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International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Thirty-first session

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17 – 21 June 2019

FINAL REPORT

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1. The 31st session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held in UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France from 17 to 21 June 2019.

2. A total of 321 participants, including representatives of the following Members of the MAB Council as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 38th and 39th sessions, attended the session: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam. Observers from the following Member States were present: Bahrein, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ghana, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Switzerland, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

3. Representatives from the Jane Goodall Institute Global, Terra Sana, German-Indonesian cooperation, South Asia Foundation, UNU- Land Restoration Training Programme, Jeune Afrique and the University of Bergen were present.

4. The full list of the participants is presented in Annex 1 to this report.

Introduction by the Chair of the MAB-ICC

5. The Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC), Prof. Dr. Enny Sudarmonowati, provided an opening speech, welcoming all participants to the 31st Session of the MAB Council. She reiterated her thanks to the Government of Indonesia that held the 30th session of the MAB-ICC in Palembang, Indonesia. She also thanked the Secretariat for organizing the 31st Session in Paris, and the French MAB National Committee for organizing the excursion on Friday, 21 June 2019. She expressed thanks to the new Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, and looks forward to strengthen the linkages between the MAB Programme and the SDGs. She also thanked the President of 39th Session of General Conference, Madame Zohour Alaoui, for the support and recommendations on the procedures and working methods for the Governing Bodies. She underlined the importance to enhance collaboration, which needs to be paid more attention. Finally, she thanked all delegates from Members States and Observers, who have made to come to Paris to participate in this 31st session, and declared the Session of MAB-ICC officially opened.

II. Opening remarks

6. Mr Xing Qu, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, welcomed the distinguished participants to the 31st session of the MAB-ICC and expressed that since the last Council session in July 2018 in Palembang, Indonesia, the world has taken note with dismay of two alarming reports. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a special report on global warming and in May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science and Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), presented the Global Biodiversity Assessment Report. Both reports tell us the urgent need to act together for our

future and for future generations.

7. In this respect, he said that the action of UNESCO's MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves is of fundamental importance, for the conservation of our world heritage and the diversity of life but also for sustainable development and the maintenance of ecological balances. That is why the MAB Council session, is a particularly important moment for collective intergovernmental action on common issues.

8. He mentioned that the battle to preserve biodiversity required both cooperation between governments and the involvement of the scientific community, but also that of all civil society actors, including indigenous communities and young people.

9. Mr Qu noted that MAB also effectively maintains partnerships with the private sector in support of sustainable development. Example of this is the recent cooperation with the LVMH group that had committed to support the MAB Programme for five years, which is a pioneering and promising example.

10. He greatly welcomed the several proposals for new biosphere reserves and the extension of existing ones and took the occasion to introduce the newly appointed Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, and concluded by wishing all a fruitful session meeting.

11. The Chairperson of the Executive Board, H.E. Ambassador Lee Byong-hyun, expressed his appreciation for the vision of the MAB Programme, noting that biosphere reserves represent an embodiment of sustainable development. He stressed the integral role of people in biosphere reserves as sites that seek to balance conservation of the environment with human traditions, welfare, social and economic development.

12. He took note of the long history of the MAB Programme, with particular reference to its current efforts - through the MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan - to overcome major global challenges such as climate change and the erosion of biodiversity. He stressed in particular the importance of the MAB Programme to UNESCO's core mandate of promoting peace and security through mechanisms such as transboundary biosphere reserves and by advancing planetary sustainability, peaceful dialogue, scientific collaboration, and capacity building. In this regard, he highlighted a panel session organized by Republic of Korea as part of the Council Session programme on Thursday 20 June on the role of biosphere reserves in promoting peace through transboundary cooperation, encouraging all delegates to participate.

13. Ambassador Lee then took note of the Council's efforts to improve the management of the MAB Programme through efforts in quality assurance; in improving communication for better understanding of the MAB programme; and by further engaging youth to foster new generations of researchers and advocates. Recalling his duties as Chairperson of the Executive Board, he commended and encouraged the work of the Council in these areas, noting their importance for UNESCO as a whole. He encouraged the Council to work hand-in-hand with the Executive Board in the development of the new Programme and Budget of UNESCO for 2020-2021, towards the 2030 Agenda. He closed his remarks by wishing all delegates a fruitful and productive session of the Council.

14. The Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, welcomed all delegates and assured them that UNESCO and she were supporting the MAB Programme in order to raise its profile to the highest level.

III. Report of the Chair of the MAB-ICC

15. The ICC Chair thanked the MAB Secretariat for the support during her tenure. She informed the participants that during the reporting period the MAB activities related to the six priority programmes: (1) visibility and formal recognition of MAB, biosphere reserves (BRs) in Member States; (2) linkages with other UNESCO Programmes as well as initiatives and collaborations in support of SDGs; (3) adaptation and replication of biosphere reserves as a sustainable development model; (4) sharing information and enhancement of communication within WNBR as well as its regional and thematic networks; (5) resource mobilisation mechanism for the development of biosphere reserves; (6) promoting science-based policy for sustainable use of natural resources based on research conducted in biosphere reserves.

16. The Chair summarized the activities conducted between 2018 and 2019, informing the audience that she met with National Commissions, MAB Committees and other MAB related stakeholders of nine Member States. In addition, she worked closely with UNESCO offices in Pakistan, Uruguay, Indonesia and Egypt to attend several events, including the National Dialogue on Women in Science to commemorate International Women Day in Lahore, the Side Event of South – South Cooperation Conference in Buenos Aires and the 14th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt. In one session of this COP CBD, the Delegate of Indonesia in its intervention also encouraged multisectoral and integrated approach in solving problem in mainstreaming biodiversity in the biosphere reserves as a model of sustainable development. The Chair thanked the MAB National Committees, National Commissions, Biosphere Reserve Management and Local Governments of all visited countries and UNESCO Regional Offices and other institutions for the mediation, assistance and hospitality.

17. The Chair continued by listing the main take home messages from her missions. She underlined the importance of the MAB National Committees and stressed the relevance of revitalizing the less active ones. She also noted the importance of collaborations among biosphere reserves and underlined the importance of regional networks, suggesting the twinning programme as one of the options. She also underlined the importance of supporting those countries that are less active in nominating new or supporting existing biosphere reserves. The Chair suggested that UNESCO Programmes and UNESCO Chairs could promote MAB Programme and biosphere reserves as the sites for programme implementation. She also noted that there are new biosphere reserves that have made excellent progress, which could inspire the older biosphere reserves. At the same time, she noted that governance and branding are still the issues and suggested that exchange of biosphere reserve managers and its stakeholders are necessary.

18. In terms of issues, she informed the audience that the level of recognition of biosphere reserves in average is low to moderate and suggested some potential correcting measures, which also include a better communication strategy. She also highlighted that importance of involving private sectors, community and NGOs to solve limited budget and other resources, mentioning the public-private partnership scheme as a possible solution to the lack of funds.

19. She suggested as well creating sister biosphere reserves for mediating peace on earth and the need to update the contact persons and address of MAB National Committee of Member States.

20. In addition to the activities listed above, the Chair was involved in a series of other activities, including resources mobilization, including proposals from South Africa on Governance of biosphere reserves and from UK's institutions (a university and a private company) in collaboration with partners in South East Asia and Latin America to be submitted to UK Research Council on the use of renewable energies in different biosphere reserves. Finally, the Chair thanked the participants for their support to her work and to the MAB Programme.

IV. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

21. Upon adopting the agenda for the 31st session of the MAB-ICC, the Delegate of France highlighted the need to finalize decision on the Exit Strategy of the MAB Programme in 2020, and indicated its concern that the next ICC meeting will be hosted outside of UNESCO Headquarters, upon invitation of Nigeria in 2020. The Delegate requested the MAB Secretariat consult with the Legal Affairs Department of UNESCO to determine whether important issues, such as the exit of Biosphere Reserves from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, could be taken outside the Headquarters.

22. The MAB Secretariat took due note of the request, and confirmed that Nigeria proposed indeed to host the next ICC in 2020. The Secretary confirmed that non-statutory decisions can be made outside of Headquarters but will consult the legal services department for confirmation.

23. The MAB-ICC then adopted the agenda and timetable of its 31st session without modification.

V. Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme

24. The Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr Miguel Clüsener-Godt, began by thanking Indonesia and South Sumatra for hosting of the 30th Session of the Council, stressing the importance of this contribution. He then remarked that this year's session welcomes more than 350 registered participants, continuing a trend towards increasing participation. He took note that 30th Council session represented a significant step forward in the implementation of the MAB Programme, notably since 24 new biosphere reserves were nominated, including two new countries - Moldova and Mozambique.

25. He noted that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) as of 2018 comprises 686 biosphere reserves in 122 countries, including 20 transboundary biosphere reserves. He took note that the session also saw a number of withdrawals, demonstrating the living nature of the World Network. He highlighted the global reach of the World Network, in terms of area and population, and that 122 of 195 UNESCO Member States now have Biosphere Reserves.

26. The Secretary took note of the decision by the MAB-ICC to finalize the Exit Strategy by 2020 and to institute a 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', and of the final deadline for responses on this matter by September this year. He noted that 64 Biosphere Reserves have yet to fully meet the related criteria, and that special considerations would be given to sites in conflict zones. He further highlighted the adoption by the Council of the Global Communication Strategy and Action Plan of the MAB Programme and its WNBR.

27. He outlined the MAB Global Communication Strategy and the 'Proud to Share' short video campaign, encouraging Council Members to view the videos online. He took note of the seven winners of the MAB Young Scientists Awards, from Costa Rica, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2), Egypt, Ghana, Russian Federation and Vietnam.

28. The Secretary reported on the 25th session of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) held in February 2019. Among the 20 new biosphere reserve nominations received were three countries aspiring to be included in the WNBR for the first time: the Kingdom of Eswatini, Zambia, as well as Norway. He also took note of two withdrawals, from Greenland/Denmark and the United States of America.

29. He then highlighted MAB activities undertaken since the 2018 MAB-ICC, including the following MAB regional and thematic workshops and meetings:

- 6th UNESCO Training Course for Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve Managers, which took place on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea from 1 to 3 October 2018, with broad global participation.
- 12th meeting of the Southeast Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet) in Legazpi City, Philippines from 25 to 29 March 2019.
- EuroMAB 2019, from 2 to 5 April 2019 in Dublin, Ireland.
- 9th meeting of the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) in Bhutan from 25 to 27 April 2019.
- 1st meeting of the Central American Biosphere Reserves from 7 to 9 May 2019 in Copán, Honduras.

30. He highlighted the UNESCO Flagship intersectoral project BIOPALT (BIOsphere and Heritage of Lake Chad (BIOPALT)), a partnership funded by the African Development Bank for an amount of USD 6.5 million with the main goal of creating a transboundary Biosphere Reserve in the Lake Chad Basin. He took particular note of a recent attack on a project team, resulting in the loss of material goods but thankfully not in injury or loss of life, and expressed his gratitude to the field-based personnel supporting this project.

31. He then highlighted a project on ecosystem restoration implemented in the La Selle Biosphere Reserve, Haiti, funded by the Government of Spain. The objective of this project is to contribute to sustainable human and economic development in the La Selle Biosphere Reserve.

32. The Secretary then mentioned the first IberoMAB Youth Forum, which took place in the Bosques de Paz Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, located between Ecuador and Peru, from 5 to 8 December 2018, bringing together 89 participants from 43 biosphere reserves from 23

countries to discuss the roles of young people who work, study or live in biosphere reserves.

33. He took note of the BRESEP (Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the South-East Pacific Region) project supported by the Flemish Government of Belgium. The project was launched in 2014 and ended in December 2018. He remarked that the main results included the creation of the first transboundary biosphere reserve in South America - Bosques de Paz (Ecuador-Peru) as well as joint work with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to improve marine and coastal planning. The second phase of the project is under discussion with the donor.

34. The Secretary then drew attention to the 7th Plenary meeting of IPBES, which took place at UNESCO HQ from 29 April to 4 May. UNESCO MAB participated in the work of the platform since the start through mobilizing its experts, knowledge holders and network of Biosphere Reserves for the assessment, capacity building as well as communication functions. He noted that the first intergovernmental interdisciplinary global scientific report on the state of biodiversity was adopted on 4 May by 132 Member States and that the report launched at UNESCO on 6th May with the participation of the Director General of UNESCO.

35. He then highlighted the new partnership between the MAB Programme and the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) group to support the work of the MAB Programme on biodiversity. Within the scope of this partnership, the LVMH group will be present alongside UNESCO at major international events in the next two years, including the IUCN World Congress and the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in November 2020 in Kunming, China. UNESCO MAB will provide scientific support for the LVMH Companies to advance their sustainable sourcing programmes via its network of 686 biosphere reserves, as well as the international scientific expertise aggregated via the MAB programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

36. The Secretary then outlined the UN Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP), a unique alliance of nearly 100 national governments, conservation organizations, research institutions, United Nations agencies and private companies, coordinated by UNEP and UNESCO. More than 7% of the total range area of great apes is situated in biosphere reserves. Last year, Gombe Masito Ugalla in Tanzania - the area where Dr Jane Goodall began her pioneering study of wild chimpanzees - became a biosphere reserve.

37. He, furthermore, mentioned that the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held from 2 to 15 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland. MAB representatives participated in several UN side events and sessions organized at national pavilions at the COP, highlighting the contributions of biosphere reserves as climate change observatories, and promoting climate science, monitoring, mitigation and adaptation actions in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

38. The Secretary then mentioned the 3rd Huangshan Dialogue on UNESCO Sites and Sustainable Development that was held in Huangshan, China, from 31 October to 3 November, and focused on the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)-related activities in UNESCO biosphere reserves.

39. The MAB Secretary recounted his participation in the 4th Meeting of the Coordination

Board for the Establishment of the Transboundary Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve, which took place in Velika Polana, Slovenia, in January 2019. The meeting forms part of the process for the establishment of the first transboundary biosphere reserve to encompass five countries - Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia - which would mark a first for the network.

40. He highlighted the project 'Economic valuation of ecosystem services in biosphere reserves' (EVAMAB), which is funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO). The project is testing effective rapid assessment methods in four selected African biosphere reserves: Pendjari Biosphere Reserve (Benin), Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve (Ethiopia), Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve (Uganda) and Lake Manyara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania). The project aims to assess the economic value of ecosystem services. The closing workshop of the project was held in Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve, Ethiopia from 13th to 17th May 2019. A Manual for Valuation of Ecosystem services for African biosphere reserves will be one of the main output of this project.

41. The Secretary then took note that the Congo Basin Forest Partnership held its 18th plenary meeting in Brussels in November 2018, followed by the International Conference of Ministers in charge of Defence, Security and Protected Areas on the fight against poaching and other cross-border criminal activities, which was held in N'Djamena, Chad, on 23-25 January 2019. He recalled that explicit mention was made of UNESCO and its MAB Programme in the N'Djamena Declaration, as responsible for facilitating 'the setting up and operation of a transhumance consultation framework which would make it possible to analyse the fundamental questions transboundary transhumance and to develop appropriate solutions'.

42. He then referred to the UNESCO Sultan Qaboos Prize, reminding the Council of the 15 July deadline for submissions, before turning to the ongoing process for the development of Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR).

43. He noted that an online draft prototype is accessible for demonstration purposes only, recalling that the 30th session of the MAB Council approved the ToRs and road map of the Working Group (WG), highlighting the synergy between the WG and the International Advisory Committee for biosphere reserves (IACBR). He informed the Council that the composition of the WG has been finalized and is now operational, with all groups well balanced in terms of gender and regional representation. He drew particular attention to the Working Group on Governance and its recommendations, adding a quote from the Director-General stressing the importance of not forgetting UNESCO's major levels for action, in particular of the areas protected through the MAB and World Heritage Programmes. Quoting the Director-General, the Secretary stated that greater use of these existing tools should be made, for example through the commitment of Member States to extend Biosphere reserves throughout their territories.

44. In concluding his presentation, the Secretary informed that implementation of MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan continues as foreseen, following the overall targets of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. He stressed the importance for MAB and its WNBR to maintain this continuity, finalise the excellence strategy next year and establish the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves.

45. He underlined the importance of new partnerships, such as with LVMH and Abertis, and recalled that MAB continues constantly to invest in new ideas and concepts in order to stay relevant.

46. The Secretary closed his presentation by presenting a steel water bottle to be distributed to delegates, as an effort to reduce waste generation during the session.

VI. Reports on actions undertaken by Member States / regions/ regional and thematic MAB Networks in the context of MAB with a focus on the Lima Action Plan and discussion on collaborative and research projects

Member States

47. The Delegate of the **United Kingdom** reported on the exploration of the development of a virtual trail for all UNESCO-designated sites and Creative Cities in Scotland to promote awareness and visits to these locations to add value to the work of UNESCO. The Delegate also highlighted progress on two projects funded by the European Commission's Interreg programmes relating to ecotourism and biocultural heritage tourism as well as progress on the Global Challenges Research Fund Blue Communities project for \$9.4 Million (which has passed the first stage), to support science capacity building in Marine Science and Marine Spatial planning in SE Asia biosphere reserves, namely in Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia.

48. The Delegate of **South Africa** recalled that it has ten biosphere reserves and reported having conducted a series of sub regional activities under the AFRIMAB network. These included capacity building on governance of biosphere reserves for Malawi, technical assistance to the Kingdom of Eswatini and Lesotho to establish their biosphere reserves, learning exchange visit with Eswatini and Zambia regarding the creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve. South Africa also coordinated and presented the MAB Programme to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers on Environment. They also informed the launch on a research project on biosphere reserve governance. Financial support for this project is foreseen.

49. Concerning the proposed activities for 2019, South Africa mentioned four initiatives: Hosting the Youth MAB Forum under the banner of National Youth Conservation Programme; Hosting series of activities geared towards National MAB Awareness Event, Initial stage on the nomination of two new biosphere reserves (submitted Sep 2020), Creation of #proudtoshare videos for all biosphere reserves.

50. The Delegate of the **Republic of Korea** reported on the International Forum 'Implications of Protected Areas for the Achievement of SDG 15' which was held in the Suncheon Biosphere Reserve in November 2018, which was followed by the dissemination of a specific guidebook on SDG 15 among all biosphere reserves in the Republic of Korea. The National Guidelines for Biosphere Reserve Criteria and Application was revised in terms of domestic timeline for biosphere reserve applications, instruction on drawing up the nomination document, etc., based on the previous application experiences. The country also reported on

the National MAB Youth Forum, which will be held at the Gochang Biosphere Reserve in July 2019. Good progress was reported on the establishment on the Jeju Island of a Category 2 Center under the auspices of UNESCO on 'Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas' (GCIDA).

51. The Delegate of **Indonesia** expressed gratitude to all MAB-ICC Member States as well as the Secretariat for the support provided to Indonesia in hosting the 30th MAB-ICC in Indonesia, and reminded the Council that the Palembang Declaration reflects Indonesian commitment to accelerate the implementation of the LAP and of the SDGs. Indonesia further reported on its continuous efforts to tackle ecosystem degradation and biodiversity conservation through a plan including 6 key actions to cope with these challenges, dealing with landscapes with an ecosystem approach, involvement of local stakeholders, etc. The Delegate then mentioned its endeavour to develop new biosphere reserves while enhancing the existing ones. It further continues to move forward its strategic programmes for biosphere reserves including establishing sustainable financing scheme.

52. The Delegate of **Japan** reported on the highlights of the study on the progress made on the Lima Action Plans (LAP) conducted by the National MAB Committee in 2018-2019. The findings of the study were shared and discussed among the members of Japanese National MAB Committee, Japanese Coordinating Committee and biosphere reserve managers in March 2019, which made for a meaningful opportunity to understand the LAP and to get an idea of other biosphere reserves' efforts. These will be used for elaborating measures for further promotion of BRs. Japan also reported on the contributions made to the Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserves Network (APBRN) in drawing up a standard framework for biosphere reserve management by sustainability science and creating best practices for applying eco-labelling in biosphere reserves in Asia and the Pacific Region.

53. The Delegate of **Sweden** noted that the country had focused successfully on making a strong connection between the biosphere reserves and the 2030 Agenda for a number of years. The Delegate also mentioned the biosphere challenge, related to education and which aims to effect change towards a more sustainable future. The Delegate also highlighted the Biosphere for Baltic project that aims to facilitate learning and dissemination of good practices from biosphere reserves in the Baltic Sea region, and also, to highlight the contribution of biosphere reserves to the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 14.

54. The Delegate also mentioned the Biosphere Forests for the Future initiative that aims to emphasize BRs as model regions for observing climate change in forest landscapes, closely linked to SDG 13. The Representative of Sweden also noted that biosphere reserves from Northern Sweden to Italy, from Finland to Canada in a joint venture, hopefully made possible through a Horizon 2020 project.

55. The Delegate of **Colombia** explained that the new Government has launched a new Development Plan based on the concepts 'Produce by conserving and conserving by producing' and 'biodiversity; strategic patrimony of the Nation', which implies a public policy oriented towards sustainability. This Plan makes visible the need to generate integral strategic actions in some region of interest, for example in two biosphere reserves: the Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In the first one, a pilot case has been started to articulate technical instruments such as Ramsar Convention and biosphere

reserves, as main referents of other instruments of local spatial planning that allow biodiversity protection, the sustainable use of its resources and especially to generate governance processes with the local community.

56. Colombia is also updating the normative framework of their National System of Protected Areas. In this context, it is further developing the concept of Complementary Conservation Strategies, in which it hopes to include BR and other international recognitions in its political and normative framework.

57. The Delegate of **Nigeria** mentioned that the Community engagement for Cross River-Korup Takamanda Transboundary BR (Nigeria-Cameroon) was carried out and led to direct consultations with 30 communities inside the site. The country also mentioned several other activities implemented within the framework of BIOPALT project such as capacity building workshop on Green economy in Biosphere reserve (GEBR). Another project called 'African Biosphere reserves as pilot sites for monitoring and conservation migratory birds (AfriBiRds) is being implemented. Within this project, the monitoring of birds started in 2018, while the second phase exercise was carried out in January 2019. Omo Biosphere Reserve in Nigeria was selected to showcase the importance of bird migration in human and environment during the celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day in May 2019 which selected the theme for this year was: protect bird, be the solution to plastic pollution.

58. Nigeria expressed the wish that the Chair of the MAB-ICC could also visit Africa as she did for other regions.

59. The Delegate of **Honduras** mentioned the international cooperation of Trifinio-Fraternidad and its role as a vehicle for international exchange. The delegate thanked Germany and IberoMAB for their active support to Honduras. They hosted the first meeting of Central American BRs in Copan Ruinas, part of the Trifinio Fraternidad BR. Representatives from biosphere reserves from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras participated in the meeting that counted with special representation from women, youth and indigenous leaders. Together they identified common priorities and challenges for the countries, including strengthen biosphere reserves as well as the integration of indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth; promote training opportunities for MAB National Committees and actors in land management; promote sustainable productive activities in biosphere reserves, to improve the socio-economic development of populations; and finally, strengthen the link with Academia and other UNESCO programmes.

60. The Delegate of **Spain** highlighted the work done to set up a platform for increasing visibility and awareness raising on BRs in Spain. He also mentioned the work being done to promote biosphere reserve products through labelling, and the strengthening of the Spanish youth network. The Delegate reported on the important work being done by the IBEROMAB network, highlighting in particular the workshop to be held in Guatemala on gender equality in biosphere reserves. The Delegate then also mentioned the importance of the Mediterranean Network of Biosphere Reserves.

61. The Delegate of **France** noted that they had developed a new strategy on SDGs in the French network. The Delegate also highlighted the biosphere reserve trophies that had been put in place to reward sustainability initiatives in French biosphere reserves, and the

EcoActeurs initiative. The Delegate also underscored the work done with universities and biosphere reserves in Lebanon, Morocco, Spain and France. The Delegate also noted that CO'MAB had been created to ensure that youth be a part of the MAB governance at the national level.

62. The Delegate of **Mexico** is currently facing a big challenge in extending their BRs; for example, the country is updating the zonation of the biosphere reserves to have more regional influence. They are working closely with the indigenous groups who live in half of the Mexican BRs. They are also working as a priority with marine and coastal BRs and with urban and periurban BRs. They are creating courses for the personnel and stakeholders to improve the management and management plans of the BRs. The Delegate of Mexico also mentioned that they are working to ensure the excellence of five BRs that are currently in the excellence strategy, and submitting periodic reviews.

63. The Delegate of **Slovakia** noted that the periodic review process had been very helpful to revitalize the BR network. The Delegate noted that Slovakian BRs were communicating through social networks effectively and were working to implement strategically the SDGs at BR level. The Delegate also mentioned the strong youth and university activities (including summer camps) developed, notably on climate change and ecosystem services.

64. The Delegate of **Oman** underlined that it has designated 20 Nature Reserves all operating under detailed integrated and science based management plans. Oman has started work through its MAB National Committee to designate one reserve as a biosphere reserve. The first National Workshop on Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks was held at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs in Muscat April 2019 organized with the UNESCO Cairo Office. At the workshop, which focused on the processes and related information and data needs for successful biosphere reserve and geopark nominations, the biosphere reserve nomination file concerning the Jabal Semhan area originally prepared in 2006 was re-examined in order that it can be updated and re-submitted. In so doing, Oman will emphasise the importance of engaging with local communities and the private sector.

65. The Delegate of **Austrian** noted that its MAB National Committee is in the comfortable situation of having its own research budget, allowing the committee not just to identify research gaps but also to fill them with appropriate projects. The Delegate noted that the MAB Committee has launched a new call for research projects including cooperative projects with foreign partners, and that four new research projects would be funded with a total budget of 320.000 Euros, including one in cooperation with the Swiss BR Val Müstair and co-financed by Swiss MAB Committee. The Delegate then noted with pleasure that the Austrian region 'Lower Mura Valley' is likely to be announced as Biosphere Reserve by the day after tomorrow, would be the final piece of the puzzle towards the realization of the 5-countries transboundary Biosphere Reserve in the Mura-Drava-Danube river corridor, sometimes called the 'Amazon of Europe'. He stated that the work on the joint transboundary proposal of all five countries has already started and that the proposal will most likely be submitted to UNESCO at the end of September 2019.

66. The Delegate of **Australia** reported on moving ahead with the Process of Excellence and Exit Strategy since the last ICC. This will result in the withdrawal of further BRs by the next Council, reducing the number to four, with a new BR being in the process of development,

and one potential first-nation BR, which could help remodel the existing Australian network, and potentially have global application. Australia also reported on the rising interest in their BRs for the bio-cultural challenge launched in Lima. Australian BRs are all using the LAP as a guide to their work, which led the Great Sandy BR to prepare and hold a very successful meeting of Australian BRs, with the participation of a representative from Clayoquot BR in Canada. There is in the country a growing interest in adopting the BR model as a framework for Sustainable Development, within the framework of the SDGs, linking MAB with actions under IPBES and the CBD.

67. The Delegate of **Germany** thanked the French delegation for the Report on the Global assessment and the 7th session of IPBES and highlighted the importance of the nexus between biodiversity and water, food and health and on the transformational change needed to fight the severe loss of biodiversity. The Delegate noted that these themes are highly relevant for biosphere reserves and that all partners in the WNBR will need to join efforts so that relevant research will be available and considered in the assessments. The Delegate noted that it will continue to be important to connect BRs to research, including UNESCO science programmes and that such research should follow the “Sustainability Science Guidelines” developed by UNESCO in 2017.

68. The Delegate of **France**, representing the host country of the 7th IPBES plenary meeting, then took the floor to underline the importance of a very close collaboration between MAB and IPBES. She stressed the importance of the possible actions proposed by IPBES towards an essential transformative change and recalled that, for nearly half a century, the MAB Programme had already been exploring these actions. The Delegate noted that MAB biosphere reserves should be used to implement the recommendations of the first Intergovernmental Report on the State of Biodiversity launched last May and to become UNESCO's lead agency for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

69. The Delegate of **Germany** supported France's intervention and called on the members of the MAB-ICC to actively promote biosphere reserves in their territory as key instruments for promoting biodiversity.

70. The Delegate of **Haiti** reported that his country is working on the implementation of the Lima Action Plan in the country and the communication and visibility of its biosphere reserves. A website is being set up with the support from GIZ (German Cooperation). The country is also working on the creation of a botanical garden.

71. Haiti is implementing a reforestation project to address deforestation and soil loss in the La Selle Biosphere Reserve. This project is supported financially and technically by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Autonomous Organization of National Parks (OAPN) of Spain.

72. The Delegate of **Estonia** noted that the biosphere reserves around the Baltic Sea were cooperating very well, and that cooperation with the Latvian biosphere reserves was also progressing well, working on a programme on making heritage visible in biosphere reserves. The Delegate also highlighted the importance of art activities in biosphere reserves, and that this was a topic that the biosphere reserves around the Baltic Sea were focusing on.

73. The Delegate of **China** pointed out that the China MAB National Committee celebrated its 40th anniversary in late July 2018, hosting an exhibition visited by thousands of visitors, and launching a series of documentaries (on ten BRs) which were showed on the National TV Channel (CCTV) in December 2018. China reported on its active contribution to the 'Proud to Share' initiative, with 6 short movies, as well as to the periodic review exercise completed for additional 3 Chinese BRs. China is also working intensively to improve the BRs management plans as well as their monitoring capacities, through the development of 11 pilot sites and numerous training activities which will be materialized in national guidelines for monitoring. On an international basis, China remains an active member of the EABRN, and will be the host of the next MAB Youth Forum.

74. The Delegate of **Vietnam** briefly reported on their interest to promote the use the WNBR as a transformative inspiration in society. Vietnam also warmly welcomed the contribution received from other countries through the exchange of volunteers coming from countries like Germany and others.

75. The Delegate of **Côte d'Ivoire** congratulated the Chairperson of the MAB Council on her comprehensive report and the excellent work done. The Delegate thanked the MAB Secretariat for the quality of the provided documentation and the rich content of its activity report. Côte d'Ivoire is committed to supporting the recommendations and the ideas in the report.

76. The Delegate also expressed its support for the proposals and strong ideas put forward by France for the proper functioning of the MAB Council. Côte d'Ivoire also recalled that the process of preparing the 6th General Assembly of the AfriMAB network, which the country will host at the end of September 2019, is progressing well.

77. The Delegate of Côte d'Ivoire mentioned that in addition to its two biosphere reserves, they are working on the creation of three new biosphere reserves. One of them, the Lamto Science Nature Reserve, will host the field trip as part of the 6th AfriMAB General Assembly.

78. The Delegate stressed that it was in the process of establishing a biodiversity platform (fauna and flora) through the biological corridor approach with Liberia. This corridor aims to promote biodiversity in the Tai-Grebo-Sapo tropical forest complex through Ivorian-German cooperation.

79. The Delegate of the **Russian Federation** mentioned the work being done with China on animal migration. He noted the positive collaboration being done at the transnational level with China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, notably in research. The Delegate called on the Secretariat to work on a model law for transboundary cooperation, for transboundary biosphere reserves and also site-to-site cooperation between countries.

80. The Delegate of **Morocco** stated that it has successfully established four biosphere reserves covering major ecosystems in the country. Following the directives of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, the National Agency for the Development of Oasis Zones and the Arganeraie, ANDZOA, covering two biosphere reserves, was created in February 2010. Following its establishment, ANDZOA has mobilized 230 million Euro for the sustainable development of these regions in partnership with local communities, ministries, private sector

and international funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, as well as bilateral partners including Canada and Belgium. Based on the positive results of its ongoing biosphere reserve activities, Morocco and ANZOA would welcome opportunities for re-enforced and expanded partnerships in support of existing biosphere reserves and for the establishment of new biosphere reserves in the country.

Regional and Thematic Network Reports

81. The Delegate of Sweden reported on behalf of the **NordMAB Network**, a thematic network for Nordic cooperation composed of Northern biosphere reserves that share common characteristics and challenges. The Network currently consists of 16 biosphere reserves in nine countries: Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway, the Russian Federation, Scotland and Sweden. The Delegate noted that during the last meeting held in Finland, NordMAB explored opportunities for collaboration between NordMAB biosphere reserves, strengthening the identity of the network and working within the framework of the SDGs.

82. The Delegate of Sweden further indicated that NordMAB was seeking funding opportunities for projects and engaging in ongoing dialogue with the Nordic Council of Ministers to enable further development of the network.

83. The Delegate of France, as member of the EuroMAB steering committee, thanked the Republic of Ireland for the excellent organization of the EuroMAB **Network** meeting held in April 2019 in the Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve with the participation of more than 300 participants from 30 countries.

84. The Delegate of Kazakhstan and Chair of the Steering Committee of **the East Asia Biosphere Reserves Network (EABRN)** reported on behalf of the Network. He noted the significant progress in implementation of the Lima Action Plan, and acknowledged the guidance provided by MAB National Committees to improve biosphere reserve management and the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in biosphere reserve governance, especially in Japan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

85. Youth engagement is also notable in the area, particularly in Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Participants from EABRN were actively involved in the MAB Youth Forum in 2017, and are more committed than ever in the light of the forthcoming global MAB Youth Forum in China. Education for Sustainable Development is also a particular focus of EABRN cooperation, in particular between Japan and the Russian Federation, who are implementing an educational exchange programme, including fieldwork at biosphere reserves. This led to the publication of *Biosphere Reserves for Future Generations – Educating diverse human resources in Japan, Russia and Belarus* in late July 2018 by Kanazawa University.

86. Since its creation, the EABRN has dedicated particular attention to sustainable tourism in biosphere reserves and specific guidelines are being prepared under the coordination of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. EABRN members have also promoted transboundary cooperation, in particular in relation to the transboundary biosphere reserve established between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (Katunskiy/Great Altai TBR), but also between the Russian Federation and Mongolia in relation to the Uvs Nuur Basin Biosphere

Reserve, Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve and the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve. Thanks to the continuous support of the Republic of Korea, forthcoming activities coordinated by the EABRN Secretariat will include the completion of a survey on training needs, the publication of Ecotourism guidelines, regular EABRN meetings in Mongolia in 2020, and capacity-building exchanges and workshops between 2019-2020.

87. The Delegate of Mexico and President of **IberoMAB Network** made a presentation on behalf of the Network, noting that IberoMAB had adopted an Action Plan, based on the Lima Action Plan, in 2018 in Colombia. The countries of the network are currently working on their own national plans based on these two documents. The Network has also created a guide to help biosphere reserve managers develop management plans.

88. IberoMAB is working to grow and consolidate the Network. It hopes that new reserves will be integrated and that three new proposals presented by Spain this year will be accepted.

89. The Network organized a seminar on disaster risk reduction in November 2018, held in Akumal, Mexico, will hold a seminar on gender equality this year in Antigua, Guatemala.

90. In December 2018, the 1st IberoMAB Youth Forum was organized with the participation of more than 90 representatives from 43 biosphere reserves.

91. The Network has carried out an update of the Iberomab Network catalogue and set up an open catalogue of demonstration areas.

92. In May, the first meeting of Central American Biosphere Reserves was held in Copan, Honduras. The meeting served to discuss priority issues and consolidate the activities of the 17 biosphere reserves of the six countries of the sub-region. It also discussed issues of significance to the entire network, such as the importance of establishing MAB National Committees and creating management plans. The Delegate of Mexico also mentioned that the next meeting of the IberoMAB Network will take place in 2020 in San José, Costa Rica.

93. The Delegate further stated that he was proud that the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve (Spain) was a recipient of the Michel Batisse Prize, in recognition of the great work being done on the site.

94. In conclusion, the Delegate thanked OAPN, AECID, the MAB Programme and its BRESEP project, the UNESCO Centre from the Basque Country, the Abertis Foundation, the Mediterranean Network of Biosphere Reserves, the Honduran National Institute for Forest Conservation and Development, and the UNESCO offices in Montevideo and San Jose for the generous support they have given to IberoMAB's activities.

95. The **South-East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet)** mentioned that its 12th meeting was held in Legazpi City – in the Albay Biosphere Reserve – in the Philippines on 24–29 March 2019. The meeting brought together approximately 120 participants from the MAB community in South-East Asia, along with delegates from the wider Asia-Pacific Network including the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM), the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN) and the Pacific MAB Network (PacMAB). The meeting contributed to strengthening active networking within the MAB community across Asia and the Pacific, through direct exchange and collaboration among biosphere reserves in the region. The

objective was also to optimize the contributions of biosphere reserves to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The meeting was hosted by the Provincial Government of Albay and the Philippines National Commission, and supported by JFIT, UNESCO Jakarta Office and the MAB Secretariat. A dedicated APBRN session saw the launch of three booklets on priority issues identified by members of the four sub-regional MAB networks in Asia and the Pacific, which together form the Asia-Pacific Biosphere Reserve Network (APBRN) (see more details in the report made by Indonesia). The Indonesian delegation expressed interest in hosting the 13th meeting of SeaBRnet in the newly designated biosphere reserve (and UNESCO Global Geopark), Rinjani Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, in 2020.

96. The Chair of the **AfriMAB Network** (Nigeria) stated that a manual on the green economy in biosphere reserves in Africa has been developed within the BIOPALT project. The Delegate also noted that several cross-country capacity-building activities had taken place, which also supported the first biosphere reserve nomination of the Kingdom of Eswatini. He underlined the continued efforts underway to establish the AfriBioFund with the support of the MAB Secretariat, and also spoke about the support given by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

97. The Delegate of the Republic of Korea reported on behalf of the **World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (WNICBR)**. Up to date there are 59 biosphere reserves (BRs) that have signed the membership document, and other 28 BRs are in process of engagement. The last WNICBR meeting was held in Menorca in May 2018, gathering more than 70 participants from 42 biosphere reserves from 32 different countries, to discuss the new work plan for the period 2018-2022. The next meeting will be held in the Gouritz Cluster, South Africa, in September 2019. As an outcome of this meeting the Zero Plastic working group was also established. Currently, 16 Biosphere Reserves have already joined this working group.

98. The 6th Training Course for Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve Managers took place in Jeju Island in October 2018, with participants from 11 countries (Cuba, Indonesia, Mozambique, St. Kitts and Nevis, China, Madagascar, Russia, Yemen, South Africa, Laos and the Philippines) to discuss more practical aspects such as tourism, branding, education and other matters in relation to BR management. The 7th training course is scheduled to take place on Jeju Island in October 2019.

99. The network also engages in research projects on climate change in Island and Coastal BRs, identifying the impact of climate change on five research sites, engaging in the definition of adaptation strategies, as well as research to identify the value of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves as a source of carbon sink, which is currently underway and will be completed by July 2020.

Observers

100. The Delegate of **Ghana** shared its experience on contextualizing and implementing the Lima Action Plan. The Ghana Action plan was launched at the national level in 2018 with the involvement of all stakeholders. It is expected to be used for consensus building and to enhance visibility of the MAB programme in the country.

101. Ghana has worked with the National Development Commission to promote full

awareness of biodiversity and sustainable development. The country has also signed an agreement with the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve in Germany and is initiating collaboration with Slovenia. Ghana is working on the development of a manual on the promotion of ecosystem services.

VII. Implementation of the ‘Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR as well as Quality Improvement of all Members of the World Network’

102. The Secretary briefly introduced the item and the associated document. He highlighted the establishment of an ad-hoc working group to review and plan for the long-term assurance of excellence of the MAB programme since 2018.

103. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the document, listing the working group members who met virtually four times for the preparation of a proposal for consideration by this session of the Council, including a draft decision to be considered at this session. She then handed the floor to the key contributing members to provide a more detailed introduction.

104. The Delegate of France took note of the three key aspects considered: for the MAB programme to work in accordance with the Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework, to strengthen the world network, and to ensure its enhanced visibility and credibility. She stressed that the programme’s key objective is to give support to biosphere reserves to allow them to perform in accordance with these documents.

105. The Delegate then turned to the obligations of Member States to uphold and implement in accordance with the spirit and guiding documents of the programme. National Committees should be established, and should conduct voluntary and informal mid-term reviews every five years to ensure the effective transmission of information relating to the functioning of all biosphere reserves.

106. The representative of the Secretariat drew attention to the corresponding paragraphs in the document, providing further detail on the recommendations made by the ad-hoc working group – including the strengthening of mechanisms such as peer support and technical workshops during regional meetings.

107. The Delegate of South Africa took the floor to outline the recommendations concerning the allocation of responsibilities at different levels within the programme. The Delegate highlighted the importance of communication and information sharing, starting from the level of the biosphere reserves, and between these and the National Committees. The Delegate stressed the importance of monitoring the quality of periodic reviews to ensure the highest possible quality. In this regard, he drew attention to the importance of introducing an informal mid-term review, allowing for the tracking and monitoring of performance in between periodic reviews under the responsibility of the national level authorities.

108. At the level of the National Committee, he noted the importance of committees having all relevant information in order for them to provide the support needed at the site level. He noted that regional networks also have a role to play in supporting biosphere reserve reviews and to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and support – with further support to be provided by

field-based members of the MAB Secretariat through site visits.

109. The representative of the Secretariat underlined the critical need to ensure effective flows of information within the MAB programme. The Delegate then drew the attention of the Council to the draft decision included in the document. The Delegate invited the Australian Delegation to introduce the decision.

110. The Delegate of Australia proceeded to introduce the draft decision, stressing his hope that the Council would discuss the contents of the draft text. He encouraged the Council to consider the deadlines proposed in the draft text, and to consider the 'stress-testing' of biosphere reserves represented by the proposed voluntary and informal mid-term review. The Delegate noted the importance of ensuring adequate financial support for the process, referring to the inclusion in the draft decision of a reference to UNESCO to consider becoming, if possible, an Implementing Organization or Accredited Entity to the Green Climate Fund.

111. After the introduction, several countries took the floor. Indonesia commended the work of the ad-hoc working group, and noted that the excellence process should be continuous in nature, and that UNESCO should work actively with other UN instruments. Indonesia then proposed a modification to part B, proposing that 'to link' be replaced with 'to mainstream' and to add reference to other international agendas, targets and mechanisms, such as IPCC and IPBES. Indonesia noted that its government does not use the term 'indigenous' and asked that this be replaced with 'local' in the text.

112. The Delegate of the United Kingdom stressed the importance of keeping focus on ensuring the excellence of the network and the need to focus on quality assurance. The Delegate acknowledged that the current periodic review process could be improved and lightened, stressing the complementary nature of the excellence process in this regard. The United Kingdom finally noted that the excellence process have already been approved by the Council in 2017, with the present discussion serving primarily to generate a better understanding of its implementation.

113. Austria supported the suggestion made by the United Kingdom and expressed that it would be absolutely necessary to streamline the periodic review process, because many biosphere reserves do not have the capacity to complete a review process every 5 years.

114. The Delegate of Germany welcomed the work of the ad-hoc working group and its experts, the quality of the results and stressing the positive, inspiring, partnership-oriented and future-oriented programme that the excellence process seeks to achieve. Germany reiterated the statement made by the United Kingdom regarding the previous approval and enforcement of the excellence process by the Council, and stressed the importance of determining what should happen to sites that do not fully comply with the provisions of the Statutory Framework, or that do not address the recommendations. He reiterated the need to design a permanent process of quality control. In this regards, Germany, the United Kingdom and other delegations have worked on the development of a new draft text decision in consultation with diverse delegations.

115. The Delegate of Estonia asked whether a format for the five-year mid-term review had been discussed and devised.

116. The Delegate of France stressed the importance of finalizing the exit strategy by 2020, the flexible nature of the mid-term review and acknowledging that further work would need to be undertaken in order to determine how it would be rolled out in detail. The Delegate suggested that the working group continue elaborating the concepts, and invited other delegations to express interest in taking part in its future deliberations. The Delegate finally took note of the financing issue, asking whether the decision for discussion should include the current reference to financial mechanisms.

117. The representative of the Secretariat explained in further detail the nature of the proposed mid-term review as envisioned in the ad-hoc group's discussions, which was discussed as a dialogue between the national authorities and the biosphere reserve. It was discussed as a voluntary and informal process in order not to wait for the deadline of the submission of the periodic review report to take action if necessary. The proposed five-year timeframe for the informal mid-term review could be further discussed and elaborated by the ad-hoc working group with a view towards a decision to be taken at the next session of the Council. Australia supported the comments made by the Secretariat.

118. The Delegate of the Republic of Korea suggested that the document could be further elaborated in order to add details on issues such as 5-year mid-term review and indicators of excellence. The Delegate noted that these should be simple, clear and functional as good tools to monitor progress, and suggested that the Council could review such progress, calling for additional clarification and discussion on the format. The Delegate also suggested that the document be acknowledged, and proposed that the ad-hoc working group continue its work, with a final decision on the process to be taken in comprehensive form at the next Council session meeting.

119. The Delegate of the United Kingdom expressed support for Germany's draft decision, suggesting to add a reference to quality assurance, as mentioned by the Chair of the Executive Board. The Delegate asked that the Periodic Review process be reviewed and streamlined in the context of the ad hoc working group, taking note that the process in its current form is heavy and its outcomes not well utilized as a basis for decision-making. The Delegate noted that the mid-term review should be voluntary in nature, and should be possible at either national or regional level.

120. The Delegate of France recalled its participation in the ad-hoc working group, and acknowledged that further work could be done to refine and further develop its outcomes. The Delegate supported the position expressed by Germany to allow the working group to continue its activities with a decision of the Council.

121. The Delegate of the Russian Federation expressed support for the statement by the United Kingdom, taking note of the difficulty of preparing the Periodic Review reports in non-English speaking member states, and calling for a review of the Periodic Review process.

122. The Delegate of South Africa reminded the Council that Technical Guidelines are also being drafted through a working group process, calling for the two processes to be streamlined. The delegate took note that the two processes share the same objective of quality assurance, and expressed support for the ad-hoc working group to continue its work.

123. The Delegate of Slovakia took note of the particular conditions facing transboundary biosphere reserves, which are required to do 'double reporting' under the current Periodic Review process and called for the process to be reviewed as well.

124. The Delegate of Nigeria asked that the ad-hoc working group be provided with all relevant information from Member States that could serve to improve existing processes as a basis for its continued work, and suggested that the draft decision be phrased so as to be open-ended and allow for eventual decisions to be taken in due course.

125. The representative of the Secretariat reminded the Council that the purpose of the mid-term review was not to shorten the reporting cycle from 10 to 5 years, but rather to improve communication between the biosphere reserves, the national level and the MAB Secretariat, to ensure better updating of information and to address any issue in due time.

126. The Chair invited Germany to present the revised draft decision. The Delegate of Germany read the draft decision in full. With reference to paragraph 3) the Delegate mentioned that the regional groups would determine possible changes in the future membership of the ad-hoc working group as the Council membership may change after the 2019 UNESCO General Conference elections.

127. After some discussions, the following decision was adopted:

The MAB Council

1. Welcomes the intermediate results of the ad-hoc Working Group established by the MAB Council at its 30th session on the 'Process of excellence and enhancement of the WNBR as well as quality improvement of all members of the World Network', the 'Excellence Process';
2. Notes that the Excellence Process has been adopted by the MAB Council in 2017, and is thus already in force;
3. Calls on the Working Group to continue its work, in its current composition but with possible changes to be agreed within regional groups, and conclude this work with the aim of its results being adopted by the MAB Council at its 32nd session in 2020;
4. As regards the established mandate of the Working Group, the MAB Council highlights the need to:
 - Address permanent mechanisms of quality assurance within the World Network;
 - Further develop the idea of a 'short and easy review mechanism, coordinated by the MAB national committee and/or focal point, five years after the designation, or last periodic review report';
 - and combine this with proposals for a more streamlined periodic review process.

128. Venezuela, as an Observer Member State, asked that a complaint be recorded in the minutes concerning the manner in which the discussion was conducted. The Delegate asked that observers be allowed to speak before decisions are taken so that their inputs would be

considered by the Council. The Chair indicated that the discussion had been conducted in accordance with the rules of the Council.

129. The representative of the Secretariat thanked all members of the Council for their contributions and confirmed that all suggestions and proposals made during the discussion would be made available to the ad-hoc working group to guide their work.

VIII. Periodic Review Reports and follow-up information received since the last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC) Meeting

130. The representative of the Secretariat presented the recommendations for the periodic review and the follow-up recommendations, using the tables available in the annex 1 and 2 of the document SC-19/CONF.231/7 with a colour code (red for sites not meeting the criteria, green for sites meeting the criteria and blue for sites for which more information was requested). It was clearly indicated in a column if the site was concerned by the Exit Strategy.

131. The Secretariat informed the Council that since the last MAB Council session, the Secretariat received 25 reports and 32 follow-up information from 25 countries, including 34 reports and follow-ups from 11 countries concerned by the Exit Strategy.

132. The Secretariat also informed the Council that three sites concerned by the Exit Strategy informed the Secretariat that they were withdrawing from the WNBR: Bamingui Bangoran (Central African Republic), Northeast Greenland (Denmark) and San Joaquin (USA).

133. The Secretariat indicated that any additional information received by the requested deadline indicated in the Advisory Committee recommendation has been presented and examined by the MAB Bureau for the MAB Council decision. In the tables presented in plenary and distributed to the Members of the Council, the Secretariat highlighted the cases when the final recommendation was changed by the Bureau before approval by the Council in plenary.

134. After the presentation of the Secretariat, several Member States, including the United Kingdom, France and Germany highlighted that numerous biosphere reserves successfully complied with meeting the statutory framework criteria. The Council recognized and congratulated the 34 sites that meet the criteria from 19 countries, including 17 sites from 11 countries, which were concerned by the exit strategy.

135. The Delegate of Honduras raised the issue on the agreed terminology regarding the Excellence Process, and the Secretariat indicated that it was following the wording of the decision taken by the MAB Council in 2017, explicitly referring to the sites concerned by the "Exit Strategy" (see annex II of the document SC-19/CONF.231/6).

136. Two countries (United Kingdom, Germany) highlighted that although biosphere reserve report on changes in size or name changes, several of them are still listed under item 8, and should be reported under item 9, such as the sites from Brazil. The Secretary informed that these requests are handled very often when the periodic review report is considered and/or follow-up information is provided, and that it could be indicated under a separate header for

clarity if necessary.

137. The Delegate of France applauded the wealth of information in the table provided, however highlighted some confusion, as it mixes sites that are part of the exit strategy and the excellence process that concerns all sites of the WNBR. The Delegate of Germany also indicated concerns regarding the communication of the status of the sites that could be further streamlined.

138. It was requested that the Secretariat communicate with the sites concerned by the exit strategy that did not meet the criteria so they are reminded and clearly informed that they need to provide the required information by 30 September 2019 at the latest, or that they need to submit a new nomination form by 30th September 2019 to be examined at the next Council session, as agreed in 2017. Several delegations highlighted the need to support these concerned Member States to allow them to comply with the requirements was also highlighted by several delegations.

139. The Delegate of the Russian Federation inquired about the status of reviewing biosphere reserves from the United States of America although the country is no longer a Member State of UNESCO. Australia reminded about the nature of the intergovernmental process, and that it is possible for countries to leave as a Member State, but still be engaged in the MAB programme. The Delegate highlighted that it should be a target to keep full membership. The Secretary indicated that after consultation with the International Standards and Legal Affairs Department, it was confirmed that for the two countries that left the Organization as a Member State (United States of America and Israel), biosphere reserves that already existed prior to their decision to leave, continue to exist in both countries, and monitoring will be maintained. They are even entitled to nominate new sites if they would want to do so, as this is in line with the objective to strengthen the MAB Programme as a means to achieve the SDGs.

140. The Secretary highlighted that the Delegation of Spain provides support to the Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean to align to the requirements, and that funding was made available. He also highlighted that it is the aim for all sites to remain part of the world network, but they need to fulfil the criteria. Regarding the tables, the Secretariat highlighted that it is a means to simplify the visualization of information, to facilitate the process of decision making for the Council and that reference to sites concerned by the exit strategy were made to facilitate the work of the advisory committee and of the Secretariat to ensure appropriate follow-up of the decision made by the Council and respect of specific deadlines. The comprehensive information and decisions are to be found in the recommendations adopted for each site once the Council made its decision.

141. The MAB Council endorsed without any modifications the Advisory Committee recommendations contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/7 for the countries and sites below (recommendations available in annex 2):

Periodic Reviews

- i. Pereyra Iraola Biosphere Reserve, Argentina
- ii. Noosa Biosphere Reserve, Australia

- iii. General recommendations to the Cameroon national authorities
- iv. Bénoué Biosphere Reserve, Cameroon
- v. Dja Biosphere Reserve, Cameroon
- vi. Waza Biosphere Reserven, Cameroon
- vii. Mont Saint-Hilaire, Canada
- viii. Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve, China
- ix. Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve, China
- x. General comments for Guinea
- xi. Badiar Biosphere Reserve, Guinea
- xii. Mont Nimba Biosphere Reserve, Guinea
- xiii. Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve, Kyrgyzstan
- xiv. General recommendation for the Mexican authorities
- xv. Huatulco Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- xvi. Laguna Madre y Delta del Rio Bravo Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- xvii. Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, Mexico
- xviii. Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve, Mongolia
- xix. Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa

Follow-ups

- i. Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve, Argentina
- ii. Beni Biosphere Reserve, Bolivia
- iii. Area Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba Biosphere Reserve (renaming of former Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve), Bolivia
- iv. Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve, Bulgaria
- v. Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve, Croatia
- vi. Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve, Cuba
- vii. Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve, Cuba
- viii. Northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve, Denmark
- ix. Cevennes Biosphere Reserve, France
- x. Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras
- xi. Monte Peglia Biosphere Reserve, Italy
- xii. Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve, Montenegro
- xiii. East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve, Slovakia
- xiv. Tatra Biosphere Reserve, Slovakia
- xv. Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve (renaming of former Val Müstair – Parc Naziunal Biosphere Reserve), Switzerland
- xvi. Apalachicola Biosphere Reserve (former Central Gulf Coastal Plain), United States of America
- xvii. Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve, United States of America
- xviii. Organ Pipe Biosphere Reserve, United States of America
- xix. San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve, United States of America
- xx. Virginia Coast Biosphere Reserve, United States of America
- xxi. University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve, United States of America
- xxii. Yellowstone Biosphere Reserve, United States of America

142. The MAB Council made the following decisions based on the Advisory Committee recommendations contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/7, after the Bureau's deliberations and based on additional information received by the MAB Council for the sites and countries below:

143. **Espinaço Biosphere Reserve, Brazil.** The Council welcomed the additional information and the clarification on feasibility of the extension and cooperation with neighbouring biosphere reserves in relation to the proposed extension. The country explained all areas of overlap between the various Brazilian biosphere reserves represent important ecotones between the ecosystems of the different biomes and, therefore, are included in more than one reserve. These are points of integration of the National Landscape Connectivity Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment. They are, therefore areas of intense cooperation between biosphere reserves. After reviewing this information, the Council considered that the site meets the criteria and accepted the extension of the Biosphere Reserve.

144. **Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve, Brazil.** The Council welcomed the additional information sent by the country, as well as the clarification of the extension and cooperation with neighbouring biosphere reserves in relation to the planned extension.

145. The country mentioned that after 28 years of successful work, the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve, has proved to be capable of complying with the principles and functions of the biosphere reserves. The country mentioned the importance of this extension, given that it will preserve the fragile Atlantic Forest Biome.

146. The country explained that all areas of overlap between the various Brazilian biosphere reserves represent important ecotones between the ecosystems of the different biomes and, therefore, are included in more than one reserve. These are points of integration of the National Landscape Connectivity Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment.

147. After reviewing this information, the Council considered that the site meets the criteria and accepted the extension of the Biosphere Reserve.

148. **Xingkai Lake Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Council noted with a satisfaction that the Chinese authorities submitted the additional information as per Advisory Committee request, namely (i) a justification how sufficient buffering functions are fulfilled in all core areas; (ii) a submission of a correct zonation map that shows a clear distinction between the buffer zone and the transition area; and (iii) corrected discrepancy in the data on the core area. In addition, details were provided on actions taken and/or planned in order to cooperate more closely with the neighbouring Khankaiskiy Biosphere Reserve of the Russian Federation, which shares the same lake, and to examine the possibility of establishing a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. The Council considered that the site meets the criteria.

149. **Haut Niger Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Council concluded that it does not have enough information to assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) and requested the authorities to submit, by 30 September 2019, an improved zonation map of the biosphere reserve using the official terminology according to the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

150. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers the national authorities its technical assistance to produce the requested documents.

151. **Ziama Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Council concluded that it does not have enough information to assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). It therefore requested the authorities to discuss with stakeholders the possibility of establishing a buffer zone to protect all flanks of the core area of the south-eastern portion of the site.

152. The Council requested the authorities to submit an application for an extension of the site as soon as possible to extend the size of the transition area.

153. The Council encouraged the authorities to submit the requested information by 30 September 2019

154. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers to the national authorities its' technical assistance to elaborate produce the requested documents that are requested.

155. **Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

156. The Council welcomed the additional information sent by the country, as well as the clarification on the population leaving in the core area. The Council requested to the national authorities to send a revised zonation map, with the proper MAB terminology where the three zones can be clearly seen. The information should be sent by 30 September 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

157. **Sierra de Alamos – Rio Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Council concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Council therefore requests the authorities to submit by 30 September 2020 a rationale for the extension and zonation change and a Management Plan with stakeholder involvement for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

158. **Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, Nicaragua.** The Council welcomed the detailed additional information sent by the authorities on the buffering functions of the core areas, the different activities and strategies implemented in the area.

159. The Council considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

160. **Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua).** The Council considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Advisory Committee requests the authorities to send more information on the Management Plan and stakeholder involvement by 30 September 2019.

Follow-ups

161. **Costero del Sur Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Argentinean authorities on the zonation of the biosphere reserve and the population living in the zones. The submitted zonation map it is still not clear.

162. The Council requests the authorities to send a clear zonation map, with the three zones and using the official terminology in line with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, by 30 September 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

163. **Yaboti Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Council welcomed the zonation map provided by the Argentinean authorities. The requested Management Plan that has been requested since 2017, was still not provided.

164. The authorities mentioned that they are working on the management plan of the biosphere reserve.

165. The Council concluded that this site **does not meet the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requests the authorities to provide a clear Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, as well as an updated version of the zonation map according to the new management plan, by 30 September 2020.

166. **Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Bolivian authorities on the development function of the biosphere reserve, which explains that the managers work in close coordination with the local population and develop cocoa and citrus production projects, as well as indigenous ecotourism in the buffer and transition zones, according to the existing management plan.

167. The Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

168. **Cerrado Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).** The Council welcomed the information sent by the Brazilian authorities. The Cerrado Biosphere Reserve sent a Periodic Review in 2016, later in 2017, which met the criteria, and a follow-up (that was not requested) in 2018.

169. The document sent by the national authorities does not follow the structure of a Periodic Review. It proposes a huge increase in zonation from 25 million ha to 76,240,779.83 ha (88,215,853 ha, different numbers are given), on the grounds that the authorities would like to preserve the Cerrado biome. The authorities later sent a letter requesting not proceed with this extension.

170. **Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, Canada.** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Canadian authorities, including the submission of an Engagement Plan and Policy, as well as the term of reference for the Biosphere Advisory Council and an updated zonation map. It welcomed the significant progress made in engaging with stakeholders and the reclassification of large portion of land surrounding the core protected area as buffer zone, thus meeting the zonation requirements. It therefore decided that the site **meets** the criteria.

171. **Fundy Biosphere Reserve, Canada.** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Canadian authorities, including the submission of an updated

zonation map and information on the very limited impact of mining operations. It welcomed the reclassification of the edge of Fundy national park as buffer zone and the engagement in working with a number of regional partners to increase the amount of protected land (both core and buffer) with the biosphere reserve. It therefore decided that the site **meets** the criteria.

172. **Lauca Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Council welcomed the additional information provided by the Chilean authorities. The country is planning to extend the biosphere reserve from 358,000 ha to 735,000 in order to add a buffer and a transition zone. The document sent as Management Plan only describes some current and future activities but it is not a proper Management Plan. The additional information about the management committee still does not explain clearly how this committee functions.

173. The Council concluded that this site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requests the authorities to submit the extension file of the biosphere reserve to include the missing buffer zone and transition area, a proper Management Plan, as well as clear information on the functioning of the management committee by 30 September 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

174. **Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Council welcomed the additional information sent by the Chilean authorities on why no buffer zone exists in the northwestern part of the reserve is still missing. The country informed that the buffer zone in the northwestern part of the Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve corresponds to the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, belonging to the Bernardo O'Higgins National Park, a strict protected area. The Council concluded that the site **meets** the criteria.

175. **Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Council appreciates the letter sent by the Mexican authorities reiterating the interest of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) of Mexico in concentrating its efforts to complete the zonation proposal of the biosphere reserve to include a transition zone, no later than September 2019. CONANP has initiated consultations and meetings with staff and authorities involved in the planification and management of the Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve, and civil society, in order to rethink the design of the Reserve, which includes a new zoning.

176. The Council recognizes the efforts of the Mexican authorities to implement a transition zone to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

177. The Council concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria. It therefore requests the authorities to send the new zonation with a transition zone and its management plan by 30 September 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

178. **Tatra Biosphere Reserve, Poland.** The Council welcomed the efforts made by the local authorities to engage and involve with local communities in the coordination body of the Tatra Biosphere Reserve and took note of the meetings already held. It also took note of the plan and options for the proposal for extension of the national park to meet the zonation criteria. It also welcomed the participation of the local authorities to the last EuroMAB meeting held in Dublin early April 2019. It further encouraged the authorities to pursue these efforts, to ask for

support from the MAB secretariat if needed and to report on progress made by 30th September 2019 for the site to meet the criteria.

179. **Mountainous Urals, Russian Federation.** The Council welcomed the management plan for this biosphere reserve for the period 2019-2028, designated in 2018 and thanked the authorities for replying to the recommendation in such a short time frame.

180. The Delegation of France indicated that during the last MAB Council session in Palembang (South-Sumatra), it had been decided that the Secretariat should consider an alert process for sites threatened in one way or another, for example through infrastructure or development projects. The MAB Council adopted this decision and requested the Secretariat to prepare this document for consideration at its next session.

181. Two Observers Member States took the floor. Brazil thanked the Secretariat and the Bureau Member of Honduras for supporting Brazil regarding the extension of two sites and highlighted that the extensions are in line with the UNESCO Director General statement to expand the size and importance of biosphere reserves as areas for sustainable development.

182. The Delegate of Venezuela regretted that decisions were made without inputs from the Observers. The Secretary of the MAB Programme explained that the 34 Members of the Council have the right to discuss first and once the decision is adopted, the floor is open for comments from Observers. It highlighted that this has been the practice. The Delegate of Venezuela also inquired about the status of those sites that are part of the exit strategy, and asked if a dialogue is ongoing with those concerned sites and their Member States to ensure that they are providing the required information in time. The Secretary confirmed that there is an on-going permanent process of communication with the Member States to ensure that they provide information in the requested deadline of this strategy.

IX. Proposals for New Biosphere Reserves and Extensions/ Modifications/ Renaming to Biosphere Reserves that are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

183. In introducing this item, the Secretariat referred to document SC-19/CONF.231/8. It outlines that at its 25th meeting held in UNESCO Headquarter from 25 to 28 February 2019, the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IABCR) had examined 31 proposals, including 20 new proposals and 11 requests for extension/modification or rezoning of already existing biosphere reserves.

184. The MAB Bureau met in conjunction with the 31th session of the MAB-ICC. The members decided that for sites recommended for approval, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee be forwarded to the Council without any change.

185. In some cases, the Advisory Committee had recommended that further information be requested from Member States by 15 May 2019. The additional information received by the MAB Secretariat by that date was subsequently reviewed by the MAB Bureau. The MAB Bureau's recommendations thereon was reported orally and on the screens to the 31th MAB-ICC.

186. Taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves contained in SC-19/CONF.231/8 and the Bureau's further deliberations on 17 July 2018, the MAB-ICC took the following decisions:

A. New nominations

187. **Unteres Murtal / Lower Mura Valley (Austria).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

188. **Saleh-Moyo-Tambora 'SAMOTA' (Indonesia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

189. **Togean Tojo Una-Una (Indonesia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

190. **Po Grande (Italy).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

191. **Kobushi (Japan).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

192. **Gangwon Eco-Peace (Republic of Korea).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

193. **Yeoncheon Imjin River (Republic of Korea).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-18/CONF.230/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

194. **Lake Elton (Russian Federation).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

195. **Alto Turia (Spain).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

196. **La Siberia (Spain).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

197. **Valle del Gabriel (Spain).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and

endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

198. **Vindelälven-Juhtadahka (Sweden)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

199. **Voxnadalen (Sweden)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

200. **Isle of Wight (United Kingdom)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

201. **Julian Alps (Italy)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal from Italy. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request namely explanation on how the core areas from the Italian side are connected to the Slovenian ones and on the rationale for including the inhabited basins in the transition area. It also requested the authorities to address the technical questions raised by the Secretariat about the ongoing transboundary cooperation with Slovenia and the name of the proposed biosphere reserve.

202. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

203. **Lubombo (Kingdom of Eswatini)**. The MAB Council welcomed this first proposal from the country. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely:

- a list of all relevant land use plans and applicable management/cooperation plans; (including any listed in the bibliography) and copies of these documents;
- a list of all legal instruments relating to the establishment, use and management of the area and copies of legal instruments;
- a new zonation map clearly indicating the three characteristic biosphere reserve zones without the other local types of protected areas;
- shape files covering the proposed biosphere reserve area.

204. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site.

205. **Nordhordland (Norway)**. The MAB Council welcomed this first proposal from the country. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request namely more information on the zonation, notably the absence of buffer zones surrounding parts of the marine/lacustrine core areas, to be submitted by 15 May 2019. The Advisory Committee also requested more information on the impacts of offshore oil exploitation on the site.

206. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the site. It furthermore encouraged the authorities to take cultural diversity in the area into account in the community participation processes.

207. **Roztocze (Poland)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely further clarification of the zonation, including an explanation of the lack of buffering around some sections of the core area in the central part of the site. The Advisory Committee also requested additional information on the impact of tourism and agricultural activities taking place in the buffer zones and their influence on the adjacent core areas.

208. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the national site as well as the transboundary biosphere reserve **between Poland and Ukraine**.

B. Extension, rezoning or renaming of already existing biosphere reserves

209. **Archipiélago Juan Fernández Biosphere Reserve (former Parque Nacional Archipiélago de Juan Fernandez) (Chile), extension and renaming**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of already existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

210. **Laguna San Rafael y El Guayaneco Biosphere Reserve (former Laguna San Rafael) (Chile), extension and renaming**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

211. **Malindi Watamu Arabuko Sokoke Biosphere Reserve (Kenya), extension and renaming of former Malindi Watamu Biosphere Reserve**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

212. **Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea), extension**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site.

213. **Los Valles de Omaña y Luna Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension**. The MAB Council welcomed this extension of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site.

214. **Menorca Biosphere Reserve (Spain), extension**. The MAB Council welcomed this

extension of an existing biosphere reserve and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8 without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site.

215. **Galápagos Biosphere Reserve (former Archipiélago de Colón) (Ecuador), extension and renaming.** The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of an existing biosphere reserve. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely the submission of a clear zonation map with MAB terminology, as well as an explanation as to why the marine core area in the northwestern and eastern part of the biosphere is not surrounded by a buffer or transition area. The Advisory Committee also requested the authorities to submit a management plan or policy for the biosphere reserve, not just for the national park.

216. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

217. **Cuencas Altas de los Ríos Manzanares, Lozoya y Guadarrama Biosphere Reserve (former Cuenca Alta del Río Manzanares) (Spain), extension and renaming.** The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming of an existing biosphere reserve. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory Committee request, namely the submission of a management plan.

218. As the information received was satisfactory, the Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

C. New sites deferred

219. **El Pedregal del Sur, Ciudad de México (Mexico).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8. The MAB Council decided that this new nomination is **deferred**.

220. The Delegate of Mexico stated that this proposal is of great interest to Mexico, because the environment of the cities, too, should be a priority. It is an audacious proposal from the city itself. The authorities will take into consideration all recommendations, improve and resubmit it, because it is an important issue for BRs in Mexico.

221. **Lower Zambezi Escarpment (Zambia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed all the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8. The MAB Council decided that this new nomination **is deferred**.

222. **Yasuni Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador), extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8. The MAB Council decided that this extension **is deferred**.

223. The country has requested an extension until 30 September 2019 to present the new

zonation once socialized with the different actors. The MAB Bureau agrees for this new deadline and requests the authorities to send in addition to the new zonation, the final version of the draft rezonation file of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve.

224. **Tuchola Forest Biosphere Reserve (Poland), extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this extension. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8, the MAB Bureau took note that the additional information requested by the Advisory committee has not been provided.

225. The Council decided that the proposal for extension and renaming **is deferred**.

226. Poland responds that the relevant institutions were not able to collect the requested information within the deadline. It is hoped that they will be able to respond to the new deadline with the further clarification from the committee.

227. **Land of the Leopard Biosphere Reserve – extension and renaming of former Kedrovaya Pad Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The MAB Council welcomed this extension and renaming and welcomed the zonation map provided following the submission in 2018 of a request to rename this site to the Land of the Leopard Biosphere Reserve. It endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in document SC-19/CONF.231/8.

228. The Council decided that the proposal for extension and renaming **is deferred**.

229. The Delegate of the Russian Federation stated that the biosphere reserve is extended because it was recommended that more land needs to be conserved to protect the species. The Delegate was concerned by the fact that submitting a new nomination form will require time and translation of the documents.

D. Voluntary withdrawals

230. The MAB Secretariat had received letters for voluntary withdrawal from three sites: Bamingui Bangoran BR (Central African Republic), North-East Greenland (Denmark) and San Joaquin (USA).

231. With 18 new Biosphere Reserves approved by the MAB Council and the withdrawal of three Biosphere reserves, the WNBR counts now 701 Biosphere reserves in 124 countries including 21 transboundary sites. Two new countries joined the WNBR: the Kingdom of Eswatini and Norway.

X. Update on the MAB Communication Strategy and Action Plan

232. The representative of the Secretariat reminded the Council that at its last session in July 2018, the MAB Council unanimously adopted the global communication strategy and action plan of the Lima Action Plan, which are available online in English and French.

233. She reported on the implementation of this strategy and highlighted the success of the

one-minute videos #ProudToShare and the importance of producing these for each biosphere reserve. She noted that the videos can be viewed on the UNESCO YouTube channel and are also available on the revamped UNESCO MAB website. A number of newly produced movies were screened in the room.

234. The representative also reported on the efforts made by the Secretariat in partnership with private groups such as AXA and Abertis Foundation to raise the visibility of the MAB Programme and its WNBR through a poster exhibition mounted on the UNESCO fences. She informed the Council that the UNESCO/MAB AXA exhibition is currently on display at Hotel Matignon (French Prime Minister's Office) and that several posters may be displayed during the G7 meeting in August in France, as well as at other key international events.

235. She also indicated that in 2019 the Secretariat is planning several storytelling 'Train-the-trainer' sessions at the regional level including through regional network meetings in Europe, Africa and Asia, with support from colleagues in the field offices. The Secretariat is looking for support to translate the MAB Communication Strategy into Spanish as well as other languages.

236. The Secretariat also presented the layout for its new website and indicated that it is currently creating new pages for each biosphere reserve.

237. Several delegates (France, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Japan) took the floor to congratulate the Secretariat for its work and efforts and reiterated the importance of the above-mentioned videos. France emphasized the need for visibility at the forthcoming World IUCN Congress (June 2020) and at COP 15 in China (October 2020), and suggested that the MAB Programme secure its own pavilion for the WNBR at the IUCN World Congress. It further proposed a working group to explore this issue. France also congratulated the Secretariat for the exhibition it organized during the 7th IPBES plenary held at UNESCO Headquarters, as well as for the organization of International Biodiversity Day.

238. The Delegate of the United Kingdom requested that the Periodic Review reports (including reports recognised as by the Advisory Committee and the Council as model periodic review reports) and nomination forms be made available on the new website, as previously decided by the MAB Council at its 26th session, in line with the open access policy. This request was supported by the Delegate of Germany.

239. The Delegate of Japan informed the Council that it has translated the MAB Communication Strategy into Japanese.

240. The Secretariat thanked the Council for their positive comments and support. It indicated that the present shortage of staff and limited resources complicated the uploading of reports and forms to the website. It also indicated that it would inform Member States of the dates of forthcoming training sessions and provide UNESCO web links to access the videos.

XI. MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme

241. In his introductory remark to this item, the MAB Secretary highlighted the need to

mobilize appropriate long-term financial support for the MAB YSA Scheme and noted that the Secretariat is following-up in this regard.

242. The MAB Secretariat then presented the revised document SC-19/CONF-231/10 rev2 and explained the revisions accordingly.

1. Selection of the MAB Young Scientists Awards (MAB YSA)

243. The Secretariat received 48 eligible applications from 34 countries (Annex 1) through the respective MAB National Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO. Twenty of the applicants were women.

244. It explained briefly the selection procedure and informed the Council that the Bureau had selected the winners of the 2019 MAB Young Scientist Award (MAB YSA) in accordance with the revised criteria and conditions of the MAB Young Scientist Awards approved by the 29th session of MAB-ICC.

245. It notified the Council that the total sum of US\$ 30,000 available for the awards is usually distributed among six candidates. However, as in 2018, the amount will be distributed among seven candidates due to the fact that two candidates share 6th position. The amounts requested by the applicants are in some cases below the maximum amount per award of US\$ 5,000; however, the total amount of these seven applications is US\$ 30,350, slightly above the ceiling of US\$ 30,000. The MAB Secretariat will cover the difference accordingly.

246. The Delegate of Estonia offered some remarks and noted his appreciation of the opportunity to participate in the selection of MAB YSA as a member of the MAB Bureau. He stated that all the applications were very good – even those which were not selected – and showed that the essence of biodiversity and sustainable development was well understood by young scientists. Estonia felt that it would be interesting to look at the results and impacts of the projects selected over the last 10 years.

247. The MAB Council then endorsed the seven winners of the 2019 MAB Young Scientists Awards. The winners and the titles of their research studies are as follows:

POSITION	GENDER	SURNAME	NAME	COUNTRY	REGION	TITLE OF STUDY
1	M	JIMOH	Kazeem	Nigeria	AFR	Impact of the green economy in the biosphere reserve project (GEBR) as an alternative livelihood source on the poverty status of Omo Biosphere Reserve communities
2	F	MAMMADOVA	Aida	Japan	ASPAC	The role of Biosphere Reserves in 'creating' international eco-entrepreneurship possibilities for youth in micro-financed transition areas of Russian and Japanese BRs
3	F	ARDIATI	Fenny Clara	Indonesia	ASPAC	Isolation, screening and assessment of White Rot Fungi in 'Berbak and Sembilang' Biosphere Reserve for their potency in wastewater treatment
4	M	BARRIOS	Miguel David	Colombia	LAC	Ecological and population genetics approach for the conservation of seagrass ecosystems in the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve
5	F	SANTOS GARCIA	Andrea	Brazil	LAC	Mapping and assessing land degradation in Biosphere Reserves: towards sustainable development through governance opportunities

6/7	F	TOUJGANI	Ihssane	Morocco	ARAB	Caractérisation et valorisation des ressources génétiques locales du châtaignier commun (<i>Castanea sativa</i> MILL.) dans la réserve de biosphère intercontinentale de la Méditerranée
6/7	M	BARNES	Isaac Yaw	Ghana	AFR	Ghana 101: using story telling through a geo-story map to highlight the Bia River Biosphere Reserve's anthropogenic effect on community livelihood and adaptation

II. *Enhancement of the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme*

248. The second part of the document built on a concept note prepared by the MAB Secretariat for the project 'UNESCO MAB Young Scientists Awards: helping young people help the planet'. This note was presented at the 30th session of the MAB-ICC, held in 2018, and recommended adopting an integrated approach to increase the number of young scientists awarded and, at the same time, letting them engage in promotional and dissemination activities through various communication activities (conferences, video messages, posts, etc.).

249. The long-term goal of the proposed project is to provide young scientists with opportunities and capacities to conduct scientific studies and research in biosphere reserves that address the Lima Action Plan and contribute to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in order to strengthen biosphere reserves as 'sites of excellence' and 'learning sites for sustainable development'.

250. The 30th session of the MAB-ICC endorsed, in general, the concept note and encouraged the Secretariat to follow-up on the mobilization of appropriate funding for the MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme and to keep the Bureau well informed on progress in this regard.

251. In order to pursue the recommendations of the MAB-ICC, the Secretariat informed the Council that it had presented the concept note and undertaken initial discussions with potential donors/member states at several regional and sub-regional meetings, notably in the Asia and the Pacific region. It had received valuable inputs for the development of a project proposal for extrabudgetary financing of this Scheme, which will be presented to potential partners ideally by 30 September 2019.

252. The MAB Council was then invited to take note of the current status of an enhancement of the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme. In addition – and taking into account the 30-year existence of the MAB YSA Scheme – the Council was invited to suggest modalities to strengthen further the visibility of this Scheme, notably in the context of the MAB Strategy, the Lima Action Plan and contributions to implementation of the SDGs.

253. In this regard, the Delegate of the United Kingdom proposed the preparation of a scientific publication on the impacts of the MAB Young Scientists Awards over the last 30 years to be finalized by 2021 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme. Some recipients of the award could be mobilized for this event, in order to give a clear idea of the added value of scientific studies carried out on biosphere reserves.

254. The Delegate of the Republic of Korea supported the UK proposal and proposed that the summarized results of the studies of the MAB Young Scientists be published on the MAB

website, which is currently being restructured. It was also pointed out that although the titles of the awarded projects are presented to the MAB Council, the results of the research are not known.

255. The Delegate of the Russian Federation expressed his appreciation of the work of the MAB Secretariat regarding the selection of the MAB Young Scientists, and was pleased with the selection of projects. The Delegate emphasized the strong collaboration his country is developing with Japan through student exchanges. He also noted that the MAB Council had taken a decision a few years ago to invite the winners to present the results of the selected MAB Young Scientists.

256. The Delegate of Australia supported the proposals of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom, and felt that publishing some of the results of these studies could prove very interesting. He encouraged the Secretariat to contact a scientific journal that could dedicate a special issue to the impacts of these studies on biosphere reserves.

XII. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management

257. The Secretary introduced this item and explained to the Council that the Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve management, which was launched in 2004, pays tribute to one of the founders of the MAB Programme. This award is presented once every two sessions of the MAB Council. The selection process is highly competitive – this year, eight applications were submitted to the MAB Secretariat. The Chair invited Member States to continue promoting the award and to submit more applications for the next cycle.

258. Mr Jose Santiso (Spain) was the winner of the 2019 Michel Batisse Award for his case study on the 'Food plan of the Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo Biosphere Reserve as a tool for the creation of local employment, the promotion of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change'. Mr. Jose Santiso's presentation on the biosphere reserve was well received by the Council.

XIII. Implementation of the Lima Action Plan

259. The Chair invited the MAB Secretariat to introduce document SC-19/CONF.231/12 on the implementation of the Lima Action Plan. In its introduction, the MAB Secretariat referred to the online-2019 survey on LAP implementation and some of its tentative findings. The MAB Secretariat also presented briefly the new section on the revamped MABnet dedicated to sharing of experiences and good practices related to LAP implementation. The Secretariat noted that the survey was based on a self-assessment by some 114 MAB Stakeholders, the majority of which had indicated that they had made good progress in the implementation of the LAP. This in spite of the fact that they have experienced various implementation challenges, notably the lack of financial and human resources. The Secretariat was also of the opinion that the experiences and good practises derived from LAP implementation could be relevant in relation to the work on the technical guidelines and on promoting excellence. Finally, the Secretariat underlined the timeliness of the formal mid-term evaluation of the LAP foreseen for

late 2019, early 2020.

260. The Chair then invited a representative of the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) to outline the methodology and process foreseen for the mid-term evaluation of the MAB Programme and the LAP. The IOS representative explained that the mid-term evaluation will examine aspects such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of LAP. The evaluation will be conceptualised through a theory of change and operationalised through an evaluation matrix, which will indicate how the agreed evaluation questions will be addressed by appropriate research methods. In terms of timeline, the evaluation study will be ready in time before the next MAB-ICC and it will include consultations with MAB Bureau members as part of the evaluation reference group.

261. In the discussion that followed, the United Kingdom stressed the importance of achieving good response rates and that surveys tailor-made for all the different stakeholder groups would be key for this purpose. He also suggested in this context that MAB National Committees, regional networks and online platforms could be helpful in ensuring that questionnaires and surveys are available in relevant languages. The representative of France stressed that the 2019 survey was too long and that it lacked indicators and links with MAB's Communication Strategy and that he did not think any French biosphere reserves had responded. The Delegate of Australia inquired on possible explanations to changes in the 2019 survey results compared to those in 2018. He also commended IOS for an interesting and useful presentation, recalling that MAB could benefit from experiences of other evaluations and assessments. The representative of the Russian Federation mentioned that they had translated the LAP into the Russian language for enhanced impact. He also stressed the importance of giving stakeholders sufficient time to provide their responses. The Delegate of Viet Nam underlined that the LAP contains actions at the global, national and site levels, and that evaluations and surveys therefore need to reflect this in the formulation of their questions.

262. In response, the MAB Secretariat thanked delegates for their comments, questions and suggestions that would be reflected in future assessments. It underlined that the 2019 survey was based on self-assessments and that there were real limitations to the extent its results could be compared with those of the 2018 survey. Noting the importance of languages, response times and questions targeting the more than 20 stakeholder groups identified in the LAP, the MAB Secretariat welcomed further inputs from MAB National Committees wishing to provide concrete suggestions for improved survey design and response rates. The Secretariat also noted that good practises and case studies derived from LAP implementation indeed would feed into and be linked with the implementation of the MAB communication strategy. For its part, IOS also thanked the MAB-ICC for its feedback and suggestions, underlining that members of the MAB-ICC and its Bureau would be duly consulted in the course of the mid-term evaluation. The MAB-ICC Chair concluded the debate thanking delegates for their participation on the item saying all considerations expressed by the Council will be taking into account.

263. In the spirit of the vision and mission statement of the Lima Action Plan, a Panel on biosphere reserves' goods and services involving representatives from La Palma Biosphere Reserve (Spain), Appennino Tosco Emiliano Biosphere Reserve (Italy) and the MAB National Committee of Ghana was then held.

264. The Secretary introduced the panel and the topic for discussion.

265. Mr Antonio San Blas took the floor as the first speaker, introducing the La Palma Biosphere Reserve (Spain), located between three continents – associated with Africa, Latin America and Europe. He explained La Palma’s objective of generating value for local products and services. This requires strict protocols for branding and management.

266. He outlined procedures for associating products with the Biosphere Reserve, and the establishment and imposition of minimum standards of quality, origin, nature of production, etc. He took note of the very high quality of La Palma products, guaranteed through laboratory testing – for example of honey. This is significant when cooperating with commercial entities such as supermarkets, and to ensure that products are traceable when exported to other territories.

267. He then discussed the cost and organization of branding and labelling, and briefly outlined the 104 products currently in the market in Spain as well as in countries across Europe.

268. He then turned to services – in particular tourism, outlining the brands and types of services associated with the Biosphere Reserve. He outlined a network of companies and associations identified as “Friends of the Biosphere Reserve”, benefitting from and contributing to the biosphere reserve.

269. He closed by encouraging UNESCO to establish a formal brand/label for biosphere reserves that could be employed at the international level.

270. The Secretary responded that a UNESCO commercial brand would be impossible. He then invited Ms. Sheila Ashong, from the MAB National Committee from Ghana to speak.

271. Ms Ashong took the floor, outlining the outcomes of the Green Economies in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) project financially supported by the Republic of Korea. She presented Ghana’s three Biosphere Reserves, in particular the Bia Biosphere Reserve. She outlined the crops produced in the Biosphere Reserve, dominated by cocoa and oil palm, along with many smaller crops. She noted that local communities – many living in relative poverty - during the Biosphere Reserve’s early years resisted and entered into conflict management. The GEBR project sought to address the relationship between management and communities and to reinforce the logistical role of the biosphere reserve through research, monitoring and information sharing – and importantly, to develop new livelihood options for local communities. Beneficiaries were selected through a detailed selection procedure, with 232 beneficiaries selected for participation – with due consideration for equitable gender and age distribution.

272. She outlined the training provided to beneficiaries in activities such as enhanced palm oil processing, snail rearing, bee keeping, and mushroom cultivation. These activities were supplemented with other capacity building and training activities, sensitizing communities to the importance of conservation.

273. The Secretary then introduced the third speaker, Mr. Fausto Giovanelli (Italy).

274. Mr Fausto Giovanelli from the Appennino Tosco Emiliano Biosphere Reserve began by stressing the importance of developing a coherent national strategy for branding, such as is currently under development in Italy. He highlighted the attractiveness of the MAB label. He stressed his understanding that the MAB logo itself cannot be used for branding purposes, such logos must be developed at the local and/or national level.

275. He explained a trial process, through which three Biosphere Reserves (Appennino, Po Delta and Alpi Ledrensi Judicaria) underwent a period of testing and learning towards the formal establishment of associated brands. The authorization to use a local Biosphere Reserve logo in Italy resides with the Biosphere Reserve management authority. Each of the three Biosphere Reserves established a logo applied in accordance with a locally defined strategy with distinct mechanisms and regulations. He then proceeded to display a wide range of brand applications from the three sites – including a prepaid card with the Appennino logo.

276. He then proceeded to show a video demonstrating the progress achieved in Italy.

277. The Secretary closed the session, thanking all panelists and the audience, and inviting all to attend the Biosphere Reserve Goods and Services Fair adjacent to the meeting room.

XIV. Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR)

278. The MAB Secretariat introduced document SC-19/CONF.231/13 concerning Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (TGBR) and provided background information on its development. The decision to develop TGBR was taken by the 29th Session of the Council in 2017, while the MAB Bureau approved the TGBR terms of reference and roadmap during the 30th Session in 2018.

279. The Secretariat outlined the establishment and composition of the TGBR Working Group (WG) and its four thematic subgroups (TSGs). Following an extensive process including two calls for nominations, the WG was populated by experts taking into account the need for gender and regional balance. By November 2018, 70 experts from 33 countries had been identified, approximately representative of number of biosphere reserves in each region and with an average of 1/3 female members.

280. Four TSGs were established – on zonation, governance, management and policy and monitoring, respectively. The MAB Secretariat provided logistical support to facilitate communication, information sharing and virtual meetings of the TSGs. France contributed to the TGBR process by seconding an intern to MAB Secretariat to provide logistical support. A table of contents was assembled based on the contributions of the TSGs and the resulting draft outline agreed upon by the WG in September 2018. The Secretariat noted that a revised draft outline would now be presented to the 31st Session of the Council.

281. The TGBR development process met with a number of challenges for which corrective measures were identified by the Secretariat. Challenges included the lengthy expert nomination process, uneven regional representation, lower than expected participation by experts, the overall limited time available, technical difficulties related to time differences

between international experts and Internet access, the difficulty of harmonizing the document between the TSGs, as well as the lack of a common information base.

282. In response, the MAB Secretariat proposed to promote the use of case studies from under-represented regions. It invited experts to confirm their participation in the TGBRs to form a core of active experts, and conducted online surveys to estimate the best time slot for organizing virtual meetings, disseminated the minutes online, and set up collaborative spaces to overcome technical difficulties. With the help of experts, the Secretariat also gathered information and compiled a bibliography.

283. The Secretariat took note of the MAB Bureau's approval of the draft plan included in Annex III of document SC-19/CONF.231/13 rev. as a working document intended to evolve further with time. The Secretariat then expressed its intention to contract a consultant to draft the TGBR based on the draft outline, for consideration by the WG, the Advisory Committee and the MAB Bureau.

284. Following this, the Secretariat invited the Council to take note of the report and provide input to the draft outline, recalling that it is an evolving document, as well as to provide guidance to the work on the TGBR. The Secretariat also encouraged Member States to provide support towards the further development of the document. The MAB Secretariat then introduced the Annex III document for comments.

285. The Delegate of Australia referred to item 1.b.5 concerning IUCN classifications, expressing concern that the identification of biosphere reserves as protected areas could lead to the misunderstanding that biosphere reserves are mere protected areas – whereas they are in fact much more. Australia cautioned that care be taken not to cast biosphere reserves in this limited light and suggested that the paragraph be reworded for clarity on this matter. United Kingdom, Russia and Austria expressed agreement with this position.

286. The Delegate of the United Kingdom proposed that discussion be limited to the future process of developing the TGBR, rather than the content of the draft outline. France, Germany and Australia supported this statement, given the evolutionary nature of the document and the limited time available for debate in the Council.

287. The Delegate of South Africa expressed a measure of disagreement with the previous speakers, reminding the Council of the need to complete the TGBR by 2020. The delegation suggested that the Council proceed with a review of Annex III so that the TSGs would be able to continue their work with the Council's guidance. The Delegate of Estonia expressed agreement herewith, suggesting that the a deferral of discussion of content would risk leading to a one-year delay in finalizing the document, and expressing concern that the proposed process would risk lessening the current momentum of the TSGs.

288. The Chair reminded the Council of the draft nature of the document, and invited the Council to take note of and endorse the Bureau's decision.

289. The Delegate of France took the floor to request that the draft decision text be displayed. The Secretariat displayed the operational paragraphs, inviting the Council to:

- *Take note of this report and to provide inputs to the draft outline which is an evolutive working document*
- *Provide guidance to the work of the TGBR*
- *Encourage member states to provide support to the MAB Secretariat in developing the TGBR.*

290. The Delegate of France reminded the Council of the TGBR's nature as an evolving document that should neither be approved nor adopted but rather 'welcomed favorably' by the Council. France further took note that the draft outline in its present form was very broad, suggesting that further work be focused on the initial four clearly defined aspects. The Delegate again expressed his hesitation to go through the text in detail – considering its draft nature – and called for the text to evolve in accordance with the originally determined terms of reference.

291. The Delegate of Australia expressed its agreement with France, however suggested that the Council 'take note' of the report, rather than welcome it. Australia reiterated that the current outline was too descriptive, including information beyond the original remit, and noted the importance of ensuring that the consultant should be given clear information and guidance for the development of the draft, in a timely manner.

292. The Delegate of the United Kingdom recalled Australia's suggestion to set a deadline for comments on the current draft outline, suggesting that the Secretariat could compile the comments received and contact the TSGs to develop a new draft outline. This new outline would be part of the Terms of Reference for the consultant to further develop the TGBR, with input and detail provided by the Working Group. The result of this process would be an advanced draft of the TGBR submitted well in advance of the 32nd Council session. The United Kingdom reminded the Council that the guideline would by definition always be evolving in nature.

293. The Chair thanked the United Kingdom for its statement and invited the Secretary to respond.

294. The Secretary suggested that a new decision be prepared, in line with the suggestion made by the United Kingdom that:

1. the Council is invited to submit comments on the deadline by 31 July 2019;
2. the Secretariat then compiles and organizes the information received and shares with the four sub-groups by end-September;
3. virtual sub-group meetings and discussions are organized leading to a new, updated outline;
4. a consultant is recruited and a first draft TGBR document is prepared by end-November;
5. the draft TGBR document is shared with the Bureau and updated in advance of the Advisory Committee meeting;
6. a draft TGBR document is presented at the 32nd session of the Council.

295. The Delegate of the United Kingdom took the floor, expressing agreement with the Secretary – however asked that the Consultant prepare the draft in a series of thematic sections for the respective TSGs to review.

296. The Delegate of Honduras expressed agreement with the previous speakers on the need for an inclusive process, suggesting that a working session with the Permanent Delegations be organized at UNESCO Headquarters in order to ensure that Delegations and Members States be kept fully informed and engaged with the process.

297. Vietnam, Kenya, Guatemala and France expressed support for extending consultations with Member States beyond the members of the Council.

298. The Delegate of France reminded the Council of the purpose of the Guidelines, stating that it is not intended to replace or in any way change the Statutory Framework but rather is a living, technical document that by definition is bound to change. The Delegate stressed that the document – by its nature – should not be adopted by the Council. It should be considered as an ever-evolving resource.

299. The Chair took note that the intention of the TGBR is to assist members, and encouraged the Council to avoid delays. The Chair then presented a new, updated text for consideration by the Council. Several member states contributed to the adjustment of the text towards a wording agreeable to all, as follows:

The MAB-ICC takes note and recognizes the good work done by the working group to date.

Members of ICC are invited to submit comments on the draft outline by email by 31 July.

The MAB-ICC noted that:

Secretariat then will compile the comments and will work with the TSGs to finalize the outline and prepare the content of the guidelines in order to present them to 32nd ICC.

During this process, the Secretariat will organize an information meeting on the TGBR with the Permanent Delegations and report about progress made and take their comments

300. The Chair asked if the decision as listed could be adopted in its current form. There were no objections. The decision was adopted.

XV. MAB Youth Activities and MAB Forum 2019

301. The MAB Secretariat provided the Council with a report summarizing the main activities undertaken to engage more with youth since the 30th MAB-ICC held in Palembang, Indonesia, in July 2018, stressing the fact that many activities had been implemented since then at the national and regional levels, as reported by the Member States during the first day of the ICC. Two MAB Youth representatives, Alice Roth from France (one of the founders of Co'MAB, the French MAB Youth Association, involved in EuroMAB) and Rodrigo Lopez Piquin (from the Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo Biosphere Reserve, involved in IberoMAB) were invited to share their experience and report on MAB Youth related events in which they were involved as co-organizers.

302. The first IberoMAB Youth Forum brought together more than 90 young participants from the region in December 2018, and on the occasion of the EuroMAB meeting in Dublin,

Ireland, in April 2019, MAB Youth representatives from France, Italy and Spain took the initiative to organize 2 workshops dedicated to 'Empowering Youth & the MAB Youth Forum' (Progressing the objectives of the MAB Youth Forum, and strengthening opportunities for Youth empowerment through involvement in the governance & management of biospheres) and 'Best practices in engaging young people' (Case studies to inspire each other). In both their interventions, the youth representatives from France and Spain stressed the fact that all MAB Youth activities organized during the last year are a demonstration of youth's will to be involved in the MAB programme (not only in events having youth as a target) and represented in MAB instances and in the governance of biosphere reserves, in order to let them participate in the decision making processes that are directed to them.

303. They expressed their need for specific 'structures' (organized networks at national and regional levels) and tools (platforms for exchanges) to allow them to play such an active role in local, national and international contexts, making sure that their needs and capacities are well taken into consideration.

304. They expressed their appreciation for efforts made by MAB National Committees and the Secretariat to involve them more effectively, and they showed great interest in participating actively in any further event and activity that would allow them to promote exchanges and to further engage in joint actions for the benefit of the entire MAB Programme.

305. The Secretariat finally announced the organization of the 2019 MAB Youth Forum, which will be hosted by the Changbaishan BR in China between 15 and 19 September 2019. This biosphere reserve will generously support its organization together with the UNESCO Beijing Office and the Chinese MAB National Committee. The 2019 MAB Youth Forum will be a starting point in a process to involve more concretely MAB Youth in the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP 15), to be held in China, in October 2020, let them elaborate their contribution to its debates and foster their commitment to the realization of the future they want, being actors of change in their territories. To this end, a partnership will be developed with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), the only officially recognized coordination platform for youth participation in the negotiations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

306. In the debate that followed, Members of the Council expressed appreciation for these developments. The Delegate of Indonesia expressed full support to increased participation of youth in the MAB Programme and its WNBR, considering that forums and other activities represent a unique opportunity to exchange and collaborate. The Delegate of Germany thanked the young representatives for their inspiring words, and the Secretariat for all the work done on youth engagement which are very encouraging for them while undertaking to organize the first German-speaking youth forum in September 2019 (Rhön Biosphere Reserve). She reported that German BR's youth is very engaged in associations implementing actions on various topics relevant to Biosphere reserves, and announced that they would soon nominate their participant to 2019 MAB Youth Forum in China. She also warmly welcomed the idea of joining forces with Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), considering their long experience in representing youth in the CBD, from which MAB Youth could learn a lot on how to let them have impact at higher level.

307. The Delegate of France confirmed their strong engagement with youth, having

stimulated the creation of Co'MAB, the MAB Youth Association fully integrated into MAB France. She explained how they supported young representatives to attend various national (National MAB Youth Forum in the Luberon BR) and international events (including the recently held EuroMAB meeting in Ireland, or the world congress of IUCN in 2020). She expressed great appreciation for the involvement of GYBN and the concrete perspective of involving MAB Youth in CBD related activities, and offered to cooperate more closely with the Chinese MAB National Committee and its network of Biosphere reserves on youth engagement.

308. The Delegate of Kenya strongly supported any activity aimed at engaging more with youth, considering in particular the importance of attracting and involving people from all ages in our activities. He also thanked Germany for supporting young volunteers from German Biosphere reserves to cooperate with Kenyan Biosphere reserves. He finally recommended a more systematic use of social medias to attract the interest of more youth and make MAB Youth activities more visible.

309. The Delegate of Honduras stressed the importance of having young people involved in biosphere reserve management, in the perspective of strengthening intergenerational cooperation and solidarity. There is in this view a need for training to foster cultural aspects and support entrepreneurship. He, therefore, confirmed their engagement to strengthen the participation of youth in their activities.

310. The Delegate of Australia congratulated the MAB Youth representatives for their messages, their energy and commitment to engage more with the MAB Programme, from their very practical perspective. He expressed his concern concerning their exposure to the reality of the CBD and its mechanisms, considering that it has failed in reaching so far various targets. He therefore suggested considering to engage more with them on issues related to climate change, taking into account the particular sensitivity to these issues showed by youth all across the globe. He also recommended that, in order to have a greater impact within the CBD, MAB Youth representatives should be encouraged to enter into contact and work with their National Delegations to the CBD, raising the profile and relevance of the MAB experience and its biosphere reserves in such contexts, and inspiring them to work differently.

311. In his reaction to the point made by Australia, the Delegate of France expressed his support to the comments made on the CBD, even if the real questions is not to have a greater impact on an event, but to consider seriously what will happen afterward, in terms of transformative actions. He shared with Australia the conviction that the MAB Programme should have a greater impact in such contexts and debates, considering in particular that the biosphere reserve concept innovated decades ago on issues, which are now proposed as possible innovations such as the "other effective area-based conservation measures" (OECMs) as proposed by the CBD. There is an interest, therefore, to be present in these debates and to engage in possible follow-up actions, as we have already many such sites that could be designated as OECMs.

312. The Delegate of South Africa reported on the many activities there are developing with youth, which will include the organization of a National MAB Youth Forum later this year. He also reported on the establishment of a WhatsApp group as a very effective tool to interact and engage more with youth, and inviting the Secretariat to consider the possibility to develop and support similar tools at the international level.

313. The Secretariat mentioned that there is much the Member States could do by themselves, support more MAB youth to engage, also from private sponsors, in the 2019 MAB Youth Forum and further activities.

314. The Secretariat thanked all representatives for their contribution to the debate and for supporting MAB Youth related activities, inviting the audience to take inspiration from the good and innovative practices of some of the Member States like France, Spain, South Africa, Germany and others. More practical information related to the 2019 MAB Youth Forum will be disseminated in the following days, and Member States were requested to actively contribute to the identification and involvement of MAB Youth from their respective networks, with financial support when and where possible, also from private sources (like Abertis) when available.

XVI. Date and venue of the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC

315. The MAB Secretariat informed that it had consulted the UNESCO Legal Affairs Department, following the request of France, to find out whether a MAB Council could be held outside UNESCO Headquarters in Paris when making decisions about the Exit Strategy.

316. According to the International Standards and Legal Affairs Department, the MAB Council session must be held at UNESCO Headquarters when decisions concerning changes in Statutes or Rules of Procedure of the Council are made. Since the decisions concerning the Exit Strategy are of technical character, they can be made anywhere the MAB Council is held.

317. The Chair then invited Member States to propose hosting the next Council session.

318. The Delegate of Nigeria took the floor and recalled that at the 30th session of the MAB-ICC held in Indonesia in July 2018, the country proposed to host the 32nd session of the Council. Since then, the country has been preparing for this event, which has never been held in Africa. Nigeria felt it was important to support Africa, a developing continent, and renewed its offer to host the next MAB-ICC.

319. Delegates of South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Kenya, Russia, Slovakia, Australia, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and Sweden expressed support to Nigeria's proposal with brief statements.

320. Delegates of France and Australia requested clarification on where exactly to hold the next MAB-ICC in Nigeria. The Delegate of France requested to take into account, the dates of international meetings in June and July 2020, including the IUCN World Congress and the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP).

321. The MAB Secretary then responded that as per practice the Secretariat will verify and ensure that there will be no other major meetings overlapping with the 32nd session of MAB-ICC (i.e. World Heritage Committee meeting, IUCN, CBD, etc.).

322. The Council adopted unanimously to hold the 32nd session of MAB-ICC in Nigeria.

323. After the screening of a short video, the Delegate of Nigeria expressed— on behalf of the Government of Nigeria and his own – a gratitude to the MAB-ICC for agreeing to hold the next Council in Nigeria. He stressed that his country's willingness to host this Council is based on a commitment to share experiences and reciprocity in the cooperation strengthened within the framework of the MAB Programme. He emphasized that Nigeria plays an active role in the MAB Programme in Africa, having chaired the AFRIMAB network for the last four years. Nigeria intends to seize the opportunity of the 32nd session of the MAB-ICC to enhance the visibility of the MAB Programme in Africa. The Delegate pointed out that Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN), MAB's focal institution in Nigeria and responsible for the 32nd MAB-ICC organization, is a Center of Excellence in Africa. The Center successfully organized the 5th AFRIMAB General Assembly in 2017. The Delegate of Nigeria re-confirmed that the next MAB-ICC will be held in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, which has all the facilities required to host international meetings. He added that Abuja is known for its stable security situation and will be delighted to welcome the next MAB-ICC in an atmosphere of serenity.

324. The Chair thanked to the MAB-ICC members for taking a decision and furthermore, pointed out that it is well in line with UNESCO Global priority on Africa.

XVII. Other matters

325. The Delegate from Australia asked the Chair to make a short observation. Being aware that this could be seen as special pleading, he made it very general not to open a Pandora's box.

326. The next MAB-ICC will make the final decisions under the Exit Strategy, and it is hoped that every biosphere reserve under that strategy will submit a report by 30 September this year to allow the IACBR consider its very important recommendations for the next meeting via the Bureau. Those recommendations should, of course, be in conformity with previous Council decisions.

327. However, the Australian Delegate is aware there may be a very small number of biosphere reserves, which have significant control over, ownership of, or are lived in by indigenous peoples that may not be able to finalise their future plans sufficiently, yet show a strong direction of travel towards conforming. Therefore, he simply wishes to ask that Council Members reflect on this possibility and be prepared to be as flexible as prudence allows at the next Council meeting.

328. Finishing his remarks, he expressed congratulations to the Chair on her chairpersonship of this meeting, the excellent support provided by the Secretariat, and of course the tireless work of the interpreters.

329. The Delegate of Austria informed that it would host the next EuroMAB network conference in 2021. On this occasion, and as a contribution to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the international MAB Programme, Austria will launch a specific scientific publication on biosphere reserves. Furthermore, Austria intends to involve more young people in the EuroMAB conference.

330. The Delegate of the United Kingdom agreed with Australia's remarks. It further

informed on a book, the first on Biosphere Reserves to be published later this year outside UNESCO publications. It reminded a flyer on this book having been available to the MAB-ICC participants and indicated that this book may serve as a useful contribution to the TGBR.

331. The Delegate of France reminded the motion made by France on the new Biodiversity strategy and presented in Palembang in 2018. It stressed the importance of highlighting the contribution of the MAB Programme to the conservation of biodiversity at international events such as COP15. France also pointed out the need to identify strong actions to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the MAB Programme and reflect the best way on how to celebrate.

332. Russia also supported the Australian proposal and thanked the MAB Secretariat. It recalled the importance of promoting transboundary cooperation.

333. In its responses, the MAB Secretary first thanked Nigeria for its wonderful proposal to host the next MAB Council and pointed out that a preparation will start immediately.

334. The Secretary reassured Russia that a great importance is continuously given to transboundary cooperation.

335. With regard to the 50th anniversary celebration of the MAB Programme, the Secretary mentioned that the Secretariat will make concrete proposals at the next MAB Council in Abuja. He also indicated that the proposals of the MAB Council members are highly welcome. The Secretary recalled the importance that the Director-General of UNESCO and Assistant Director General for Natural Sciences attach to the MAB Programme and mentioned a full support.

336. The Secretary then informed on a draft report having been distributed for a discussion and adoption.

XVIII. Adoption of the Report

337. Ms Johanna MacTaggart (Sweden), Rapporteur of the Council, presented the draft report of its 31th session to the Members and Observer Delegations section by section, and paragraph by paragraph where appropriate. A small number of modifications, additions and deletions introduced by delegations were noted.

338. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed during the review of the report on 20 June 2019, the last day of the 31th session of the Council.

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International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Thirty-first session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room II (Fontenoy Building)
17 – 21 June 2019

ITEM 8 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Periodic Review Reports and Follow-Up Information Received since the last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC) Meeting

1. Since the last MAB Council in July 2018, the Secretariat received 25 reports and 32 follow-up information from 25 countries , including 34 reports and follow-up from 11 countries as implementation of the Excellence Process.
2. The Secretariat also received a letter from the Greenland Biosphere Reserve from Denmark, concerned by the Excellence process, for voluntarily withdrawal.
3. During its meeting held from 25 to 28 February 2019 in Paris, the Members of the Advisory Committee reviewed these periodic review reports and follow-up to the previous MAB Council recommendations. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on each of these sites are included in the Annexes I and II of this document. These recommendations have been transmitted to the concerned Member States for follow-up and any additional information provided by 15 May 2019 will be examined by the MAB Council and its Bureau at its thirty-first session.
4. The MAB ICC Bureau at its meeting last June 2017 adopted the Excellence Process. The Advisory Committee indicated clearly in the recommendations the deadline for submission of additional information to align with this strategy with specific timeline for sites concerned, and to inform the countries accordingly.
5. The Secretariat will prepare a colour table, which will summarize the results of these recommendations, so the Council can take its decision (green colour for sites that meet the criteria; red colour for sites that do not meet the criteria; pink colour for sites that are recommended for withdrawal; blue colour for sites for which more information is requested).
6. The MAB Council is invited to consider and endorse the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, including the suggested changes to be proposed by the MAB Bureau during its meeting during the 31st Council session.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Man and
the Biosphere
Programme

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Annex 1. EXAMINATION OF PERIODIC REVIEW REPORTS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Country	Name of the site	Comments
ARGENTINA	Pereyra Iraola	
AUSTRALIA	Noosa	
BRAZIL	Espinhaço Range	
	Mata Atlantica	
CAMEROON	Bénoué	Excellence process
	Dja	Excellence process
	Waza	Excellence process
CANADA	Mont Saint Hilaire	
CHINA	Dingushan	Excellence process
	Qomolangma	
	Xingkai Lake	
GUATEMALA	Maya	Excellence process
GUINEA	Badiar	Excellence process
	Haut Niger	Excellence process
	Monts Nimba	Excellence process
	Ziama	Excellence process
KYRGYZSTAN	Issyk-Kul	Excellence process Official letter confirming that PR to be submitted by 30-09-2019 as per decisions of 29th MAB-ICC
MEXICO	Huatulco	
	Laguna Madre y Delta del Rio Bravo	
	Los Tuxtlas	
	Sierra de Alamos – Rio Cuchujaqui	
MONGOLIA	Mongol Daguur	
NICARAGUA	Bosawas	Excellence process
	Rio San Juan	Excellence process
SOUTH AFRICA	Kogelberg	Letter received asking for delay

1. **Pereyra Iraola Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Pereyra Iraola Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The reserve is located between the municipalities of La Plata and Berazategui on the banks of the Río de la Plata in the northeastern part of Buenos Aires Province in Argentina. It is the last protected area of the original riverside ecosystem and home to the greatest biological diversity in the province.

2. There have been no changes to the size of the area (10,248 ha) or the population (2,620 inhabitants) since the designation of the biosphere reserve.

3. A Management Plan for the Punta Lara Natural Reserve for the period 2018-28 has been submitted. The Punta Lara Natural Reserve forms the core area of the biosphere reserve. However, a Management Plan for the entire biosphere reserve has not been supplied.

4. Over the last 10 years, the governance of the territory changed. A management agreement was signed between the new provincial authority of the territory (OPDS) and the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs that formalized an administrative management framework. The agreement established guidelines setting out which sectors were to be administered by the state agencies. The biosphere reserve does not have a Management Committee or a Management Plan.

5. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide** whether the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

6. The Advisory Committee therefore requests that the authorities submit by 30 September 2019:

- a new zonation that protects better the core area, including a proper buffer zone;
- an overall Management Plan for the entire biosphere reserve;
- information on how the participation of stakeholders will be secured in the biosphere reserve;
- confirmation of the creation of a stakeholder-based Management Committee for the site.

7. **Noosa Biosphere Reserve (Australia).** The Advisory Committee commended the Australian authorities on the submission of the first Periodic Review of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve (NBR), which was designated in 2007. The biosphere reserve is located in South East Queensland, Australia and encompasses the entire Shire of Noosa.

8. The site has 55% vegetation cover with many beaches, coastal headlands and hinterland areas. It is one of several biodiversity 'hotspots' on the east coast of Australia, where tropical and temperate land zones overlap. It has diverse ecosystem types. The local indigenous people have a close relationship with the land and waterways within the NBR.

9. The total area of the biosphere reserve increased from 93,446 ha (terrestrial 87,593 ha, marine 5,853 ha) to 110,728 ha (terrestrial 86,978 ha, marine 23,750 ha) as a result of the extension of marine areas up to 5.5 km from the coast. The core area increased from 24,870 ha to 42,282 ha as a result of the growth of a land protected area which now accounts for 36.5% of the land of Noosa Shire, while the terrestrial buffer zone and transition area were reduced accordingly.

10. The total population has increased slightly to 54,033 people by a rate of about 1% per year, while the general regional product increased by about 1% per annum due to increased revenues from both the tourism and non-tourism sectors. Noosa is a popular holiday destination for both domestic and international visitors.

11. A NBR Management Plan (2009-2012) was developed by various representatives of the community sector boards; the plan is currently under review.
12. Vegetation cover reduced slightly over the last 10 years and some native species such as koala declined, especially in urban areas. Pest species, especially feral animals, have affected wildlife. Key threats to the Noosa Biosphere Reserve were identified as climate change, weeds and pest species, vegetation clearing, habitat fragmentation and degradation processes.
13. Recent, major funded research areas include the restoration of fish, the restoration of koala populations and habitats, the development of local food and the management of tourism.
14. The NBR authorities actively monitor the health of various ecosystems and the richness of biodiversity within the reserve. In addition, monitoring is currently carried out on various variables of abiotic environmental factors and socio-economic factors.
15. The Advisory Committee noted that one of the objectives of the NBR is Zero Emission Noosa, and encouraged the authorities to continue their efforts to reach this goal.
16. Since plants and animals move across administrative boundaries, the Committee recommended communication and cooperation with neighbouring shires of Noosa. With regard to the conservation of migrating birds, the Committee encouraged the NBR to look for opportunities for cooperation with key stopover sites in Asia.
17. The Advisory Committee commended efforts to deal with feral animals that present major threats to biodiversity conservation and encouraged the authorities to share their research results and experiences with other biosphere reserves suffering from the same problems.
18. The Committee noted with satisfaction the successful Registration of Kabi Kabi First Nation as Native Title Claimants (traditional owners) of the entire biosphere reserve area.
19. The Advisory Committee commended the national and Noosa BR authorities for their efforts in the preparation of this high-quality Periodic Review report. The Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the statutory framework of the WNBR.
20. **Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Espinhaço Range Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2005.
21. The document in question does not follow the structure of a Periodic Review and was submitted in Portuguese. A huge increase in zonation is proposed that would expand the total surface area from about 3 million ha to 10 million ha.
22. The last Periodic Review submitted in 2016 met the criteria. The Advisory Committee therefore recommends that the authorities submit a request for an extension of the biosphere reserve using an official document format (Periodic Review or Nomination file) found on the MAB website in one of the three official UNESCO MAB languages, and explain the feasibility

of the extension and cooperation with neighbouring biosphere reserves in relation to the planned extension.

23. **Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1993. The biosphere reserve is the largest in the world, and covers significant areas of the Atlantic Forest which stretches across 13 states, the State of Minas Gerais and 12 coastal states (from Ceará to Rio Grande do Sul).

24. The document in question does not follow the structure of a Periodic Review and was submitted in Portuguese. A new zonation is mentioned, as part of 'Fase 7', which would lead to an increase of 10 million ha resulting in a total area of 89 million ha.

25. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide** whether the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

26. The Advisory Committee therefore requests that the authorities submit a request for an extension of the biosphere reserve using an official document format (Periodic Review or Nomination file) found on the MAB website in one of the three official UNESCO MAB languages.

27. **General recommendations to the Cameroon national authorities:**

28. On 6 February 2018, the authorities of Cameroon indicated to the MAB Secretariat, that they were continuously implementing the measures to address the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB ICC on the Periodic Reviews regarding Cameroon's three biosphere reserves (Dja, Bénoué and Waza), which all fall under the "Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR".

29. The Advisory Committee noted that the MAB Secretariat has not received follow-up reports for all three sites. It has therefore requested the national authorities to provide a follow-up for each site by 30 September 2019. The Advisory Committee expressed its concern regarding the lack of communication on the part of Dja Biosphere Reserve.

30. **Bénoué Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** Since 2016, the authorities have been involved in a process to revise the Management Plan for the protected area, with the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ). As a result of this process, a new zonation of the Bénoué National Park, which is compatible with the three functions of a biosphere reserve, should arrive in a timely manner.

31. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers to the national authorities its' technical assistance to elaborate produce the requested documents that are requested.

32. **Dja Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** As part of the ongoing review, the authorities have promised to correct inconsistencies in the Management Plan, identified during the 29th session of the ICC, concerning the description of the zoning. The new nomination form to be

sent by the authorities as soon as possible will include all annexes as well as the zonation, in accordance with the requirements of a biosphere reserve.

33. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers to the national authorities its' technical assistance to elaborate produce the requested documents that are requested.

34. **Waza Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** As a follow up the 28th MAB ICC recommendations, the authorities informed that the core areas of the Waza Biosphere Reserve fall exclusively under the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF), while the buffer zone is under participatory management following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the local stakeholders and the MINFOF. The zoning, consistent with biosphere reserves scheme and socio-economic data, will be updated after completion of the project 'Securing Local Livelihoods for the Sustainable Development of Waza National Park and its Peripheral Zone' which is implemented by MINFOF and IUCN. The authorities underline that the site is under threats of terrorists groups.

35. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers to the national authorities its' technical assistance to elaborate produce the requested documents that are requested.

36. **Mont Saint-Hilaire (Canada), extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the third Periodic Review (the first and second were in 1997 and 2008, respectively) of Mont Saint-Hilaire Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1978. Mont Saint-Hilaire was the first Canadian biosphere reserve.

37. Over the last 40 years, more than 400 scientific articles have been produced about the biosphere reserve, with McGill University the main scientific partner in this regard. In addition, new technologies (digital tablets and other innovative geomatic tools such as ArcGIS Online) have been introduced to provide tools adapted to the visitors and partners of various projects.

38. The Advisory Committee noted that the priority objective was to increase the protected areas of the site. The total area has increased fivefold from 56.5 km² (~30,000 inhabitants) to 293.7 km² (~44,000 inhabitants). The extension was initiated in 2010 and thereafter a new zonation was proposed to increase the conservation and protection functions in relation to the transition area. The core area increased from 500 ha (2007) to 1,053 ha (2010) and finally to 1,396 ha (2017). The buffer zone increased from 600 ha (2007) to 3,181 ha (2010) and finally to 4,530 ha (2017) ha – a sevenfold increase.

39. In a context of rising population, increasing urbanization and urban sprawl, these conservation gains were made possible thanks to the collaboration and sensitization of the elected officials, owners and other actors in the territory.

40. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the commitment of the Reserve Management Team with regard to long-term assignments. Over the last 10 years, low turnover has enabled the development of varied expertise and the ability to share this with the biosphere reserve's partners. The Advisory Committee also acknowledged the attachment of stakeholders

(citizens, businesses or organizations) to the territory, with 2,400 volunteer hours logged per year – a clear sign of support and citizen involvement in the area.

41. The Advisory Committee took note of the five steps carried out during the Periodic Review process:

- Collection, processing and analysis of data relating to the updating of the components of the site (mapping and zoning, ecosystem services, conservation programmes, economic activities, resources and logistical support activities, etc.)
- Strategic analysis and review of the biosphere reserve interventions
- Formal renewal of support for designation
- Site visit and meeting of partners by the external review committee
- Deliberations of the Canadian MAB National Committee, recommendations and production of the final report.

42. The Advisory Committee also took note of the four recommendations for the future that were formulated, including one scenario where the site would enlarge not only to the East, but also to the North, connecting with the territory of the Lake Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve.

43. The Advisory Committee welcomed this comprehensive, well-prepared and detailed Periodic Review report, recommended to approve the extension of the biosphere reserve and concluded that the site **meets** the criteria. The Advisory Committee expressed its congratulations to the management team on the expansion of the site and its close cooperation with the stakeholders. The Committee also expressed its appreciation for information received about prospective work for the future of the site, including two scenarios for future expansion.

44. **Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve (China).** This site falls under the ‘Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR’.

45. The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities for the submission of the revised second Periodic Review report, together with a new zonation map, produced in response to recommendations from the review of the second Periodic Review report, which was evaluated at the 30th ICC in 2018.

46. The previous extent of the biosphere reserve matched the territory of the Dinghushan Nature Reserve, covering a total area of 1,133 ha. After the revised zonation, the total area was increased by about five times to 5,123 ha, following consideration of the ecological, environmental and socio-economic situation and consultation with stakeholders including the Zhaoqing Municipal People’s Government, the Zhaoqing Forestry Bureau and Jilongding Nature Reserve, and the three surrounding local communities.

47. Under the new zonation, the core area remains unchanged, but the new buffer zone includes the original buffer zone and most of the areas of the Jilongding Nature Reserve. The new transition area includes the original transition area, the transition area of the Jilongding

Nature Reserve and the three local communities. Under the proposed expanded biosphere reserve, the total population will increase from 100 to 12,044.

48. This biosphere reserve has been very active in conservation, research, and education and training. The Advisory Committee believes that this expansion of the biosphere reserve will encourage diverse activities for sustainable development including ecotourism.

49. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts of Chinese authorities in revising the Periodic Review report and establishing the new zonation and associated management structures. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Chinese authorities avoid mass tourism and develop a good model of ecotourism which can be beneficial to biodiversity conservation and the local economy. It also recommended more active involvement on the part of local people and other stakeholders in activities and the decision-making process.

50. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recommended the Chinese authorities to establish a new comprehensive management plan covering the new areas based on the submitted Zonation, Management Coordination Mechanism and Development Plan of this extended biosphere reserve. It also encouraged them to monitor various ecological and socio-economic variables in order to prepare the next Periodic Review report in 10 years.

51. The Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the extension of the biosphere reserve and concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR. The Advisory Committee requested an updated management plan by 30 September 2019.

52. **Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee commended the Chinese authorities on the submission of the first Periodic Review for the Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve. It noted that the Periodic Review should have been conducted in 2014, but acknowledged that the process was unavoidably delayed due to the earthquake in Nepal, which caused a great number of deaths, toppled many houses and damaged roads in the biosphere reserve.

53. The Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve covers a large area more than 7,400 metres above sea level. It has a distinct vertical distribution of ecosystems ranging from lower altitudes to higher alpine altitudes. Local residents traditionally engaged mainly in agriculture and husbandry, manufacturing and production (silverware, forest products, etc.), with only a handful of local residents involved in tourism. Following its accession to the WNBR, a number of other industries have developed in the biosphere reserve, with local residents practising more diverse livelihoods. Tourism, border trade, business, ethnic arts and crafts, and labour have become the main sources of income. This change has alleviated resource depletion and promoted the conservation of wildlife and forests.

54. The People's Government of Shigatse City administers the site and nominates the administrative officers of the Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve Management Bureau. The operation of the reserve falls under the supervision of the competent forestry agencies of the Central Government, the government of the autonomous region and the People's Government of Shigatse City.

55. There are 4 counties, 31 towns and 292 administrative villages in the reserve. The total population was 88,938 in 2000 and 97,705 in 2016.
56. The core areas cover a land area of 1,032,500 hectares and the buffer zones cover 625,300 hectares. These areas are key biodiversity conservation areas. Direct development activities are prohibited in these areas, with the exception of research and monitoring. The transition area covers a land area of 1,724,100 ha and is the site of experiments and learning activities carried out by people using natural resources in a sustainable manner. In this zone, the local communities and other stakeholders agree to work together to manage and use the area in sustainable ways that will benefit those who live there.
57. The Advisory Committee noted that Qomolangma Biosphere Reserve Management Bureau has established close relations with local communities and has invited local residents to participate in the management of the reserve. Furthermore, it noted the submission of management plan for the biosphere reserve.
58. The Committee encouraged the Chinese authorities to use cultural diversity and traditional knowledge for the conservation of biodiversity. It further encouraged them to exert greater effort to monitor biodiversity and research the impacts of climate change in this regard. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the Chinese authorities to utilize ecotourism to improve the livelihoods of local people.
59. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of statutory framework of WNBR.
60. **Xingkai Lake Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the first Periodic Review for Xingkai Lake Biosphere Reserve.
61. The site is situated in the Xingkai Lake Basin. The west side of the site borders Mt. Laoye in the Changbai Mountain Range and the east side borders the Sikhote-Alin Range in the Russian Federation.
62. The Xingkai Lake Wetland was added to the List of Important International Wetlands in 2002 and designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2007.
63. The total area of the reserve is 298,985 ha with a core area of 57,454 ha, a buffer zone of 7,923 ha and a transition area of 233,808 ha.
64. The Xingkai Lake Community-based Co-management Committee was established with a view to ensuring the inclusion of neighbouring communities in the development, planning and management of the reserve.
65. Local communities within the reserve work mainly on Xing kaihu Farm, Xing kaihu Aquaculture Company and Baipaozi Township. “Xing kaihu” brand rice has been labelled as one of China’s organic products. The farm’s annual production of aquatic products reaches 200 tonnes, and its paper mill exports six products to 21 countries and regions including Canada and Japan.

66. There are 691 plant species in the biosphere reserve. The site is also home to wild animals including 414 species of vertebrates, among which are 40 species of mammals, 289 species of birds, 8 species of reptiles, 7 species of amphibians, 2 species of cyclostomata and 68 species of fish.

67. The Joint Protection Committee of Xingkai Lake Reserve, a co-management organization, was set up to incorporate the development of surrounding communities into the development plan of the reserve.

68. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts of Chinese authorities on the conservation of wetlands and the restoration of degraded areas. It recommended the creation of specific policies on tourism management and the elaboration of a comprehensive management plan

69. However, the Advisory Committee recognized that the buffer zones are relatively small (about 3% of the total area), and are mostly composed of a thin linear strip. It also noticed that the buffer zone and the transition area are not easily discerned. In addition, it found a discrepancy in data in the core areas.

70. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

71. By 15 May 2019, the Committee requests the Chinese authorities to:

- justify how sufficient buffering functions are fulfilled in all core areas, and if they are not, consider rezonation to increase buffer zones
- submit a revised zonation map that shows a clear distinction between the buffer zone and the transition area
- correct a discrepancy in the data on the core area.

72. The Committee encouraged the authorities to cooperate more closely with the neighbouring Khankaiskiy Biosphere Reserve of the Russian Federation, which shares the same lake, and to examine the possibility of establishing a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

73. **Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

74. The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1990. The Maya Biosphere Reserve is located in the Petén region of northern Guatemala and, together with the Maya Forest of Belize and Mexico, represents one of the largest areas of tropical forest north of the Amazon and the northernmost tropical forest in the Western Hemisphere.

75. The submitted zonation map is not clear and has not employed the official terminology specified by the Statutory Framework. The total surface area covers 2,090,000 ha, and approximately 175,000 inhabitants live in the biosphere reserve of which 15% reside in the core area. In the description of activities that have taken place over the last 20 years, the

authorities state that without the designation, a large amount of protected area would probably have been lost quickly. A Management Plan was submitted and a Management Committee has been established.

76. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

77. The Advisory Committee therefore requests a new zonation map with the proper MAB terminology, according to the zonation defined in the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

78. **General comments for Guinea:** The Advisory Committee commended the Guinean authorities for completing the periodic review process and sending the reports of their biosphere reserves, as well as their efforts to comply with the requirements of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement within time.

79. **Badiar Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the second Periodic Review for the Badiar Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2002. The reserve is located in the northern part of Guinea along the boundary with Senegal and consists of forests. It has a current core area of 101,064 ha, a buffer zone of 89,058.5 ha and a transition area of 314,877.5 ha. The area is inhabited by nearly 130,205 people and is home to many species of birds and mammals including chimpanzee.

80. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the updated zonation map and documents with annexes, as well as for the participatory approach used to produce the Periodic Review.

81. The Advisory Committee noted the investment in improving pools infrastructure and tourist observation points, which promote scientific and historical achievements as well as development actions for local communities.

82. The Advisory Committee noted that two of the three core areas in the northern part of the biosphere reserve, which are both national parks, are not delineated by a buffer zone to effectively ensure their long-term conservation.

83. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) and requested the authorities to provide, by 30 September 2019, a new zonation map and a rationale as to why there is no formal buffer zone around two of the core areas and indicate what buffering functions are in place, or provide a new zonation map.

84. **Haut Niger Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this second Periodic Review for the Haut Niger biosphere reserve, designated in 2002. The reserve consists of forests. It has a current core area of 55,400 ha, a buffer zone of 364,100 ha and a transition area of 227,500 ha. The area is inhabited by nearly 338,805 people and is home to many species of birds, mammal species and plants.

85. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the zonation map and documents with annexes. It also appreciated the participatory process used to produce the Periodic Review.

86. The Advisory Committee recognized the transfer of a large number of agents to the central area, to undertake conservation and development actions for local communities, as evidence of strong political will.

87. The Advisory Committee noted that the zonation map does not indicate a transition area, but does include a core area, referred to as the 'noyau central', and a 'forêt classée' and two buffer zones.

88. The Advisory Committee concluded that it **does not have enough information to assess whether the site meets or does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) and requested the authorities to submit, by 15 May 2019, an improved zonation map of the biosphere reserve using the official terminology according to the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

89. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers the national authorities its technical assistance to produce the requested documents.

90. **Mont Nimba Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this third Periodic Review for the Mont Nimba Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1980. The reserve is located in the northern part of Guinea along the boundary with Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The site consists mostly of forests. It has a current core area of 12,540 ha, a buffer zone of 35,140 ha and a transition area of 88,280 ha. The area is inhabited by about 65,024 people and hosts many endemic species notably the viviparous toad, mammals and plants.

91. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the updated zonation map and documents with annexes, as well as the participatory process used to produce the Periodic Review.

92. The Advisory Committee observed the use of regulations to ensure the protection of core areas, the limitations imposed on the mining company's license to exclude it from operating in the core area of Déré, and the involvement of two CEGENS-Centres de Gestion de l'Environnement and one scientific research station devoted to development actions.

93. The Advisory Committee also noted the possibility of establishing a transboundary biosphere reserve with Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and the opportunity to strengthen education, communication and awareness raising to promote the participation and ownership of local communities in the biosphere reserve.

94. The Advisory Committee noted that the three core areas are not indicated with the same colour in the legend of the zonation map.

95. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) and encourages the authorities to improve the zonation map by using the same colour for the three core areas. It also encourages cooperation with neighbouring countries with a view to eventually creating a transboundary biosphere reserve.

96. **Ziama Biosphere Reserve (Guinea).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this third Periodic Review for the Ziama Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1980. The reserve consists exclusively of forests. It has a current core area of 41,169 ha, a buffer zone of 74,220 ha and a transition area of 120,500 ha. The area is inhabited by about 90,000 people and is home to many endemic species, notably migratory elephants.

97. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities on the new zonation which addresses the recommendations of the 29th session of the MAB ICC (i.e. the extension of the biosphere reserve to include the villages in the transition area through a participatory process).

98. The Advisory Committee observed the enforcement of regulations to ensure the protection of core areas, and the establishment of contracts for the transfer of exploitable bottomlands in the transition area.

99. The Advisory Committee also noted that the core area in the south-east of the site does not have a sufficient large buffer zone to ensure its long-term protection.

100. The Advisory Committee concluded that it **does not have enough information to assess whether the site meets or does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). It therefore requested the authorities to discuss with stakeholders the possibility of establishing a buffer zone to protect all flanks of the core area of the southeastern portion of the site. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit an application for an extension of the site as soon as possible to extend the size of the transition area.

101. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to submit the requested information by 15 May 2019.

102. Within the framework of the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR, the MAB Secretariat offers to the national authorities its' technical assistance to elaborate produce the requested documents that are requested.

103. **Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve (Kyrgyzstan).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

104. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the official letter of Kyrgyzstan and thanked the national authorities for providing a detailed work plan and timeline in order to submit the Periodic Review by 30 September 2019, in compliance with MAB ICC 2017 decisions on the Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR.

105. **General recommendation for the Mexican authorities:**

106. The Advisory Committee welcomed the four Periodic Reviews submitted by the Mexican authorities and recognized the effort made by the country.

107. All biosphere reserves have a Management Plan and a Management Committee, but the Advisory Committee noted that the Management Plan does not include the transition area. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan with stakeholder involvement for the biosphere reserve that includes a transition area.

108. **Huatulco Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Huatulco Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in the physiographic province of the Sierra Madre del Sur, which is characterized by bays, cliffs and rocky escarpments.

109. Approximately 45,000 people currently live in the biosphere reserve. Conventional tourism along the coastline and bays near tourist areas (Chahue Bay, Santa Cruz, Organ-Maguey, Cacaluta and San Agustín) presents a threat to fishermen, while divers and marine tourists provoke damage with boat anchors, solid waste and overfishing, upsetting the balance of marine communities and endangering the reproductive capacity of marine wildlife. One of the most important changes in recent years was the inclusion of the municipality of Santa María Huatulco in 2015 within the 'Programa de Ordenamiento Ecológico Territorial'.

110. There is no separate biosphere reserve Management Plan, as the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) governs all reserves. The Commission established the National Programme of Protected Natural Areas 2014-2018 (PNANP) with a clear mission and vision, as well as objectives and goals to be achieved in matters of conservation relating to ecosystems in Mexico identified through the creation and management of Natural Protected Areas. Through its 2040 Strategy, CONANP is developing a long-term strategy that will function as the framework for institutional planning, guiding actions over the short and medium term, with a view to strengthening and consolidating the institution and its important mission for the benefit of Mexico. It should be noted, however, that there have been a number of institutional changes in directors and managers at national, regional and local levels over the last 10 years.

111. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

112. **Laguna Madre y Delta del Rio Bravo Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Laguna Madre y Delta del Rio Bravo Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. Laguna Madre is located in a coastal plain of the Gulf of Mexico. The reserve is one of two large hyper-saline coastal wetlands in North America (the other is located in Texas in the United States) and one of seven in the whole world.

113. The last 10 years have seen zonation changes to the reserve in line with the management programme, published in 2015. These changes decreased the core area from 317,290 ha to 61,001 ha, and increased both the buffer zone from 255,518 ha to 511,807 ha

and the transition area from 234,160 ha to 1,059,129 ha. The total surface area has thus increased from 806,968 ha to 1,631,937 ha. These zonation changes better protect the core areas and their mangroves forests. Mangrove restoration programmes have also been established in the area. Under the original zonation, the total population amounted to about 500,000 inhabitants. As a result of zonation changes, which excluded urban areas no longer part of the biosphere reserve, the total number of inhabitants has decreased to 17,000.

114. The development of the Management Programme of the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Laguna Madre y Delta del Río Bravo took into account the points of view of academia, productive groups (livestock, agricultural, fishing and tourism), government and civil society. The management programme does not include the transition area, however.

115. The National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) established the National Programme of Protected Natural Areas 2014-2018 (PNANP) with a clear mission and vision, as well as objectives and goals to be achieved in matters of conservation relating to ecosystems in Mexico identified through the creation and management of Natural Protected Areas. Through its 2040 Strategy, CONANP is developing a long-term strategy that will function as the framework for institutional planning, guiding actions over the short and medium term, with a view to strengthening and consolidating the institution and its important mission for the benefit of Mexico.

116. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

117. **Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006. The reserve is an area of high geological and ecological complexity and human activity. It presents a high diversity of environments that correspond to nine types of vegetation. Los Tuxtlas represents the northernmost limit of the rainforest on the American continent and its different types of forests and rainforests, from the seacoast to the summit of the volcanoes, make it a unique case in Mexico and North America.

118. The surface of the biosphere reserve has not changed (334,000 ha), while the population increased from around 278,000 to 307,000 inhabitants, mainly in the transition area.

119. There has been an expansion of community services oriented towards rural ecotourism, which has generated greater appreciation for the environmental services offered by the biosphere reserve. In addition, a greater number of civil society organizations have emerged with the objective of protecting the environment.

120. The biosphere reserve is administered by the National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP) and has an Advisory Council that promotes the participation and integration of civil society in the tasks of conservation and the development of protected natural areas. In December 2014, the composition of the Advisory Council altered due to several causes, including changes of representatives in the local, municipal and state governments, as well as

in research institutions, and diverse non-governmental organizations that work with communities in the area. The biosphere reserve has a management programme that was approved in 2009 which does not include the transition area.

121. CONANP established the National Programme of Protected Natural Areas 2014-2018 (PNANP) with a clear mission and vision, as well as objectives and goals to be achieved in matters of conservation relating to ecosystems in Mexico identified through the creation and management of Natural Protected Areas. Through its 2040 Strategy, CONANP is developing a long-term strategy that will function as the framework for institutional planning, guiding actions over the short and medium term, with a view to strengthening and consolidating the institution and its important mission for the benefit of Mexico.

122. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, it recommends that the authorities establish a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

123. **Sierra de Alamos – Rio Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Sierra de Alamos – Rio Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2007. The protected area of Sierra de Alamos – Rio Cuchujaqui falls within the geographical provinces of the Western Sierra Madre and the Northwest Coastal Plain, which consists of an elevation gradient of vegetation, ranging from tropical deciduous forest to the Sierra Madre evergreen forest.

124. The area defined in 2006 responded to the will and commitment of local owners. However, following the publication of the Management Programme in 2015, a new zonation was established, in order to clearly define which activities were and were not allowed in the area. This decreased the core area from 20,169 ha to 9,956 ha and increased both the buffer zone from 72,720 ha to 82,933 ha and the transition area from 42,982 ha to 97,697 ha. The total surface area thus increased from of 135,872 ha to 190,587 ha. The population also increased from 9,120 inhabitants to around 10,500.

125. The biosphere reserve has had a management programme since 2015, which functions as the planning instrument guiding the conservation and management of natural resources, through strategies and actions based on knowledge of local problems in the area. The management programme does not include the transition area, however.

126. The National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) has established the National Programme of Protected Natural Areas 2014-2018 (PNANP) with a clear mission and vision, as well as objectives and goals to be achieved in matters of conservation relating to ecosystems in Mexico identified through the creation and management of Natural Protected Areas. Through its 2040 Strategy, CONANP is developing a long-term strategy that will function as the framework for institutional planning, guiding actions over the short and medium term, with a view to strengthening and consolidating the institution and its important mission for the benefit of Mexico.

127. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to submit a rationale for the extension and zonation change and recommends that they establish a Management Plan with stakeholder involvement for the biosphere reserve that includes the transition area.

128. **Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the first Periodic Review for the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve.

129. The steppe and wetland territory of the Mongol Daguur comprises mainly low mountainous landscapes supporting a variety of species of fauna and flora. The area is rich in biodiversity, and the site provides nesting and breeding grounds for globally endangered species. Situated in the eastern tip of Mongolia where it borders China and the Russian Federation, the biosphere reserve functions as a transboundary ecosystem. This enables Mongolia to act as a buffer against desertification in China.

130. The Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve was designated in 2007. In 2017, the Landscape of Dauria, which includes the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve, was inscribed as a transboundary World Heritage property shared between Mongolia and the Russian Federation, as an outstanding example of the Daurian Steppe eco-region extending from eastern Mongolia into Russian Siberia and northeastern China.

131. The total area of the biosphere reserve is 103,016 ha and includes a core area of 15,600 ha, a buffer zone of 51,600 ha and a transition area of 35,800 ha. Over the last 10 years the population has increased from 200 (transition area) to 1,957 (400 in buffer zone and 1,557 in the transition area). The Advisory Committee has invited the authorities to offer an explanation for this growth in population.

132. One of the immediate threats to the transition zone of the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve is illegal hunting. The majority of illegal hunting in the biosphere reserve targets gazelles and marmots. Illegal hunting also causes desertification and loss of important wildlife habitats and is totally unsustainable over the long term in the transition areas.

133. Climate change poses a huge challenge to the reserve, causing the permafrost to dry and parts of the wetland to die. Research is being conducted on this subject with a view to slowing down this process and restoring the environment.

134. The Advisory Committee noted that, since 1994, the three countries have been cooperating under the framework of the China-Mongolia-Russian International Protected Area Agreement (DIPA). The Committee encouraged the Mongolian authorities to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve with the Daurian Biosphere Reserve in the Russian Federation, and possibly with the Dalai Lake Biosphere Reserve of China, although the latter is not contiguous with the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve.

135. The Committee further encouraged the authorities to study and find solutions to human-wild animal conflicts including illegal hunting in all three zones.

136. The Advisory Committee also invited the authorities to increase international cooperation on research and ecotourism, and to seek funding opportunities for ecotourism from other countries. Funds generated from ecotourism can be used for the protection of wild animals.

137. Although there has been interest locally in forms of income generation such as vegetable gardening or intensive farming, the Advisory Committee would not recommend intensive farming in the area as it will accelerate desertification.

138. The Committee noted that the World Heritage Property Area of Mongol Daguur covers 580,080 ha, while the total area of the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve covers only 103,016 ha. The Committee therefore invited the national authorities to provide a map with the juxtaposed boundaries of the Mongol Daguur SPA, the Mongol Daguur Biosphere Reserve and the world heritage site of the Landscapes of Dauria, and explain the rationale underlying the spatial differences between the SPA, the biosphere reserve and the World Heritage site by 15 May 2019.

139. The Committee also encouraged the Mongolian authorities to continue enhancing stakeholder participation processes related to management of the biosphere reserve, and to consider an expansion of the biosphere reserve zones, especially the core areas based on the zonation of the World Heritage site.

140. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

141. **Bosawas Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

142. The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1997. Bosawas is located in the north of the country next to the border with Honduras. The reserve constitutes the so-called 'Heart of the Mesoamerican Biocorridor' together with the three neighbouring protected areas of Honduras 'Río Patuca' National Park, 'Tawhaka' Anthropological Reserve and 'Río Plátano' Biosphere Reserve.

143. The Periodic Review document reports for the period 2004-14, and not until 2018.

144. In the nomination file, it was indicated that the size of the core area was 329,800 ha, the buffer zone was 523,700 ha and the transition area was 1,328,000 ha. However, during the periodic review process, adjustments were made based on geographical information systems with greater precision.

145. Based on the current calculations, the extension of the Biosphere Reserve is 1,994,187.31 ha, of which 806,595.16 ha correspond to the core area, 850,063.22 ha to the buffer zone and 337,528.94 ha to the transition area.

146. In total, more than 450,000 inhabitants live in the biosphere reserve out of which 50,000 inhabit the core area. These are indigenous communities (miskitos and mayangnas) living from several sustainable small-scale activities such as fishing and agriculture.

147. The biosphere reserve has submitted a management plan for the biosphere reserve. A management structure is also in place, led by the Ministry of Environment of Nicaragua, which coordinates actions with governmental and non-governmental institutions, research institutions, local organizations and the private sector.

148. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to provide a rationale on the buffering functions of the core areas by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

149. **Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve (Nicaragua).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

150. The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Rio San Juan Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2003. The biosphere reserve encompasses a significant variety of ecosystems representative of tropical humid forests and wetlands, tidal marsh, coastal lagoons and estuaries, which are important shelters for rare or threatened animals and plant genetic resources of the meso-American tropics.

151. The Periodic Review document reports for the period 2004-14, and not until 2018.

152. The total surface area of the biosphere reserve covers 1,834,107 ha, and a proper transition area of 514,641 ha has been added to the zonation map. Approximately 255,000 inhabitants live in the reserve of which a small majority live in the buffer zone, while a small indigenous community of 300 people inhabits the core area. There is currently no Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, and in its absence the authorities adhere to relevant national policies. A management structure for the biosphere reserve is in place, led by the Ministry of Environment of Nicaragua, which coordinates actions with governmental and non-governmental institutions, research institutions, local organizations and the private sector.

153. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the Advisory Committee requests the authorities to send more information on the Management Plan and stakeholder involvement by 30 September 2019.

154. **Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the official request sent by the Chair of the MAB National Committee to extend the date of submission of the dossier for the second Periodic Review for the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, which is still underway, to 30 September 2019. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their efforts to meet Article 9 of the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

155. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to submit the dossier by 30 September 2019.



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Annex II RECOMMENDATIONS OF PERIODIC REVIEWS ENDORSED BY THE MAB ICC

Country	Name of the site	Comments
ARGENTINA	Costero del Sur	Excellence process
	Laguna de Pozuelos	
	Yaboti	
BOLIVIA	Beni	
	Pilon-Lajas	Excellence process
	Ulla Ulla	Excellence process
CANADA	Frontenac Arch	
	Fundy	
CHILE	Lauca	Excellence process
	Torres del Paine	Excellence process
CROATIA	Velebit Mountains	Excellence process
CUBA	Peninsula de Guanahacabibes	
	Sierra del Rosario	
DENMARK	Northeast Greenland	Letter of withdrawal Excellence process
FRANCE	Cevennes	Excellence process
HONDURAS	Rio Platano	Excellence process
ITALY	Monte Peglia	
MEXICO	Islas de Golfo de California	Excellence process
MONTENEGRO	Tara River Basin	Excellence process
POLAND	Tatra	National Zonation map Excellence process
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Mountainous Urals	Designated 2015
SLOVAKIA	East Carpathians	National Zonation map Excellence process
	Tatra	National Zonation map Excellence process
SWITZERLAND	Val Müstair	Change of name
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Apalachicola (former Central Gulf Coastal Plain)	Excellence process
	Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island	Excellence process
	Organ Pipe	Excellence process
	San Joaquin	Excellence Process
	Virginia Coast	Excellence process
	University of Michigan Biological Station	Excellence process
	Yellowstone	Excellence process

156. **Costero del Sur Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

157. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Argentinean authorities. The submitted zonation map is not clear and has not used the official required terminology specified under the Statutory Framework. Therefore, the Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requests the authorities to send a clear zonation map using the official terminology in line with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR, including justifications and information on the populations living in the zones, by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

158. **Laguna de Pozuelos Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Argentinean authorities following the recommendations of the MAB Council in 2018. A management committee has been established in which each stakeholder will take an active part in the development of a Management Plan. Given the short period, the Management Plan has not yet been completed, but the authorities have submitted a schedule of activities and a work strategy for its elaboration. An updated map including the proper zonation was attached to the recommendation document.

159. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria.

160. **Yaboti Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Argentinean authorities following the recommendations of the MAB Council in 2018. The requested information that was received is not satisfactory. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requests the authorities to provide a clear Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, as well as a zonation map, by 15 May 2019.

161. **Beni Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Bolivian authorities. The national authorities have provided a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and the following explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve: the whole biosphere reserve is surrounded by four External Buffer Zones (ZEA), which function as national conservation mechanisms for protected areas that ensure connectivity to maintain the flow of species in natural biological corridors.

162. The biosphere has begun work on their new Management Plan which supplants the previous one from 2006. According to the submitted work schedule the new Management Plan will be finalized in 2019.

163. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requests the authorities to submit an explanation confirming whether or not the current zonation structure fulfils the development functions by 30 September 2019.

164. **Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve (Bolivia).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

165. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Bolivian authorities. The national authorities have provided a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and the following explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve: the western part of the biosphere reserve is surrounded by the Madidi National Park (protected area), the southern part is surrounded by 'tierras comunarias de Origen – TCO' (original community lands) and the eastern part is surrounded by an External Buffer Zone (ZEA). These functions as national conservation mechanisms for protected areas that ensure connectivity to maintain the flow of species in natural biological corridors.

166. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to submit an explanation confirming whether or not the current zonation structure fulfils the development functions by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

167. **Reserva de la Biosfera Area Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba (former Ulla Ulla Biosphere Reserve) (Bolivia)**. The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

168. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Bolivian authorities. The national authorities have provided a revised zonation map with the proper terminology and the following explanation as to why the transition area does not surround the biosphere reserve: the eastern part is surrounded by the Madidi National Park (protected area), by mountain peak areas that cannot be accessed and by 'Territorios Indígena Originario Campesinos Titulados' (TIOC).

169. The national authorities have also sent updated numbers regarding the size of the human population.

170. Finally, an official request to change the name of the biosphere reserve has been made.

171. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and recommends that the renaming of the site to 'Reserva de la Biosfera Area Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba' be approved.

172. **Cerrado Biosphere Reserve (Brazil)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information sent by the Brazilian authorities. The Cerrado Biosphere Reserve sent a Periodic Review in 2016, later in 2017, which met the criteria, and a follow-up (that was not requested) in 2018.

173. The document sent by the national authorities does not follow the structure of a Periodic Review. It proposes a huge increase in zonation from 25 million ha to 76,240,779.83 ha (88,215,853 ha, different numbers are given), on the grounds that the authorities would like to preserve the Cerrado biome.

174. As the Cerrado Biosphere Reserve previously sent a Periodic Review in 2017 that met the criteria, the Advisory Committee recommends the authorities to submit a request for an extension of the biosphere reserve using the official documents and explaining the feasibility of the extension and cooperation with the neighbouring biosphere reserves in relation to the planned extension.

175. **Bistrishko Branishte (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the Bulgarian authorities. The representatives of the Bulgarian National MAB Committee informed the Advisory Committee of their work on the update of the Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve to meet the criteria. The Sofia Municipality declared their willingness to upgrade the site and to continue its participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Preparation of the nomination form for an extension was initiated with a consultation on the first draft with the main stakeholders at a meeting held on 18 September 2018. The final version was supposed to be submitted to the MAB Secretariat in mid-November 2018, however it has not yet been received by the Secretariat.

176. As the site is subject to the Excellence and Enhancement process of the WNBR, the Advisory Committee requested that **the nomination form be submitted no later than the final deadline of 30 September 2019.**

177. **Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the authorities on 27 September 2018, which accompanied the evaluations formulated by the Canadian MAB Committee. The Advisory Committee equally appreciated the interim report on the progress made by the authorities of the Frontenac Arch biosphere reserve towards the fulfilment of the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It noted that the final report would be submitted by 15 June 2019.

178. The Advisory Committee appreciated the meetings organized by the authorities with representatives of indigenous communities, as well as other stakeholders to ensure a sound financial basis as well as support for the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also noted the improvements made in relation to fulfilling the logistical function of the biosphere reserve.

179. The Advisory Committee noted that the zonation still **does not meet** the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Canadian MAB Committee has requested that the zonation be adapted to the requirements by 15 June 2019, after which time the committee will decide whether to withdraw the site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, or to request to maintain the area's status as a biosphere reserve.

180. The Advisory Committee therefore requests the authorities to submit the Engagement Plan and Process, the TORs for the Biosphere Advisory Council and an updated zonation map by 15 May 2019, for consideration by the MAB Council at its next session.

181. **Fundy Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the authorities on 27 September 2018, which accompanied the evaluations formulated by the Canadian MAB Committee. The Advisory Committee equally appreciated the interim report on the progress made by the authorities of the Fundy Biosphere Reserve towards the

fulfilment of the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It noted that the final report would be submitted by 15 June 2019.

182. The Advisory Committee appreciated the new strategic partnerships, which will help to diversify income-generating strategies – notably the foraged beer production. The Advisory Committee equally appreciated the inclusion of first nation members in the board of directors of the biosphere reserve, and encourages the management to further enhance inclusion of first nation people in the management and strategies of the biosphere reserve.

183. Additional information was provided on the activities and impacts of wind farms and mining in the biosphere reserve. While the wind farms are monitored and no negative impacts were noted, the Advisory Committee noted that impact studies of mining are still lacking, and urges authorities to address this omission.

184. The Advisory Committee appreciated the steps taken to improve the buffering of the core areas of the biosphere reserve, and recognized that many of the areas surrounding the core areas are subject to the Crown Lands and Forest Acts. The Advisory Committee urged the authorities to continue negotiations with license holders and private landowners to increase the de facto buffering functions of the areas surrounding the core areas. The Advisory Committee concluded that at the moment the site **does not meet** the requirements of the Statutory Framework. The Canadian MAB Committee has requested that land management in the areas surrounding the core area be adapted to the requirements by 15 June 2019, after which time the national committee will decide whether to withdraw the site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, or to request to maintain the area's status as a biosphere reserve.

185. The Advisory Committee requests the submission of an updated zonation map and information on the impact of mining operations by 15 May 2019, for consideration by the MAB Council at its next session.

186. **Lauca Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

187. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A Management Plan has been submitted for the three national protected areas but not for the biosphere reserve, as this is still under preparation. Mentioned is made of a management committee, however, the information supplied does explain clearly how this committee functions.

188. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is **not able to decide whether the site meets the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It therefore requests the authorities to submit a Management Plan for the biosphere reserve, as well as clear information on the functioning of the management committee by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

189. **Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

190. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chilean authorities. A revised zonation has been received, however the requested explanation as to why no buffer zone exists in the northwestern part of the reserve is still missing. A management plan for the period 2018–2021 has been submitted and a management committee has been created.

191. The Advisory Committee requests the authorities to confirm that areas lacking formal buffer zones have buffering functions provided by the national park by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria.

192. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Management Plan should refer to the Lima Action Plan and the new MAB strategy instead of the Madrid Action Plan.

193. **Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserve (Croatia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the authorities on 17 December 2018, and the additional explanation regarding the added transition area. The Advisory Committee appreciated the cooperation with the city of Zadar in terms of tourism, cultural heritage and education. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to seek cooperation with the other communities adjacent to Zadar and the other transition area, in order to connect the different transition areas. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria.

194. **Peninsula de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserve (Cuba).** This site has already met the criteria but extra information was requested.

195. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Cuban authorities. The requested Management Plan has been received. However, the requested revised zonation, including a continuous marine buffer zone, is still missing and should be sent by 30 September 2019.

196. **Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve (Cuba).** This site has already met the criteria but extra information was requested.

197. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Cuban authorities. The requested Management Plan has been received.

198. **Northeast Greenland (Denmark).** The Advisory Committee took note of the letter of Greenland indicating their intention to withdraw, and regrets that the northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve authorities decided to **withdraw** the site from the WNBR. The Advisory Committee expressed its thanks to the biosphere reserve staff for their contribution to the MAB Programme and its WNBR and encouraged the authorities to continue their participation in the MAB Programme, and to make every effort to nominate a site in the near future.

199. **Cevennes (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information sent on the zonation and the adherence of local communes/municipalities to the site. Regarding the zonation, the submitted map shows the extensions of the buffer and transition zones. The Advisory Committee also appreciated the progress made in terms of reaching agreements with the remaining communes, and noted that 84% of the communes in the area now have signed the biosphere reserve's charter. The remaining communes are involved in

the biosphere reserve through separate contracts. The Advisory Committee appreciated that several fundraising and labelling initiatives have contributed to this increased support for the site. The Committee recognized the legal restrictions on including communes who have not signed the charter, but is satisfied with the additional contracts concluded with the remaining communes that ensure a de facto buffering of the core areas. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to seek cooperation with the remaining communes. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria, and reminded the authorities that the next Periodic Review report is due in 2028, when the charter expires.

200. **Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

201. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Honduran authorities. The requested management plan was received in addition to the following explanation as to why a transition area is missing in the southern and eastern region of the biosphere reserve: in the south, the core area borders the Tawahka Asangni protected reserve; in the east, only a buffer zone exists as this region has remained free of high-impact human interventions. The area forms part of the ancestral habitat of the Miskitu indigenous peoples, and has a population density of 0.01 inhabitants/km².

202. The Advisory Committee considers that the site **meets** the criteria.

203. **Monte Peglia (Italy).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged with thanks the Management Plan for the Monte Peglia Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2018.

204. **Islas del Golfo de California Biosphere Reserve (Mexico).** The site falls under the 'Process of Excellence and Enhancement of the WNBR'.

205. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Mexican authorities. In October 2018, the MAB Secretariat received a letter from the authorities explaining that due to the large area of the biosphere reserve and the significant number of islands, they will need more time to revise the instruments and mechanisms, in order to produce an operational zoning proposal.

206. In December 2018, the Mexican authorities sent a new letter informing the Secretariat that, following several consultations, the Government of Mexico, through its National Commission for Protected Areas, has decided not to withdraw the biosphere reserve from the World Network, and instead plans to rethink the overall design with a view to elaborating a new vision that would allow the reserve to comply with the zonation and the legal and national political regulations.

207. The Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts of the Mexican authorities to implement a transition zone to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

208. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria. It therefore requests the authorities to send the new zonation with a transition zone and its management plan by 15 May 2019, in order to adhere to the excellence process timeframe.

209. **Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (Montenegro).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities of Montenegro. The Committee acknowledged the creation of the biosphere reserve coordination body, which consists of various stakeholders including the representatives of local communities. The action plan for the biosphere reserve was also well received by the Committee. As regards the zonation, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the written explanation of the rationale based on the zonation of the national park.

210. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the authorities to strengthen stakeholder involvement in biosphere reserve management by including representatives of business into site management structures.

211. **Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Polish authorities, and expressed its encouragement for the creation of a new multi stakeholder-based coordination body for the biosphere reserve. It also welcomed the information related to the extension of the biosphere reserve outside the national park and planned changes in zonation, and considered it to be a very positive development. The Advisory Committee understands that all the actions described are difficult and will take time. The Committee supported the steps and actions taken so far and encourages the authorities to continue the process. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the plan for meetings with authorities that took place in January and February 2019 and subsequent public consultations, and requested an update on their outcomes by 30 September 2019.

212. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the Polish authorities to participate in the forthcoming EuroMAB regional network meeting and to seek technical support from the MAB Secretariat, as well as peer consultations within the WNBR with the representatives of sites that face similar problems.

213. **Mountainous Ural (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the letter sent by the authorities on 1 October 2018. In this letter, the authorities state that the parties involved in the management of the biosphere reserve have submitted proposals for the Management Plan detailing the development of the protected areas as well as the municipalities in the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee commended the progress made but urges the authorities to finalize the Management Plan and submit it by 15 May 2019, along with a clear description of a stakeholder-based management structure for the biosphere reserve.

214. **East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia).** The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for sending the new zonation map indicating the buffer zones for this site, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

215. **Tatra Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia).** The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for sending the new zonation map indicating the buffer zones for this site, which meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

216. **Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair (renaming of former Val Müstair – Parc Naziunal Biosphere Reserve) (Switzerland).** The Advisory Committee took note of the change of name of this site to reflect the inclusion of new communities and the ongoing extension process.

217. **Apalachicola (former Central Gulf Coastal Plain) (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional documents related to the site zonation and encourages the US authorities to continue its cooperation with local stakeholders in order to ensure proper buffering functions to concerned core areas.

218. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

219. **Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this resubmission of the Periodic Review report for the Glacier Bay Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1986, and located in southeastern Alaska. Its sparsely populated territory covers over 1.5 million ha of unique marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Sitkan Biogeographic Province of North America. The site consists of two units: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve and Admiralty Island National Monument. The Glacier Bay area is a typical example of ice-affected landscapes, while the forest of Admiralty Island is the greatest remaining block of productive old-growth temperate rainforest in the world.

220. The Advisory Committee noted that the biosphere reserve is managed by the National Park Service (Department of the Interior) and the United States Forest Service (Department of Agriculture), and that frequent consultations take place with various stakeholder groups (e.g. indigenous people). The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to consider the creation of a formal overall biosphere reserve advisory/coordination body, based on permanent stakeholder participation, which would operate continually rather than on a case-to-case basis. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

221. **Organ Pipe (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the information provided by the US authorities stating that the site has changed management body from the National Park Service to the International Sonoran Desert Alliance and requesting a deadline extension to update the Periodic Review report under the new management. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to finalize the report and to submit it by 30 September 2019 for consideration by the MAB Council.

222. **San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee took note with regret of the decision of the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve authorities to withdraw the site from the WNBR. The Advisory Committee expressed its thanks the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve staff for their contribution to the MAB network and encouraged the authorities to undertake all efforts to make the indicated necessary changes and re-nominate the site at some future date.

223. **Virginia Coast (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated map indicating the buffer zones. The explanations previously provided demonstrated



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that through Protective land use agreements and conservation easements, these areas do function as buffer zones. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

224. **University of Michigan Biological Station (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information on the consultation processes initiated by authorities with neighbouring landowners, including first nation groups and local conservancies. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to continue the consultation processes aimed at reaching agreements about buffering functions of areas adjacent to the core area. The Advisory Committee noted the intention to change the name of the site, and recommended that the authorities announce it together with the Periodic review report, with an appropriate zonation, by 30 September 2019.

225. **Yellowstone (United States of America).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information on agreements of cooperation and the promotion material. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.