (May 2009), the MAB/ICC reiterated the recommendation to use sites within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves as learning and demonstration sites for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and for addressing the issues of global changes, including climate change. The 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves: "Biosphere Futures, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development" was held from 4 to 9 February 2008 in Madrid (Spain) and adopted a Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves for the period 2008-2013. The Action Plan provides a clear vision and mission for the WNBR associated with targets and indicators to address the issues of climate change, provision of ecosystem services and urbanization.

**Decision required:** no decision is required on this document

## Introduction

1. The twentieth session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held in Madrid from 4 to 9 February 2008 and the twenty-first session was held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 25 to 29 May 2009. Its Bureau met on 3 February 2008 in Madrid, on 21 and 22 April 2008 in Paris, on 12 and 13 February 2009 in Paris and from 24 to 28 May 2009 in Jeju, Republic of Korea. The reports from these meetings can be consulted on the website ([www.unesco.org/mab](http://www.unesco.org/mab)). The Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves met from 9 to 11 February 2009 and recommendations were submitted to the MAB Bureau.

## Composition of the Bureau of the ICC

2. The ICC, at its twentieth session, elected the following officers to constitute its Bureau:

Chairperson:	H. E. Mr Henri Djombo (Congo)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Mr Alfredo Reca (Argentina) Mr Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi (Lebanon) Mr Chung-II Choi (Republic of Korea) Mr Valery Neronov (Russian Federation) Mr Josep Puxeu Rocamora (Spain)

## National and regional activities

3. At the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the ICC, Council members reported on their MAB activities including issues such as: (a) using biosphere reserves to reduce biodiversity loss; (b) using biosphere reserves as places to assess, mitigate and adapt to climate change; (c) enhancing the involvement of local communities in biosphere reserve activities with a view to eradicating poverty; (d) improving networking at the global and regional levels, including South-South cooperation; (e) the importance of transboundary cooperation; (f) the relevance of biosphere reserves to education for sustainable development.

4. Reports were also made on the regional networks, AfriMAB, ArabMAB, EuroMAB, EABRN (East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network), IberoMAB, REDBIOS (Canary Islands, Cape Verde, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal) and SACAM (South and Central Asian MAB Network) and SeaBRnet (South East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network). The importance of regional meetings for sharing experience, practices and ideas on ecosystem and thematic issues, including periodic review processes, legal and institutional aspects, conflict management, community involvement, ecotourism and quality economies was highlighted. Summaries of their activities are available in the reports of the MAB/ICC and bureau meetings.

## Cooperation with international partners

5. The Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences has coordinated, on behalf of UNESCO, the organization and hosting of the 7th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (WGABS 7) in April 2009. On this occasion, a side event was organized by UNESCO and partners on the theme of access and benefits sharing in the biosphere reserves context.

## **Ecological sciences, MAB and biosphere reserves**

### **The World Network of Biosphere Reserves**

6. At the 20th and 21st sessions of the MAB-ICC, the main highlights were:
  - (a) The periodic reviews of 12 existing biosphere reserves were examined in May 2009. The recommendations of the MAB Bureau on these sites were transmitted to the countries concerned.
  - (b) The Council took note that its Bureau had examined a total of 32 new biosphere reserve proposals in 2009 from 25 countries and four proposals for extension of existing biosphere reserves. The full list is available at [www.unesco.org/mab](http://www.unesco.org/mab).
  - (c) Mr Juan Jimenez of Mexico received the 2008 Michel Batisse Award. Ms Boshra Salem of Egypt and Mr Yuriy Gorshkov of the Russian Federation shared the 2009 Michel Batisse Award.

### **3rd World Congress for Biosphere Reserves, 4 to 9 February 2008, Madrid, Spain**

7. More than 800 participants attended the 3rd World Congress, with the generous support of the Government of Spain. The participants of the Congress and the MAB-ICC adopted the Madrid Action Plan (MAP) which articulates actions, targets and success indicators, partnerships and other implementation strategies, and an evaluation framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) for the period 2008 to 2013. It takes fully into consideration the recommendations of the Review Committee that evaluated UNESCO's Natural Sciences and Social and Human Sciences Programmes during 2006-2007. Actions are to be taken at the local, national and international levels. The MAP defines four main action areas, with 31 targets and 65 actions that are critical to achieving the vision and mission of the MAB Programme. The MAP demonstrates how the WNBR provides a unique contribution to address three major challenges:

- (a) accelerated climate change with consequences for societies and ecosystems;
- (b) accelerated loss of biological and cultural diversity; and
- (c) rapid urbanization as a driver of environmental change.

### **Intersectoral Cooperation**

8. MAB is cooperating with the Culture Sector and other partners on linkages between cultural and biological diversity. In the context of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, the Canada Research Chair in Ethnoecology and Biodiversity, the Secretariat of the CBD, UNEP and UNESCO will jointly organize the International Congress on Biological and Cultural Diversity: "Diversity for Development – Development for Diversity", to be held in Montreal in July 2010. The Congress is also part of the joint programme between UNESCO and the CBD on the links between biological and cultural diversity which was launched during the last CBD Conference of the parties in Bonn in May 2009.

### **Agroecosystems**

9. A proposal was endorsed during the 21st session of the MAB-ICC to create a specific theme dedicated to the sustainable development of agro-ecosystems under the MAB Programme.

10. With support from extrabudgetary funding provided by the Spanish Government, UNESCO took an active part in the recent International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). The IAASTD was co-sponsored by FAO, GEF, WHO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and the World Bank and is composed of one global assessment and five sub-global

assessments. In order to promote and mainstream the IAASTD's main results and outcomes, UNESCO's Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences recently produced a policy brief on the sustainable development of agroecosystems.

### **Climate change-related activities**

11. The MAB programme is participating in the UNESCO intersectoral platform on climate change and several biosphere reserves are contributing as demonstration sites for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. A second phase project for the West Polesie transboundary Biosphere Reserve between Poland, Ukraine and Belarus is focusing on interactions between biodiversity and climate change as a flagship project for the MAB Programme.

### **Marine and Coastal systems**

12. A Global Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Contributing to Action on Climate Change and Sustainable Development was created in 2009, in Jeju, Republic of Korea, as one of the MAB Programme thematic networks.

### **Humid Tropics**

13. A South-South Cooperation Network for capacity-building for sustainable development in the humid tropics was launched in 2009. Some of the activities of the Network include the interdisciplinary doctoral programme on sustainable development of the humid tropics existing at the Centre for Advanced Amazonian Studies (NAEA) of the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), Belém, Brazil, which cooperates with the Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (ERAIFT) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in Indonesia.

### **Mountains**

14. As a follow up to the preparation of the *Global Change in Mountain Regions (GLOCHAMORE) Research Strategy*, an international UNESCO-MAB workshop entitled Research Strategy on Global Change in Mountain Biosphere Reserves was held at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal) on 19 November 2008 in conjunction with the International Mountain Biodiversity Conference jointly sponsored by ICIMOD, IUCN and UNESCO-MAB. During the UNESCO workshop (attended by 45 participants from 13 countries), participants fine-tuned implementation modalities of the *GLOCHAMORE Research Strategy* so as to render the Strategy operational in mountain biosphere reserves and other mountain protected areas. Consequently in early 2009, 10 mountain biosphere reserves (in China, Germany, India, Peru, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland and United States of America) started operationalizing the *GLOCHAMORE Research Strategy* in their respective biosphere reserves to assess the impact of global and climate change on the biophysical environment and socio-economic conditions of mountain inhabitants.

### **Drylands**

15. The six countries involved in the UNESCO/MAB-UNEP/GEF Regional Project entitled Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective Management and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Dryland Biosphere Reserves in West Africa cooperated in research, training and capacity-building activities. Twelve Ph.D. and 40 Masters' students graduated in 2009. A partnership with Radio France International (RFI) was implemented with activities such as the instalment of community radios and production of radio programmes by local communities in local languages on biodiversity, ecosystems and biosphere reserves in the six participating biosphere reserves (Pendjari (Benin), Mare aux Hippopotames (Burkina Faso), Comoé (Côte d'Ivoire), Boucle du Baoulé (Mali), "W" (Niger) and Niokolo Koba (Senegal)).

16. Thanks to extrabudgetary funding provided by the Flemish Government of Belgium, the UNESCO Teaching Resource Kit for Dryland Countries has been produced in Arabic, English, French and Spanish language versions (see <http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php>). The kit targets school teachers and their pupils in secondary schools in countries affected by desertification and was distributed through the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, in an intersectoral collaboration.

17. The second phase of the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands (SUMAMAD) Project was approved for funding by the Flemish Government of Belgium in March 2009 to conduct comparative studies in arid lands management involving scientists and biosphere reserve managers from Belgium, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia. Following the very successful first phase of the project (2003 to 2007), the second phase is implemented by UNESCO-MAB in close collaboration with the United Nations University–International Network on Water, Environment and Health and aims at elaborating different climate change scenarios in drylands for local populations and decision-makers as well as promoting sustainable livelihoods for dryland communities.

### **Promoting biosphere reserves as learning sites for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)**

18. The MAB Secretariat organized two workshops at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development – Moving into the Second Half of the United Nations Decade held in Bonn, Germany in March 2009:

- (a) “UNESCO biosphere reserves as learning sites for integrating local and global sustainability issues” which presented innovative partnerships between the private sector, institutions and stakeholders for sustainable development in biosphere reserves in Australia, Benin, Brazil, Costa Rica, France, Germany and Viet Nam;
- (b) “Mainstreaming biodiversity in education and learning” was jointly organized by the MAB and the CBD Secretariats and focused on ways and means to better integrate biodiversity into education and learning for sustainable development.

### **Education and Capacity-Building:**

19. In the series of policy briefs jointly produced and published by UNESCO, SCOPE and UNEP, four briefs were produced, on Biofuels, Sustainable Agriculture, Coastal Basins and Livestock in a Changing Landscape.

20. The continuation of ERAIFT located at the University of Kinshasa (DRC) and supported by UNDP, the European Union and UNESCO/Belgium Funds-In-Trust Cooperation. Nineteen Masters students graduated.

21. Twenty MAB Young Scientists Awards were made to 20 young researchers from 17 countries.

22. One regional training workshop was organized in EuroMAB for periodic review and dialogue between stakeholders in biosphere reserves using role playing and modelling for conflict prevention and management on biodiversity.

### **Information and communication**

23. The French version of the *World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation* was prepared by UNESCO/MAB in collaboration with the Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle (MNHN), the Association for the Development of Environmental Information, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and the Ministry of Forests and Fauna of Cameroon, thanks to the French Funds for the Global Environment, as a contribution to promote the International Year of the Gorilla (2009). A film

on youth-focused public awareness on great apes and the Great Apes Education kits were also produced by UNESCO/MAB and the MNHN.

24. The MAB Communication Strategy and Clearing House was endorsed by the MAB-ICC at its 21st Session and is being developed with the support of the Communication Sector, BPI and DIT.

25. A BBC documentary entitled *Rising Tides* featuring current and potential future climate change impacts in the twinned North Devon (United Kingdom) and Malindi (Kenya) Biosphere Reserves was produced.

26. Two technical notes were produced under the Biosphere Reserves Technical Notes Series, N.2 “Dialogue in biosphere reserves: References, practices and experiences”, and N.3 on “Man and nature, making the relationship last” in English and French.