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Organización
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para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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DRAFT RESOLUTION

Submitted by: GERMANY

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GRENADINES, SPAIN, TURKEY and VIET NAM

**UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and
the World Network of Biosphere Reserves' contribution
to sustainable development**

The General Conference,

Recognizing that the MAB Programme has made an important contribution since 1970 to shaping and directing the relationship of man and the environment towards a more sustainable future,

Emphasizing that the Third World Congress of Biosphere Reserves which was held in Madrid in February 2008 has reconfirmed the special importance of the biosphere reserves and *welcoming* the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves (2008-2013) as a seminal contribution to the development of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, building on the Seville Strategy,

Considering contemporary and emerging challenges that confront humanity with regard to the pursuit of sustainable development, including climate change, provision of ecosystem services and urbanization as well as the potential and role of biosphere reserves in addressing these challenges,

Emphasizing that education and learning play an important role in achieving sustainable development worldwide,

Recognizing the value of biosphere reserves as spaces for mutual learning among communities, researchers, managers, decision-makers and other stakeholders – locally and globally – and *recognizing* the significance of the lessons they provide in participatory approaches to combining scientific, local and traditional knowledge to pursue sustainable development choices, especially

within the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014),

Welcoming increased efforts of Member States to establish functional North-South and South-South partnerships among biosphere reserves and *welcoming* increased support for the efforts of developing countries to establish, strengthen and promote biosphere reserves,

Welcoming increased partnerships between biosphere reserves and their networks with private partners,

Recognizing that further substantial initiatives need to be taken by Member States and by UNESCO in order to reorient biosphere reserves as model regions and learning spaces for sustainable development, especially in transboundary contexts,

1. *Invites* Member States to further implement the Seville Strategy, taking into account the Madrid Action Plan, and to deploy the resources necessary for that purpose as well as to recognize biosphere reserves as a policy instrument for which responsibility must be accepted across departments and across policy levels;
2. *Invites* National Commissions for UNESCO, MAB National Committees, individual biosphere reserves, regional and thematic biosphere reserve networks as well as the MAB Secretariat and UNESCO's intergovernmental/international scientific programmes (ISPs), to accept responsibility for the actions respectively specified in the Madrid Action Plan, to be implemented in cooperation with the partners specified;
3. *Invites* international and regional intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and private partners to cooperate in the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and *appeals* to funding bodies to mobilize resources correspondingly;
4. *Invites* Member States:
 - (a) to make full use of existing and planned biosphere reserves as model regions and learning places for sustainable development;
 - (b) to promote increased international and national partnerships among biosphere reserves and with academic institutions, private partners and all other relevant stakeholders; and
 - (c) to assist each other in that respect, among other things, through exchange of information, knowledge and good practice;
5. *Calls upon* the Director General to take all necessary measures within existing resources and to seek extrabudgetary funds as appropriate:
 - (a) to further ensure the MAB Programme's strategic leadership in the quest for sustainable development and the implementation of the Madrid Action;
 - (b) to contribute to increasing the visibility of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves through concerted public awareness and advocacy measures; and
 - (c) to improve UNESCO's function as a clearing house for best practice in biosphere reserve management and function as learning places for sustainable development;
6. *Requests* the Director-General to present a progress report on the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and an outlook on prospects for its successful implementation to the General Conference at its 36th session.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) Programme was launched in the 1970s. Its task is, on the national level and through international coordination, to develop principles for sustainable use and for effective conservation of the biosphere's natural resources, and to put these into practice in exemplary fashion. To this end, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves was founded. By 28 C/Resolution 2.4, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 1995. This World Network currently comprises 553 sites in 105 countries. Biosphere reserves are model regions for sustainable development in which conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources are pursued. In addition to their conservation and development function, biosphere reserves also have an educational element.
2. The Madrid Action Plan, adopted in February 2008, stresses the importance of biosphere reserves for overcoming the challenges associated with climate change, biodiversity loss and urbanization. Biosphere reserves are not only areas that develop strategies to solve such problems, they are also sites that promote mutual understanding between local authorities, researchers, managers, decision-makers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the concept of these reserves is also about sharing findings, experience and traditional knowledge at national and international levels.
3. The potential of the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves must be made use of for a policy of sustainable development. It is essential to promote the implementation of the Madrid Action Plan, the establishment of new partnerships between individual biosphere reserves, and also with scientific institutes and private establishments, and the exchange of information, knowledge and practical experience.
4. The submitted draft resolution emphasizes the significance of biosphere reserves as sites for education for sustainable development. Its aim is for greater use to be made within UNESCO of the options and services of the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It proposes in particular a stronger systematic link with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the various UNESCO programmes in individual sectors.