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ORGANIZATION**

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

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FINAL REPORT

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1. The 29th session of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France from 12 to 15 June 2017.
2. A total of 263 participants, including representatives of the following Members of the MAB Council as elected by the UNESCO General Conference at its 37th and 38th sessions, attended the session: Algeria, Austria, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Togo, Turkey and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3. Observers from the following Member States were present : Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Burundi, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Canada, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Monténégro, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Chad, Republic of Chile, Republic of the Congo, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vietnam.
4. The full list of the 263 participants is presented in Annex 1 to this report.

I. Opening by the Chair of the ICC

5. Mr Didier Babin, Chair of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB-ICC), officially opened the meeting. He welcomed all members and Observers, and thanked the Secretariat for preparing the session. He also stressed the importance of this session and the role that biosphere reserves have for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. Mr Babin paid homage to several MAB-related personalities that had passed away since the last session of the MAB-ICC: Mr Bonaventure Guedegbe from Benin, who was very active in the implementation of biosphere reserves in his country and in the region; and Professor Samir Ibrahim Ghabbour of Egypt, who was a very prominent MAB Egypt and ArabMAB Member. Finally, he mentioned the tragic car accident in which Mr Moutassim Bassim Nimir from Sudan and Mr Azanaw Mudgeta of Ethiopia and their driver died. The two scientists were working jointly on a new transboundary biosphere reserve between their countries. The Council observed a minute's silence to honor the memory of the five deceased members of the MAB family.

II. Opening remarks of the Director-General of UNESCO

7. In her opening address, Ms Flavia Schlegel, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, welcomed, on behalf of the Director-General, all MAB-ICC members and observers.
8. She recalled that one year has passed since the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves and the 28th session of the MAB-ICC was held in Lima, Peru, and since the adoption of the Lima Action Plan 2016-2025. She stressed that the momentum generated in Lima had been very much kept alive in the last few months through successful follow-up events, such as EuroMAB, ArabMAB, SeaBRnet and other regional meetings.

9. Ms Schlegel also mentioned MAB meetings held in Kazakhstan and Nigeria, the forthcoming 2017 MAB Youth Forum to be held in Italy, and the major new MAB project concerning Lake Chad. Ms Schlegel thanked Member States and partners for their support towards making these events and developments possible.

10. The Assistant Director-General mentioned that this MAB-ICC session would discuss the 'Exit Strategy', which was adopted by Council in order to consolidate the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) in conformity with Statutory Framework of the WNBR. She mentioned that all countries concerned by the exit strategy have replied, showing their willingness to stay as members of the network. She congratulated all countries for their efforts to improve the functioning and quality of the network in order that it will become a leading network for the implementation of the SDGs.

11. Ms Schlegel underlined that while originally 270 biosphere reserves had initially been affected by the exit strategy, 120 sites had since then improved their functioning considerably, and reconfirmed UNESCO's full support in this regard.

12. In this context, she also mentioned the strong support that the MAB Programme receives from other national initiatives such as UNESCO Category 2 Centres and other structures.

13. Ms. Schlegel also mentioned that biosphere reserves are considered as privileged models intended to guide our world towards more environmental and social sustainability. She noted that within the context of the 2030 Agenda, the successful implementation of a biosphere reserve allows for no less than 14 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be addressed, in particular the SDGs on Climate Action (13), Life on Land (15) and Gender Equality (5) - but also Life below Water (14), a major focus of the United Nations Ocean Conference held in New York in June.

14. Ms. Schlegel mentioned that over 200 million people live in biosphere reserves, places that provide them with opportunities for reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use, and for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understand and manage changes and interactions between social and ecological systems - including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity.

15. Ms. Schlegel stated that over 200 million people in 120 countries have been given the opportunity to use UNESCO sites as sites for sustainable observatories for resilience and citizen sciences, including transboundary sites for prevention for conflicts and the promotion of cooperation. She said that biosphere reserves form a noble network that may help to ensure a better world.

16. Finally, Ms. Schlegel thanked Prof. Babin, all National Commissions, all MAB National Committees and all biosphere reserves, the MAB Secretariat and all Member States. She wished all members of the MAB-ICC fruitful and constructive deliberations during the 29th session of the MAB Council.

III. Report of the Chair of the ICC

17. The Chair of the MAB-ICC, Mr Babin, thanked Ms. Schlegel for her encouraging message and the Members of the MAB Bureau for their effective work. The Chair stressed that following the Lima Congress, the MAB Programme has worked strongly for enhanced credibility of the WNBR in support of a better world.

18. Mr Babin highlighted two main points as focus of MAB: implementation of the SDGs based on the Lima Action Plan; and the implementation of the exit strategy. He took note of the need for strong support to the MAB Secretariat in this context. He welcomed the continued service of Mr. Han as Secretary, and recalled his first meeting with the Secretariat in April 2016 and thanked all for their work and achievements.

19. Mr. Babin took note of the role of the Advisory Committee in the implementation of the road map. He mentioned the organization of two Bureau meetings and thanked the International Advisory Committee for preparing all the technical details.

20. Mr. Babin also referred to his meeting with the President of the General Conference and his discussions on the governance of the MAB Programme. In December 2016, the Chair attended the Summit Muchtanbal on Indigenous Experience - held in Mexico - meeting with the outgoing and the new Chairperson of CBD in order to improve cooperation with the MAB Programme. He also met with the Head of ECOSOC in order to exchange information on International Programmes that focus on poverty eradication. Mr. Babin stressed the importance of this theme for the WNBR, as it helps build resilient societies. The full report of the MAB ICC Chair is contained in Annex II.

IV. Adoption of the agenda and timetable

21. The MAB-ICC adopted the agenda and timetable of its 29th session without modification.

V. Report of the Secretary of the MAB Programme

22. The Secretary of the MAB Programme introduced document SC-17/CONF.229/4, providing the MAB Council with a brief overall update on MAB development since its last session in Lima, March 2016. The report was accompanied by a slide presentation and is available in online with other MAB-ICC documents.

23. The Secretary informed that the endorsement of the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025) and Lima Declaration at the 200th session of the Executive Board (EXB) was obtained, with strong support from many EXB members. He took note that the MAB Strategy 2015-2025, the Lima Action Plan and the Lima Declaration were now all available in six UN languages both online and in hard copy.

24. The Secretary of the MAB Programme mentioned that the preparation of UNESCO's Budget and Workplan (draft 39C/5-2018-2021) had been completed, with strong alignment of MAB Programme within UNESCO's overall strategic objectives supported by the use of new RBB (Result Based Budgeting) methods. Subject to the approval of 39th Session of the General Conference, MAB would in the 39C/5 have one separate Expected Result (ER) and one joint ER with the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) on UNESCO sites for SDGs.

25. The Secretary also informed that the implementation and reporting of the current workplan (38C/5 - 2016-2017) on MAB and WNBR had proceeded according to schedule.

26. He mentioned that two sessions of MAB Bureau were held in September 2016 and March 2017, respectively, to follow up the Lima Congress and prepare the present MAB-ICC meeting in June 2017 (agenda, documents and reports of the MAB Bureau are available

online). He took note that the documents prepared for the present session of the MAB-ICC are the result of consultations between the Bureau and the Secretariat.

27. The Secretary stated that the 23rd session of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) was held in January 2017, its recommendations communicated by the Secretariat to the MAB Bureau and all the Member States concerned in a timely manner. He took note that 25 new nominations were presented to the IACBR, 4 transboundary biosphere reserves, 12 extensions and 5 withdrawals. Furthermore, the Secretariat received 96 periodic reviews and 104 follow-up communications. Of particular interest in this regard was the submission of the 1st transboundary biosphere reserve in Latin America and the 1st trans-regional biosphere reserve between Russia and Kazakhstan. On this point, the Secretary invited the MAB Council to express its sincere gratitude for the high quality and professional work accomplished by the IACBR members who have been undertaking enormous additional tasks in relation to the implementation of the exit strategy.

28. The Secretary then stated that the house-wide process led by Member States on the improvement of governance of UNESCO programmes was being closely followed, with a specific document on MAB governance prepared for this session of the MAB-ICC.

29. Following this general introduction, Mr Han presented some highlights of the MAB Programme activities since the Lima Congress. He noted that MAB National Committees, regional and thematic networks and individual biosphere reserves had been active on many fronts. He said that it is neither possible nor the intention for the Secretary's report to comprehensively cover such a broad range of activities. His report provided only highlights of key MAB activities since Lima in which the MAB Secretariat and Field Offices of UNESCO had contributed.

30. Mr Han said that in total, the WNBR covers all major ecosystems, and that over 200 million people live in UNESCO-designated biosphere reserves. Of the three UNESCO site designations, biosphere reserves occupy by far the largest area.

31. The Secretary stressed that MAB had made substantial contributions to UNESCO activities on climate change. Through a dedicated staff member, MAB co-chairs the UNESCO Task Force on Climate Change, thus contributing the overall coordination of UNESCO's climate change activities. This has included the preparation of the updated UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change, approved by the Executive Board at its 201st session, and UNESCO's engagement with the UNFCCC and its COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco. MAB and the WNBR have been duly reflected in the UNESCO climate change strategy and in relation to COP22, where special side events on UNESCO designated sites were organized at the UNESCO Pavilion. In this context, Mr. Han also mentioned that preparations are underway to feature MAB and the WNBR at COP23 in Bonn, Germany, in 2017.

32. In continuation, the Secretary presented the Lake Chad Project, a MAB-coordinated intersectorial project involving MAB, World Heritage and the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) with the Lake Chad Basin Commission. This project is funded by the African Development Bank with some US\$6.5 million. It aims at conserving biodiversity and strengthening the resilience of the Lake Chad ecosystems and communities by applying a biosphere reserve approach and the World Heritage Convention, and will be a flagship project for MAB in Africa.

33. Mr Han announced the upcoming MAB Youth Forum, scheduled for 18-22 September 2017 in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy. The first Youth Forum under the MAB programme, the UNESCO Venice Office leads in the preparation, resource mobilization and cross-cutting cooperation for this event with contributions from UNESCO's IHP, Social and

Human Sciences Sector, Culture Sector, and Communication and Information Sector.

34. Mr Han also mentioned the upcoming meeting on 'Sustainable Tourism in Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves', to be organised by the International Centre on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (a UNESCO Category 2 Centre) in September this year.

35. The Secretary noted that the MAB Secretariat represented UNESCO at COP13 of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) at its High Level Forum, and participated in the Summit Muchtanbal on Indigenous Experience related to Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity in December 2016. It also participated in the World Conservation Congress of IUCN in September 2016, and in the 5th Plenary of the IPBES in March 2017 as focal point for UNESCO, with a view towards making input from MAB available toward the review of the global assessment report to be presented in 2018. These contacts and participation have led to possible cooperation of MAB with CBD on reporting on the Aichi Targets, especially target 14 on benefit sharing.

36. Mr. Han noted that input was provided by the Secretariat toward the messages of the Director-General for MAB-related international days, including the UN World Wildlife Day (2 March), International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May), World Environmental Day (2 June), World Day to Combat Desertification (17 June) and the International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems (26 July).

37. Concerning the completion of the implementation of the MAB Exit Strategy, the Secretary of the MAB Programme noted that - over last four years - there has been a substantial improvement in a large number of sites affected by with the related procedures: at the time of writing, 126 out of 270 BRs concerned have been considered as meeting the Seville Criteria, with many other sites are in the process of strengthening their adherence. This represents a great quality improvement for MAB and the WNBR. However, he also noted that - in addition to voluntary withdrawals - there were still 108 sites from 48 countries not yet meeting the criteria. It is expected that the MAB Council will wrap up the implementation of the exit strategy at its current session and move forward.

38. The Secretary underlined that a major gap in participation in MAB and its WNBR had been identified in Lima: 75 UNESCO Member States still have no biosphere reserves designated in their territories. He also noted that the Secretariat had made efforts to narrow this gap, and currently more than 10 countries are actively engaged in MAB dialogue and technical consultation. Although a long-term task, it is expected that, every year, two to three new countries will join the WNBR.

39. The Secretary also informed that MAB instruments and tools are being elaborated, including the prototype of the Operational Guidelines for WNBR and the MAB communication strategy - both of which were presented at the Council session – as well as a fully functional MAB online service for biosphere reserve data, social media platforms and online surveys and reporting.

40. Mr Han took note that the launch of MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan occurred at an optimal moment, coinciding with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. He noted that the progress of implementation, although at an initial stage, is well on track. However, he also stressed that more can be achieved with the collective support of the Member States.

41. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Han gave a short overview of regional and thematic meetings: A meeting of ArabMAB (Algeria, May 2017) marking the 20th Anniversary of ArabMAB and the implementation of the new MAB Strategy 2016-2025 in the Arab region with

a workshop on “Governance, financial management & green economy. A meeting of EuroMAB (Sarlat, Dordogne BR, France, April 2017) exploring the new types of partnerships necessary for an ecological transition and involving socio-economic, scientific and university actors, as well as artists and communication specialists. The 8th Meeting of the SACAM Network (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 24-25 October 2016) on Biosphere Reserves and Sustainable Development. A meeting on the Roles of Local Governments in Implementing the Lima Action Plan (Wakatobi Biosphere Reserve, Indonesia June 2016) to further the Lima Congress discussions regarding the roles of local government in biosphere reserve development with specific recommendations concerning a) governance and platform of local governments in MAB, b) natural resources management and sustainability, and c) green economies and green job creation. The 3rd Asia and the Pacific Biosphere Reserves Network meeting (Bali, Indonesia, July 2016) on the fostering of collaboration between UNESCO Natural Sciences programmes and networks. A regional workshop (Mata Atlantica BR, Brazil, September 2016) on partnerships with private sector and other stakeholders.

42. The MAB Secretary then provided examples of MAB regional and thematic workshops and projects, such as the green economy projects in biosphere reserves in Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania under KOICA funding to UNESCO; the Pan-African initiative on the development of Green Academies for education, the Biosphere Reserve Excursion for young people between Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates; the rural education project in Inner-Mongolia with funding from Elion Foundation of China; a joint production of chocolate through cooperation between two Biosphere Reserves Peru and Switzerland; and a project for promoting youth leadership in climate change using BRs and WH sites in Indonesia, funded by UNITAR under the UN CC:Learn partnership.

43. The Secretary provided information about a new reforestation project in Haiti financed by Spain, about a new project on green economies in African biosphere reserves entitled Evamab, and about a national awareness-building workshop held in Suriname.

44. Mr. Han said that there are interesting new examples in ESD as well as in green economies. For example, the Choba Choba project (mentioned above) intends to produce chocolate with cacao from the Gran Pajaten Biosphere Reserve in Peru and milk from the Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve in Switzerland.

45. The Secretary noted that it is critical for MAB and its WNBR to move fast and become fully engaged in the mainstream development agenda at the local, national, regional and global level. MAB needs to seek new cooperation opportunities and partners, and to this end obtain a new and fuller understanding of MAB’s true stakeholders (especially youth groups, local governments, civil society organizations and entrepreneurs committed to green and inclusive development); as well as identify new modalities of intervention for positive changes. MAB must serve as an incubator for - and champion of - innovative ideas.

46. In his final remarks, Mr. Han noted that during this Council session a new communication strategy will be presented. Suggesting a way forward, he indicated that further mainstreaming of MAB is needed and partnerships should be enlarged; a clear research agenda for MAB should be defined, to be driven by countries and by regions.

47. The Secretary finished his presentation by saying that it was time to join efforts for the implementation of the MAB Strategy 2015-2025 and the Lima Action Plan 2016-2025. He indicated that immediate follow up is to develop national, local and regional plans for its implementation in order that the MAB global strategy and action plan will address the specific conditions and priorities at national, local and regional levels. He thanked the Austrian MAB National Committee, the Abertis Foundation and the Government of Spain for funding the publication of the MAB activity report. He also acknowledged the Government of Germany for

its generous support, which has ensured the continuous and timely production of the World Map of Biosphere Reserves.

48. The Chair then opened the floor for comments on the MAB Secretary's report.

49. The delegate from UK welcomed the need for a new and stronger research agenda for MAB. He stated that the upcoming meeting of UNESCO Science Chairs in Geneva could make progress in this regard. One of the outcomes of this meeting should be a survey on how many UNESCO Chairs are working in biosphere reserves.

50. The Republic of Korea commended the Secretariat for its valuable work since the Lima Congress despite limited time, financial and human resources. The Republic of Korea also welcomed the results of the green economy project in Africa financed by KOICA and congratulated the work of the MAB Secretariat and the three MAB National Committees in Africa involved.

51. Malaysia thanked the Secretariat and informed that it is actively participating in managing biosphere reserves and building capacity in the framework of the Lima Action Plan. Malaysia also welcomed MAB's contribution to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by promoting sustainable management of forests to mitigate the impact of climate change.

52. Morocco thanked the Secretariat for its extraordinary work on sustainable development, particularly in relation to the UNFCCC COP21 and COP22. Morocco, however, expressed regret that a working group previously established by the Secretariat on quality economies with focus on biosphere reserves was no longer active. Morocco proposed the re-establishment of this working group.

53. St. Vincent and the Grenadines thanked the Secretariat for its detailed, well-prepared, and very transparent reporting, despite the lack of financial and human resources. St. Vincent and the Grenadines welcomed the Expected Results in the new C/5 related to the MAB Programme and the organization of the MAB Youth Forum, and suggested that the event should be repeated in all continents.

54. Italy thanked the MAB Programme for the organization of the MAB Youth Forum.

55. China thanked Mr Han for his concise presentation and the whole Secretariat for all their work. China took note that activities on climate change, the MAB Youth Forum, and green economies are extremely important areas for MAB.

56. Finally, Algeria thanked the ADG/SC, the MAB Secretariat, Mr. Han, Ms. Skandrani, and Mr. Dogsé for their interest and support for the ArabMAB network.

57. In closing, Ms. Schlegel thanked all Member States for their comments and promised to revive the MAB research agenda. She also welcomed all remarks made on the upcoming UNESCO Chairs Workshop in Geneva, Switzerland.

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

58. **Morocco** noted the establishment of the Atlas Cedar Biosphere Reserve in 2016 as the 4th in the country, and stressed the large area now covered by these sites. Morocco further recalled that as biosphere reserves are special places, they require special governance structures that allow for them to ensure sustainability at a regional scale.

59. **Malaysia** outlined activities undertaken in support of the implementation of the Lima Action Plan, and took note of the challenges faced by the country in this regard – including the impacts of climate change and the risk of unregulated development, as well as management and legislative issues.

60. **Japan** highlighted the work undertaken to distribute the MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan – along with advice and guidance on its implementation - to the country's biosphere reserves. Japan further highlighted activities organized under the national network of Biosphere Reserves, including exchanges with other countries in the region, as well as educational activities organized with schools in the transitional areas of the country's biosphere reserves.

61. **Indonesia** highlighted ongoing work on ensuring effective management and sustainable development in the country's Biosphere Reserves, with particular focus on zonation and legislative aspects as well as biosphere reserve branding. Indonesia further made reference to the country's plans for a number of new Biosphere Reserve nominations in the short and long term, and on ongoing efforts to link biosphere reserves with other UNESCO intergovernmental science programmes.

62. **The Republic of Korea** highlighted activities in support of the Lima Action Plan, including the development of a national action plan, the organization of national workshops, and the publication of policy research documents that provide guidance for biosphere reserve managers on issues such as sustainable local economies and education for sustainable development. Finally, the Republic of Korea took note that a new Category 2 Centre under the Auspices of UNESCO is under preparation in Jeju Self-Governing Province; the Global Research and Training Centre for Management of International Designated Areas.

63. **Azerbaijan** stressed the importance of UNESCO's natural science programmes, with MAB holding particular importance during a time of climate change. Azerbaijan highlighted the adoption of a new national strategy on sustainable use of biological diversity, and took note of its international cooperation by stressing how membership of ICC helps the country engage actively with MAB communities in other countries.

64. **France** focused on two key achievements of its work in the MAB programme: the biosphere reserve prizes scheme, and the publication on best practices of French biosphere reserves in relation to agenda 2030.

65. **The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** highlighted its multiple international collaborations, including the EU Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme in cooperation with a number of Nordic countries on natural and cultural heritage and tourism, its support of periodic reviews in other countries, and a global research collaboration on marine science with various other countries

66. **Algeria** underscored the MAB committee's work on the elaboration of the Algerian action plan based on Lima, including governance as a priority area. The representative also noted that Algeria undertaking and inventory of biosphere reserves.

67. **Spain** highlighted its activities to raise awareness through gastronomy and the elaboration of biosphere reserve recipe book; he noted that the MAB committee was elaborating and inventory of Spanish biosphere reserves, notably in regard to geological heritage; and that they were working to transpose Lima action plan to Spain.

68. **South Africa** mentioned the importance of creating synergies between MAB and other programmes. It also underscored the work the MAB committee had done to translate the Lima Action plan to a national BR strategy and action plan. The representative also brought to the meeting's attention a workshop on mainstreaming BR into extracting industries with different actors.

69. **Nigeria** highlighted the work being done on green economies by the MAB committee, the strengthening of the committee's links with academia, notably in the field of biodiversity conservation, as well as the committee's work to develop student awareness of biosphere reserves. In addition to promoting national biosphere reserves, they also are working on developing transboundary proposals with Cameroun. The representative thanked the Secretariat for its work on developing the Lake Chad project.

70. **Turkey** noted that it had prepared a national action plan for biosphere reserves in Turkey. The MAB Committee has mostly focused on public awareness activities within two years and have been preparing a brochure on the increase awareness of UNESCO sites, including biosphere reserves.

71. **Sweden** took note of a recent publication on Sweden's biosphere reserves as arenas for the implementation of the 2030 agenda. Sweden further recalled a commitment made at the recent UN Oceans Conference in New York to facilitate learning and sharing of experience from biosphere reserves in the Baltic Sea region, and invited interested parties from the region to discuss this initiative further. Finally, Sweden highlighted the recurring educational activity, the "Biosphere Challenge", now an international event that could be showcased at the 2017 MAB Youth Forum.

72. **Hungary** took note that the adoption of the Lima Action Plan has led to improvements in biosphere reserve zonation, governance and management. Official agreements have been signed between biosphere Reserve managers, local government authorities and other stakeholders, and biosphere reserve management plans and progress reports have been updated and harmonized.

73. **Germany** stressed the importance it places on the exit strategy as delivering quality assurance for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Germany further noted that a national implementation plan for the Lima Action Plan is under finalization, and highlighted its substantial global commitment to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves benefitting reserves around the world through engagement in a wide range of conservation and management projects and initiatives.

74. **Mexico** drew attention to its ongoing efforts at ensuring alignment between existing plans and strategies and the Lima Action Plan. Mexico further highlighted a series of training

courses organized for managers and technicians reaching nearly all biosphere reserve managers in the country, noted the ongoing review and expansion of several existing biosphere reserves, and took note of the increasing engagement of the Mexican MAB programme with urban areas.

75. **China** referred to the ongoing work to familiarize its national network of biosphere reserves with the MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan, highlighting presentations and discussion held at national network meetings and training courses over the past year. China also drew attention to a new national awards scheme, through which young scientists and biosphere reserve rangers are recognized for outstanding achievements. Finally, China took note of the ongoing development of a national action plan to be published in 2018 to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the country's engagement with the programme.

76. **Honduras** thanked the Secretariat for its support in the periodic review of the Rio Platano site and for the elaboration of a proposal for a new site named San Marco de Colon. The representative highlighted strengthening of interconnectivity of biosphere reserves within the country, and at the international level with the Trifinio-Fraternidad site, and the importance of working on training, capacity building, and awareness raising within communities.

77. **Kazakhstan** underscored its strong biosphere reserve network. It highlighted the integration of biosphere reserves in national legislation, and how it had encouraged youth participation within the MAB national committee.

78. **Slovakia** noted that the MAB committee had been restructured this year, and now included more representation of different groups, not only scientists. The representative highlighted the flexible governance mechanisms in Slovakian biosphere reserves. It noted that it was undergoing periodic reviews for national and transboundary BRs, and had been developing a national MAB communications strategy.

79. **Austria** highlighted the fact that it had a MAB research budget, and had launched a call for research project this past year and had just selected five research projects just made five research projects for 400,000 euros in collaboration involving multiple countries. It mentioned workshop on sustainable energy within Austrian BRs.

80. **Peru** noted that the Lima Action plan had given stronger impetus for the programme in Peru, notably to create more biosphere reserves. It thanked the government of Flanders and the UNESCO Secretariat for its support through the BRESEP project. It highlighted several workshops, on green economies and research notably. It underscored that it was applying the Lima Action Plan at the national level.

81. **St Vincent and Grenadines** thanked other countries for their reports, notably as they could help identify best practices, which would be very helpful for small island states. She asked that countries indicate what were their challenges in the implementation of the Lima action plan, and to know more on how indigenous and local communities are involved in the sites.

82. **Madagascar** noted the work ongoing at several Biosphere Reserves, expressing support for a “fund for the biosphere” to ensure sustained support. Madagascar further highlighted exchanges that have been organized with Comoros under MAB, and the preparation of plans for the improvement of existing biosphere reserves.

Regional and Thematic Network Reports

83. Algeria took the floor for **ArabMAB**, noting that the network contained 30 BRs, and involved many thousands of people. The representative noted that the MAB committees from the region fixed themselves the mission of meeting Lima Action Plan requirements. She highlighted 2 main events: the Tangier meeting with over 100 participants from the region, including BR managers, IHP, local players and civil society, which prepared an appeal to COP22 to use biosphere reserves as laboratories for sustainable development. The second major event was a meeting in Algiers on implementing the new MAB Strategy, in addition to a thematic workshop on governance, finances and green economy.

84. France took the floor for **EuroMAB** and noted it had organized the EuroMAB meeting this year, with more than 200 delegates from 41 countries including southern part of Mediterranean. The framework for all discussions was the SDGs as well as the Lima Action plan. 15 different workshops took place – on communications, branding, indigenous groups, urban matters, climate change, governance; transboundary; networking; support for periodic reviews etc. Key themes that came out of the meeting were the importance of research (notably transdisciplinary research) governance and the creation of networks. France noted that Ireland would host the EuroMAB meeting in 2018.

85. Ghana reported on **AfriMAB** priority areas, notably the need to ensure financing for the Afrimab bureau, the importance of communications tools to ensure collaboration between African biosphere reserves, capacity building of BR managers, and the consolidation of a fund (AfriBiofund) to facilitate governance. Some key activities highlighted included the naming of baby gorilla on behalf of AfriMAB, the collaboration initiated between different African BRs looking at the business perspective. The representative highlighted the region’s implementation of Lima Action Plan, notably in relation to green economy. It highlighted the survey undertaken on poaching in BRs, and the region’s activities on sustainable extraction.

86. **Indonesia (for SeaBRnet)**. A regional meeting on role of local government in biosphere reserve management was held in 2016 in the Wakatobi Biosphere Reserve, Indonesia, resulting in Wakatobi Recommendations. Also in 2016, a regional discussion on cooperation between UNESCO programmes in support of the 2030 Agenda was organized in Bali, Indonesia, with participation by all four subregional networks in Asia and the Pacific. The 10th SeaBRnet meeting was held in 2017, with participation from the IGGP and World Heritage programmes and a thematic focus on the development of national and subregional priorities for the implementation of the LAP. Finally, a series of Indonesian Youth leadership camps for climate change were held, with participation from a diverse group of youths from across Indonesia.

87. Republic of Korea for **EABRN**: Member states now preparing national action plans in accordance with the Lima Action Plan – China will launch its national plan next year on the

40th anniversary of its engagement with MAB. EABRN contributed actively to the July 2016 discussion in Bali, which saw contributions from several EABRN member countries. The 15th meeting of the EABRN will be held in Kazakhstan this summer, and the 7th EABRN training course will be held in China and Republic of Korea in the autumn of the same year.

88. Mexico for **IberoMAB**: IberoMAB covers 183 biosphere reserves in 23 countries. All participated very actively in the Lima Congress, and a series of workshops have been conducted in the period after the event. Discussions have been held on the adaptation of the Lima Action Plan to the network, as well as on the role of gender equality and the role of women in biosphere reserves. Mainstreaming of gender perspectives in MAB plans and should be prioritized. Biosphere reserves should be seen as strategic centers for sustainable development, with focus on key issues such as climate change. Transboundary cooperation has been encouraged among IberoMAB members, resulting in projects engaging multiple countries – for example Chile, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama on coastal and marine cooperation. Further discussions are planned, with Colombia hosting the 18th IberoMAB meeting.

89. Sweden for **NordMAB**: NordMAB brings together MAB communities in the northern hemisphere. Two meetings have been held since the Lima Congress, formulating activity plans and conducting training to boost the confidence of biosphere reserve managers. Other activities are also carried out, including Youth On Ice, which together youth for visits to the Arctic and discussions on issues such as climate change.

90. Republic of Korea for the **Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves**: An annual network meeting is held in the Jeju Biosphere Reserve. The network supports a range of educational and research programmes targeting issues such as the impacts of climate change. A biannual newsletter is published with active contributions from members.

Observers

91. **Egypt** highlighted its focus on scientific research, notably through young scientists awards. It noted that six research projects had been selected from biosphere reserves and other protected areas in Egypt. Egypt also reported on recent publications on biosphere reserves on land uses and endangered species, on four Egypt MAB bulletins issues and on periodic reviews undertaken for multiple sites. Egypt noted that the MAB committee had been renewed and guidelines for proposals of sites were being elaborated.

92. **Tanzania** focused its intervention on extension of biosphere reserves, notably on the green economies, on raising awareness with 185 farmers, identifying green economies, honey, ecotourism, agriculture. The representative reported on the country's biodiversity survey and noted that its priority in the coming years would be more training on nomination process for biosphere reserves; on trying to find funding support for BR nominations, on promoting exchanges, research, and developing MAB promotional materials.

93. **Kenya** reported that all six biosphere reserves had gone through periodic reviews. The representative noted that Kenya planned to do national plan of action based on the Lima Action Plan in 2017-2018. He highlighted the importance that research work be closely

related and be applied to the management of biosphere reserves. He welcomed the support from UK in various activities, and reported on capacity building workshops in various sites.

94. **The United States of America** noted that it had been an early partner in MAB, and was now undergoing a major review of its biosphere reserves, learning from the Rocky Mountain experience the previous year. The representative reported on an August 2016 workshop on training biosphere reserve staff on periodic review process, where 15 sites present plus the secretariat, as well as international experts, revised periodic reviews, leading to a better understanding of the way forward for the MAB programme. He described the reactivation of MAB committee the previous year, and the fact that a focal point had been designated to assist biosphere reserves with the periodic reviews. He reported on the periodic reviews undertaken by the network, noting that 14 sites had been positively reviewed, and 17 had voluntarily withdrawn, many in order to re-apply or be subsumed in larger sites.

95. **Australia** took note that the Australian Departments of Foreign Affairs and Environment have recently been active in addressing MAB issues, underscoring that Australia will actively pursue the Exit Strategy. Australia further noted its intention to develop future biosphere reserves with significant indigenous engagement, and reiterated its intention to focus and review sites with overlapping designations to guard against the dilution of management aims and objectives.

96. **Cuba** expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for its work, often under significant financial constraints. In its 70th year of engagement with UNESCO, Cuba reaffirmed its commitment to cooperation with UNESCO and in particular MAB, and encouraged further exchange and cooperation. Cuba took note that the implementation of MAB at the national level is aligned with national and international development commitments. Finally, Cuba highlighted the International Environment and Development Congress is held regularly for 20 years, with active contributions towards this year's event through the MAB Committee.

97. **Switzerland** expressed gratitude to France and EuroMAB for its successful recent meetings, and drew attention to a collaborative project with Peru focusing on chocolate from biosphere reserves. Switzerland further highlighted ongoing international cooperation on UNESCO's science programme, and stressed the need to focus on quality assurance in MAB and in the management of Biosphere Reserves.

98. **Ghana** highlighted its participation in AfriMAB activities, and reiterated its commitment to further strengthen the management of its biosphere reserves, drawing attention to projects on water quality and cooperative exchange arrangements between different reserves – including exchanges with UK experts on social capital.

99. **Sri Lanka** highlighted its ongoing follow-up to Periodic Review reports and comments, and its intention to align Sri Lanka's biosphere reserves with the Lima Action Plan. Sri Lanka stressed biosphere reserve branding as an area of particular interest, along with biosphere reserve exchanges and the promotion of the MAB and biosphere reserve concepts to a wider audience through the establishment of a network of national reserves based on the Biosphere Reserve model.

VII. Implementation of the Exit Strategy

100. The Secretariat introduced this item by reminding that the purpose of the Exit Strategy is to improve the credibility and the quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and to help Member States to meet the required standards for their biosphere reserve to become fully functional in conformity with the criteria of the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves and the Pamplona recommendations for transboundary sites. The Exit Strategy concerned 270 sites in 75 countries when adopted in 2013, including 4 transboundary sites. Five withdrawals of sites by two countries (UK and Austria) took place since the adoption of the Exit Strategy. She mentioned that two other countries will announce withdrawal of sites at this session. The overall response rate has been very high: all countries did send a response as of May 2017. Out of the 270 sites concerned, in March 2017, after the Advisory Committee meeting, 126 sites were meeting the criteria including 3 transboundary sites fulfilling the Pamplona recommendations. More than 80 % of the sites concerned were designated prior to the adoption of the Statutory Framework.

101. The Secretariat highlighted the several encouraging results, leading to a large number of biosphere reserves that had improved zonation, governance and management, within the given time frame, resulting in that they now meet the criteria. Several national workshops had been held to discuss the periodic review process and reporting in concerned countries, capacity building workshop, as well as technical missions from the Secretariat, UNESCO Field Offices and experts from sites from the WNBR.

102. The Secretariat provided some global statistics detailed by region and introduced the table in the annex to the working document on the item that compiles the status of the sites which are not meeting the criteria, or that did not comply with the statutory framework by not having submitted a periodic report. The Secretariat informed that the Bureau will look at the additional information received and that the final table will then be shared for the decision of the MAB Council. She also mentioned that the Bureau made some proposals to be considered by the Council, for the sites concerned in the table including on next steps for ensuring a continued quality process.

103. Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the Chairperson stated that the exit strategy was actually a strategy to improve the Global Network and that it was already a success, although still not complete. He praised the work of the countries as a significant number of sites responded, sent reports and improved their sites. He thanked his predecessor from Mexico and praised his courage to launch this strategy in 2013. He also thanked the Secretariat as well as the regional and national offices of UNESCO and the MAB National Committees for their important work. Finally, he expressed his appreciation for the considerable work of the Advisory Committee during these last years.

104. He recalled that the exit strategy was both ambitious and courageous as well as demanding. He noted that the exit strategy represented an opportunity for the global network to position itself as a network of excellence that demonstrates to the world what biosphere reserves can offer for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. An enormous

amount of work has already been done and the objective is to leave nobody behind, have as few sites as possible leave the Network and to support those concerned.

105. He also mentioned the follow-up to this strategy and the need for the MAB programme to look beyond this strategy. The goal is not to have as many sites as possible but sites that work and are models. Finally, he recalled that the Council was at a historic moment, that it should seize the opportunity to improve collectively, to support the sites that need it, through solidarity, and by being strong and demanding. In response to his inquiry, the Secretary confirmed to the President and to the Members of the Council that the Council has legal authority to take a decision on the removal of sites concerned by the exit strategy from the global network of sites.

106. Many Member countries and observers took the floor to express their views on this issue.

107. All countries welcomed the importance of the strategy in strengthening the network and ensuring its credibility as well as that of the MAB programme. All countries indicated that it was necessary to change the name of the strategy, which could be interpreted in a negative way, while it aimed at strengthening the Network and improving the functioning of the sites. A large majority of countries welcomed the success of the strategy, notably because of the high response rate, the fact that many sites now meet the criteria, having made significant changes in zonation and site governance. They highlighted efforts by countries, the Secretariat, UNESCO offices and the Advisory Committee. A large majority of countries agreed that this strategy should be carried out and concluded. A large majority also indicated that a new permanent mechanism or process should be established to continuously further improve the quality of the Global Network in the future and to mobilize resources and solutions to support sites and countries in need.

108. The concerns expressed mainly concerned the consequences and implications of a possible Council decision to remove sites. Questions were raised about the additional time that could be given to countries and sites that had efforts to continue the work initiated; the political consequences if the Council were to decide to remove sites from the global network; the necessity of capitalizing on the network's achievements and experiences, including expertise within the Advisory Committee; the need to remain flexible in terms of procedures and to take account of socio-cultural specificities, including at the zonation level; the possible demotivation of countries and sites concerned if they were invited to resubmit a new nomination dossier ; lack of clarity in procedures and operational guidance on the Periodic Review process; the possibility of modifying the Periodic Review period to 5 years; the means available to support countries and sites facing difficulties to better assist them; the fact that some sites will not be able to meet the criteria despite their goodwill; the need to take into account the populations and local communities involved; the reputation of the MAB program and the World Network if a clear decision is not taken regarding sites that do not meet the criteria or do not adhere to the Statutory Framework; the importance of providing a deadline for the sites concerned; the need for a follow-up procedure and a process to further improve the quality of the Global Network and thus identify mechanisms and means to help countries avoid exit.

109. Finally, the importance of the Periodic Review process was praised by many as essential for improving the quality of their sites at the national level.

110. The Chair also reported on the work undertaken by the Bureau to review the additional information received and indicated that the number of biosphere reserves affected by the strategy had decreased from 100 sites to 85. He explained that reports received for the first time on 15 May had therefore not been considered by the Advisory Committee had not been discussed at the Bureau, in accordance with the evaluation procedures.

111. An open working group was set up by the Council to improve the draft decision chaired by Martin Price of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the group met several times. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a table of affected sites organized by category (transboundary sites, sites in conflict zones, sites that did not submit a report, sites that submitted reports late so that these could not be examined by the Advisory Committee, among others).

112. After individual consultations with Member states and observers and reflecting on the discussions held in plenary and in the working group, the Chair made a proposal for a draft decision which was presented to the Council for discussion. After discussion, the Council adopted the following decision:

The MAB Council decides to complete the « Exit Strategy » in 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', to ensure that they serve as models for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MAB Council decides the following with regard to the sites concerned by the "Exit Strategy":

1. **For sites which have provided information and meet the criteria**, the MAB Council warmly congratulates the Member States concerned and expresses its thanks to all stakeholders who have engaged in this important process.
2. Furthermore, the MAB Council encourages the MAB Secretariat, national commissions for UNESCO, National MAB Committees and concerned biosphere reserves to convey positive messages that inform about and celebrate this success.
3. The Council further acknowledges that certain Member States have decided to withdraw sites under their jurisdiction from the World Network and congratulates them on showing their commitment in this way.
4. **For biosphere reserves in conflict zones**, the MAB Council decides that these sites remain in the WNBR as long as these conflicts continue. These sites should not be obliged to send a report. The Secretariat and the WNBR will support the biosphere reserve concerned to the extent possible. When the conflict ceases, the biosphere reserve should be supported by the MAB National Committee and the Secretariat, the Regional networks and the WNBR including an evaluation of the conditions to advise

the biosphere reserve and the national Committee on how the biosphere reserve can fulfil its obligations under the Statutory framework.

5. For transboundary biosphere reserves, the MAB Council adopts the following process,

- a. The Member States must submit the national periodic report by 30th September 2017;
- b. This report will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2018;
- c. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information after evaluation by the IACBR;
- d. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 whether the site meets the criteria;
- e. The MAB Secretariat and the World Network will support the transboundary biosphere reserves in their specific challenges.

6. For biosphere reserves which have provided comprehensive information, which has been evaluated by the IACBR and the MAB Council, but the site does not meet the criteria, the Council adopts the following process:

- a. The Member States must submit additional information/answers to the MAB Secretariat by 30th September 2017 or 2018;
- b. This information will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB Council in 2018 and/or 2019;
- c. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information after the evaluation by the IACBR;
- d. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 and 2019 whether the site meets the criteria;
- e. In the case the Biosphere reserve meets the criteria, the Council will formally recognise this;
- f. Member States will have the option to submit a new nomination by 30th September 2018 or 2019;
- g. Member States will have the option to request an extension in area, by 30th September 2018 or 2019, as appropriate;
- h. The decision that the site does not meet the criteria and will therefore no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network will be effective as of the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020.

7. For biosphere reserves which have provided a Periodic review report or other appropriate information that has not yet been evaluated by the IACBR and the MAB Council, the Council adopts the following process :

- a. The Periodic review report/information received will be evaluated by the IACBR and then the MAB ICC in 2018.;
- b. Member States will have the option to provide complementary information either before 30 September 2017 or after the evaluation by the IACBR;
- c. The MAB Council will determine in 2018 whether the site meets the criteria;
- d. In the case the Biosphere reserve meets the criteria the Council will formally recognise this;
- e. The decision that the site does not meet the criteria and therefore will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network will

be effective as of the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020;

- f. In case that the biosphere reserve does not meet the criteria, its further consideration will be as described in paragraph 6.

8. For biosphere reserves which have not provided any Periodic review report which allows evaluation as to whether the biosphere reserve meets criteria, the MAB Council decides that the site will no longer be referred to as a biosphere reserve which is part of the Network at the closure of the MAB Council session in 2020, and adopts the following process: The Member State may submit:

- a. a periodic review report by 30th September 2017 which will allow the site to follow the process described in paragraph 7; or
- b. a formal working commitment with an explanation of issues and needs and a detailed workplan and timeline, submitted by 30th of September 2017, in order to submit the Periodic Review report at the latest by 30 September 2018 or 2019; or
- c. a new nomination form in conformity with the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at its earliest convenience and before 30 September 2019, to be evaluated in 2020 by the IACBR and then the MAB Council.

9. In cases biosphere reserves cannot meet the criteria, the MAB Council encourages the Member State concerned to withdraw the site under the provisions of paragraph 8 article 9 of the Statutory Framework.

10. With regard to all of these decisions of the Council, the MAB Secretariat will communicate the decision to the appropriate levels of the Member State concerned, with copy to the permanent delegation and national UNESCO Commission, within four weeks of the Council decision, specifying the requirements for each concerned biosphere reserve. Recipients will be asked to confirm the receipt of the communication.

11. The MAB Council asks the MAB Secretariat to be precise in all communications, when transmitting recommendations, decisions etc.

12. Furthermore, the MAB Council encourages all Member States, National MAB Committees and biosphere reserves as well as the Regional Networks to share their experience with periodic review reporting within the WNBR and offer, as appropriate, support to biosphere reserve in order to meet the criteria.

13. Support to the sites that are not meeting the criteria or have difficulties in reporting the results of their periodic review process are suggested below:

- a. Organizing specific technical workshops targeting the difficulties such as zonation and governance. Host countries should cover the costs of such workshops. Such workshops could also be systematically be organized and facilitated at the regional networks meetings (such as the EuroMAB Network with a support desk workshop being organized for new biosphere reserve proposals and periodic review reports);
- b. Encouraging eligible UNESCO National Commissions and MAB national

Committees to apply for financial support through the UNESCO Participation Programme;

- c. Requesting existing UNESCO Chairs and Centers (such as ERAIFT, the MAB Chair in France, UNESCO Centre in Spain) to provide courses and training facilities to requesting sites and countries;
- d. Mobilizing the existing expertise and human resources for technical and support missions, including inviting experts of the International Advisory Committee (active and from previous mandate), other biosphere reserves staff, the UNESCO Secretariat and UNESCO field Offices; whenever possible the costs of travel and lodging should be supported by the host countries, with support from UNESCO, and no fees should be provided as per common practice in the MAB Programme;
- e. Using the operational guidelines (in process) to share typical issues faced by biosphere reserves and solutions, using the diversity of the WNBR;
- f. Using peer periodic review support. A biosphere reserve that meets the criteria can support and guide a site that is having difficulties to undertake the periodic review report and meeting the criteria. This peer process should be done on a voluntary basis;
- g. Member States could be invited to contribute to donate to the MAB Fund to support some of the activities mentioned above, in order for the World Network to be used as a powerful tool for enhancing the credibility and quality of its sites and for demonstrating cooperation and solidarity in action.

VIII. Periodic Review Reports and Follow-Up Information Received since the last MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC) Meeting

113. The Secretariat introduced this item and indicated that the high number of reports examined by the Advisory Committee was due to the exit strategy. She presented the tables for both the periodic review report and the follow up recommendations using a colour code as for previous MAB sessions. She specified that several sites provided additional information as requested by the advisory committee and that the information was examined by the Bureau. She indicated precisely when the recommendation had been modified and that the updated recommendations will be finalized in the report.

114. Several Members asked the floor to enquire about specific recommendations, specific sites and about the process for reporting as a transboundary biosphere reserve for the national report part. The Secretariat invited the countries to reply to the recommendation and to send any additional information and or clarification to the Secretariat so it can be taken into account and transmitted. As regards the national reports for TBR, a clear time frame will be specified to the concerned countries.

115. The MAB Council then endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory committee, while making some changes therein for some of the sites which had provided additional information and that were examined by the MAB Bureau.

116. In addition to the recommendations endorsed and modified by the MAB Council below, the specific decision taken by the MAB Council for the sites concerned by the exit strategy (see para 112) will apply to the concerned sites and will be reflected in the final recommendations sent to the countries by the MAB Secretariat.

A. Recommendations for New Periodic Review Reports

117. **Laguna Blanca Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review Report of the Laguna Blanca Biosphere Reserve, Argentina, designated in 1982. The biosphere reserve is a typical treeless Patagonian steppe with crystalline rocks, including some sedimentary rocks with fossils of the genera *Ostrea* and *Trigonia*. This area is of particular interest for its birds, and was in fact established to protect the black-necked swan (*Cygnus melanocoryphus*), which is found here in great abundance.

118. Following previous recommendations, the biosphere reserve has established a management committee, encouraged the sustainable use of vicuña fibre, monitored and produced a study of the high Andean wetlands that form part of the biosphere reserve, implemented a participatory action research programme for archaeological heritage and improved the status of the biosphere reserve within the provincial legislative framework. In 2009, two sub-sites within the biosphere reserve, Lagunas Altoandinas and Puneñas de Catamarca, were nominated as a RAMSAR wetland site.

119. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. However, the Advisory Committee noted from the documents submitted that the zonation has not altered since the previous periodic review (2000), although the total surface area of the biosphere reserve has decreased from 973,270 ha (core: 163,450 ha; buffer: 48,170 ha; transition: 761,650 ha) to 640,505.9 ha (core: 113,838.2 ha; buffer: 37,551.7 ha; 489,116 ha). The Advisory Committee also noted that the buffer zone is not completely surrounded by a transition area. Therefore, further information is requested by 15 May 2017.

120. **Nacuñan Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the Second Periodic Review Report of the Nacuñan Biosphere Reserve, Argentina, designated in 1986. Nacuñan is located in the Province of Mendoza in the plains at the foot of the Andes. The area consists of semi-arid upland grasslands, shrubby steppe and scrub, and shrubby and herbaceous woodlands, as well as wetlands.

121. Following previous recommendations, the biosphere reserve has improved its overall conservation through the extension of the transition zone from 6,718 ha in 2000 to 26,218 ha. The objective of this extension was to incorporate the bordering livestock fields included in the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) scheme, developed by the Provincial Native Forest Programme (*Programa Provincial de Bosques Nativos – Ley 8195*), which took into account the revised zonation.

122. This integration of the new transition area with the town of Nacuñán and the neighbouring cattle fields is now underway. A research programme has been developed to assess the impact, and evaluate and develop monitoring and control of invasive species. Special emphasis has been placed on orienting research projects towards socio-economic

issues. Financing of the reserve has been divided between several provincial and national institutions.

123. The biosphere reserve has a well-established management committee and a management plan.

124. The Advisory Committee congratulated the biosphere reserve for the solid research work it has carried out and concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

125. **Costero del Sur Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of the Costero del Sur Biosphere Reserve, Argentina, designated in 1985. The biosphere reserve is located in the Province of Buenos Aires in the southern part of the Rio de la Plata estuary on the Atlantic coast. It is situated in a humid and swampy region that comprises pampas grasslands characterized by deep, fertile soils. It includes coastal areas, flooded and unflooded swamps, wetlands and dry forests.

126. Based on the previous recommendations, the new actions of the municipalities involved, for the first time, joint effective and consensual actions for the management of the reserve. The initial result of these actions was the formation of a participatory management committee composed of institutions of both municipalities in November 2014. This committee has been operational since that date and holds monthly meetings, responding to the coordination requirements of the reserve. It is also developing a management plan with an interdisciplinary team of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Museum of La Plata. The Management Committee and these two partners are currently working on a revised zonation of the biosphere reserve, in order to incorporate a buffer zone and a transition zone.

127. The biosphere reserve has organized a variety of environmental education activities, conferences with environmental specialists, guided tours, and observation studies of the flora and fauna. It has also established a twinning agreement with the Coastal Biosphere Reserve of Argentina and Uruguay.

128. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee noted that the Management Committee is currently working on the revised zonation, and requested a copy including the accurate size of the biosphere reserve, as three different areas are given (1,337 ha, 375 km² and 25,000 ha). The Advisory Committee request to resubmit a periodic review by 15 May 2017.

129. The MAB Council welcomed the additional zonation information sent by the national authorities. However, the MAB Council, concluded that the zonation has to be revised as it still does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

130. **Yabotí Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Yabotí Biosphere Reserve, Argentina, designated in 1995. Yabotí is located in the Brazilian rainforest biogeographical region. The biosphere reserve constitutes a rich subtropical forest ecosystem, with a high diversity of species in the

herbaceous, underwood and tree layers. The fauna is diverse, including many endangered and rare species of reptiles, birds and mammals.

131. In light of previous recommendations, a ground survey has been carried out to revise the zonation of the biosphere reserve. To address risk assessment concerns, a new coastal road that takes into consideration conservation objectives has been designed and discussed during meetings of the Management Committee.

132. The Advisory Committee noted the lack of changes in the zonation of the reserve, but observed small differences when undertaking a comparison with the first Periodic Review. In the 2006 review, the biosphere reserve had a total surface of 236,613 ha (core: 20,658 ha; buffer: 21,921 ha; transition: 194,034 ha), however the current review gives a total surface area of 236,013 ha, which implies an increase in the size of the core area and buffer zone, but a decrease in the transition area (core: 21,194 ha; buffer: 22,335 ha; transition: 192,484 ha).

133. The Advisory Committee also noted that the biosphere reserve still lacks a management plan and that the zonation does not correspond to the given figures. Therefore, Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework and requests more detailed information on the zonation by 15 May 2017.

134. **Kosciusko Biosphere Reserve, Prince Regent Biosphere Reserve, Unnamed Biosphere Reserve, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) Biosphere Reserve, Yathong Biosphere Reserve, Hattah-Kulkyne & Murray Kulkyne Biosphere Reserve, Wilson's Promontory Biosphere Reserve and Riverland Biosphere Reserves (Australia).** The Advisory Committee took a note of the official letter requesting an extension to submit periodic review reports of the biosphere reserves listed above until 30 September 2017. The letter providing a rationale also contained an information on continuous work with the relevant sub-national governments and key stakeholders to resolve the status of the Australian biosphere reserves. The need to negotiate outcomes of these processes with all the key stakeholder and communities involved in these biosphere reserves was emphasized. This is particularly the case for consultations with Aboriginal Traditional Owners, to ensure that the complexities of traditional land access and management are appropriately considered. The rationale further noted that this process not be unnecessarily hastened, as this may risk stakeholder relationships and engagement and jeopardize the future of these biosphere reserves.

135. As all these sites are concerned by the Exit Strategy, the requested deadline will be submitted to the Bureau of the MAB Council at its next session for its consideration.

136. **“W” Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Benin).** The MAB Council acknowledge receipt of the periodic review on the Benin side of the “W” Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. This report sent after the deadline has not been reviewed by the Advisory Committee.

137. **Cerrado Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review for this biosphere reserve, which was created in 1994 and extended in 2000

and 2001. The reserve includes several types of forest, savannah and other ecosystems associated with the Cerrado Biome, which is a biodiversity hotspot for conservation priorities. The southern part of the reserve borders the capital Brasilia.

138. During the last twenty-one years much has changed in the Cerrado Biosphere Reserve, with significant urban expansion in the territory of the Federal District and its surrounding area. The territories covered by the States of Maranhao, Tocantins and Piaui have experienced growing deforestation for large-scale agriculture, in addition to extensive cattle-raising and large forestry projects, which account for a large proportion of Brazilian grain and fibre production. In relation to governance, available information shows low levels of implementation and effectiveness, in the absence of the formalization of Committees.

139. On a positive note, the four States and the Federal District Governments intend to implement the Cerrado Biosphere Reserve. In this regard, efforts are needed to rethink the Cerrado Biosphere Reserve in terms of geographic boundaries and to develop a governance model to ensure effective management by public and private institutions at the local level. An action plan for the biosphere reserve has also been elaborated with the commitment of the five states involved.

140. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities:

- Submit a report of the activation of the management committee by 30 September 2017.
- Submit a revised zonation map, with clear georeferenced borders as well as the total area of the core, buffer and transition zones by 30 September 2017.
- Promote the communication and the vision of Cerrado Biosphere Reserve as unity and not as five different States.
- Assure the effective participation of the civil society and other stakeholder in the management of the biosphere reserve.

141. **Ali Botouch Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the answer by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. It also noted with appreciation the attempt to explore the potential of the site to meet criteria by extending the site to include adjacent municipalities.

142. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of local communities’ participation in the process of upgrading the site and acknowledged the challenges of communication with relevant stakeholders. It also took note of the lack of interest and support over the past three years, which seems to indicate that the biosphere reserve designation is not perceived as an asset to regional development by respective municipalities.

143. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the

World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

144. **Bistrishko Branishte Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the answer by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. It also noted with appreciation the attempt to explore the potential of the site to meet criteria by extending the site to include adjacent municipality.

145. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of local communities’ participation in the process of upgrading the site and acknowledged the effort made to invite the representatives of the Sofia municipality to participate at the meeting with the UNESCO experts in May 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the challenges of communication with relevant stakeholders. It also took note of the lack of interest and support over the past three year that seems to indicate that the biosphere reserve designation is not perceived as a priority to regional development by respective municipalities.

146. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

147. **Dupkata Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. It also noted with appreciation the efforts of the Bulgarian authorities to take steps towards meeting the MAB criteria by Dupkata Biosphere Reserve. It also noted that this site was part of the national effort for upgrading of Bulgarian biosphere reserves during 2015-2016.

148. The Advisory Committee expressed regrets that the major concerns indicated by the stakeholders could not be overcome and that the site is not able to meet the criteria with no stakeholder interest and participation.

149. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

150. **Bayuvi dupki – Dzhindzhiritza Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. It also noted with appreciation efforts made to meet MAB criteria by enlarging the site to include the whole territory of Pirin National Park, which will constitute the core areas and buffer zones, as well as the creation of transition areas including the adjacent municipalities.

151. The Advisory Committee also took note of the actions of the Ministry of Environment and Water over the last three years as well as the activities of the Expert Group for upgrading the Bulgarian biosphere reserves. It however regretted that despite all these efforts no satisfactory results have been achieved as regards support and interest in the biosphere reserve in the respective municipalities when comprehensive stakeholder engagement is crucial.

152. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

153. **Chuprene Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. It also noted the effort made to meet criteria by enlarging the site as well as inviting representatives of respective communities to participate at the meeting with the UNESCO experts in May 2016, with the goal of understanding the Seville strategy and criteria. It also noted that this site was part of the national effort for upgrading of Bulgarian biosphere reserves during 2015-2016.

154. The Advisory Committee regretted that despite the multilateral discussions one of the community already refused to participate in the upgrading process.

155. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

156. **Kamchia Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to upgrade Kamchia Biosphere Reserve. It also noted that this site was part of the national effort for upgrading of Bulgarian biosphere reserves during 2015-2016.

157. The Advisory Committee expressed regrets that despite all actions taken, the stakeholders did not accept the proposal for participating in the upgrading of the site and expressed other priorities.

158. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the

World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

159. **Kupena Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to adopt necessary measures towards upgrading Kupena Biosphere Reserve to meet the criteria. It also noted that this site was part of the national effort for upgrading of Bulgarian biosphere reserves during 2015-2016.

160. The Advisory Committee expressed its regrets that despite all actions taken, the stakeholders did not embrace the idea of the biosphere reserve.

161. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

162. **Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply by the Bulgarian authorities and the actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for upgrading of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to adopt necessary measures towards upgrading Mantaritsa Biosphere Reserve to meet the criteria, by enlarging the site to implement proper zonation and to initiate participation of adjacent municipalities in biosphere reserve activities and management. It also noted that this site was part of the national effort for upgrading of Bulgarian biosphere reserves during 2015-2016.

163. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Bulgarian authorities to continue to work with stakeholders to clear all their concerns related to the site upgrading.

164. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation of the last attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process.

165. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the recent attempt of the Bulgarian authorities to gain support for the upgrading process. In the case that the local communities are not responding or negatively responding by 15 May 2017, the Advisory Committee supports the proposal of the Bulgarian authorities to withdraw this site from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

166. **Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response made by the Bulgarian authorities and actions taken as indicated in the “Road map” for revision of the Bulgarian Biosphere Reserves designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to adopt necessary measures towards transforming Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve in order to meet the MAB criteria.

167. The Advisory Committee expressed regrets that despite all actions adopted in 2014-2016, especially inviting the municipality of Blagoevgrad and the Rila National Park Directorate to undertake steps for revision of Parangalitsa site and for updating the site, there was no positive outcome achieved as the municipality and the Rila National Park administration did not express interest in creating a post-Seville site. Therefore, the site is not able to meet the criteria based on lack of stakeholder interests, support and participation.

168. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the contribution of Parangalitsa Biosphere Reserve to the World network in the past and recommended the Bulgarian National MAB Committee to consider withdrawing the site from the World network of Biosphere Reserves.

169. **Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (Cambodia).** The Advisory Committee took a note of the official letter from Cambodia requesting an extension of the submission of periodic review reports of Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve until middle of September 2018. This request was justified as follows: the management of Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (TSBR) is under multiple government agencies and local authorities and the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia is responsible for the core areas and partly for the buffer zone of TSBR. Therefore, Periodic Review Report of TSBR thus requires a series of inter-governmental agency coordination in order to collect all relevant information and inputs, which has in turn taken longer time and resources than expected.

170. As this site is concerned by the Exit Strategy, the requested deadline will be submitted to the Bureau of the MAB Council at its next session for its consideration.

171. The MAB Council noted with the satisfaction that Cambodian authorities submitted the complete information on the implementation of the follow-up recommendations of the 2012 ICC. The MAB Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

172. **Dja Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review, sent after the Exit Strategy deadline. The biosphere reserve designated in 1981 is located in Southern part of the country and is part of the Congo Basin Forest endowed with a wide of ecosystem and varied flora and fauna biodiversity. The biosphere reserve includes a Natural World Heritage site.

173. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that with regard to the 2008 request of the MAB ICC, there has been an improved involvement of the local communities in the management of the area and the revitalization of the actor's forum. Many consultative stakeholders meetings were organized within and outside the biosphere reserve.

174. The Advisory Committee noted that there is confusion with the features of biosphere reserves and those of the world heritage site. The terminologies like reactive monitoring mission and outstanding universal value are used in the biosphere reserve periodic review report (page 10).

175. The Advisory Committee noted inconsistencies between the description of the biosphere reserve with two zones (core area 526,004 ha; transition area 950,000 ha), the figures provided in page 11 (core area 526,004 ha; buffer: 76,000 ha and transition area 950,000 ha) and the legend of the biosphere reserve map provided in page 19. Moreover, the buffer (76,000 ha) is reported as under development through the implementation of a specific project which is not yet completed.

176. As regard to the management, the core area is reported as subject to a strict protection regime while the transition area is defined as “a corridor for activities ecologically sustainable where human activities are regulated and / or controlled in concordance with the principles of “rights of use”, which should apply to a buffer zone.

177. The Advisory Committee considered that the zonation is not clear and the management of the transition zone does not conform to the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

178. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the WNBR.

179. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities resubmit a new nomination form with all the requested annexes when the zonation will be completed.

180. **General information from the Central African Republic.** The advisory committee took note of the information provided by the national authority on April 2015 of their wish that Bamingui Bangoran Biosphere Reserve and Basse Lobaye Biosphere Reserve remain in the list of biosphere reserves.

181. **Juan Fernández Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Archipiélago Juan Fernández Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1977. The Juan Fernandez Biosphere Reserve is situated 650 km from the Chilean coast in the Pacific Ocean. It includes the whole archipelago with the islands of Robinson Crusoe, Alexander Selkirk and Santa Clara, and all the islets in the area. The Juan Fernandez Archipelago is volcanic in origin with steep, rugged mountain ranges and deep ravines.

182. The biosphere reserve has started work on the extension proposal, which is to include marine areas previously protected by presidential decrees and the town of San Juan Bautista, with the aim of integrating buffer zones and fully implementing the concept of a biosphere reserve. Simultaneously, work has begun on creating a Management Plan, involving all actors of the archipelago. The expansion and management of the reserve is a comprehensive process that includes the effective participation of the largest possible number of institutions and the local community. Articulating this process entails time and resources that are being sought from different sources of funding.

183. The Periodic Review proposes a significant extension of the total surface area of the biosphere reserve. Previously, the site consisted of just a core area (9,967 ha). The new review proposes a total surface of 1,216,483.45 ha (core area: 117,613.01 ha; buffer zone:

4,722.85 ha; transition area: 1,094,147.59 ha). It is estimated that the extension request could be sent to UNESCO in mid-2017 and that a management plan will be available by the end of the year.

184. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve still **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves because the biosphere reserve still doesn't have the appropriate zoning. In order to fulfil the criteria, the Advisory Committee has requested the submission of an appropriate zonation, a management plan and the formation of a management committee by 15 May 2017.

185. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information and the work that authorities and the local population are carrying out since 2015 to accomplish an appropriate zonation and a governance structure for the site, and explore ways to fulfill the development function of the site. However, the MAB Council, concluded that this technical information should be examined by the Advisory Committee in its next session.

186. **Araucarias Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Araucarias Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1983 and extended in 2010. The Araucarias Biosphere Reserve is located in the Andes range in south-central Chile. It comprises the Conguillío National Park and the Alto Bío-Bío National Reserve. The main feature of this biosphere reserve is the massive presence of *Araucaria* trees.

187. A management plan for the core area has been adopted and previous recommendations have been followed.

188. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and noted that this periodic review should be considered as a follow-up report since the next periodic review should be submitted in 2019.

189. **Cabo de Hornos Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Cabo de Hornos Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2005. This periodic review report was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2016 (a letter was sent to the MAB Secretariat on 30 September, explaining the delay and on 9 October the Periodic Review was submitted).

190. This biosphere reserve forms part of the Magallanes Sub-Polar (or Sub-Antarctic) Evergreen Rainforest, and contains a mosaic of contrasting ecosystems with unique and singular characteristics.

191. Changes were recorded in the spatial configuration of the biosphere reserve during 2005– 2015. Simultaneously, the ministries and services involved proposed the extension of the biosphere reserve to protect terrestrial and marine areas of great biological value. The long-term conservation of biodiversity at this site should be addressed within the territorial planning framework of the Cabo de Hornos commune, and must consider the integration of terrestrial and marine areas.

192. Low impact tourism was proposed as a sustainable development strategy, in accordance with the government's Strategic Development Plan for the region. The coincidence of biogeographical, administrative and cultural limits (relating to the ancestral distribution of the original ethnic group) in the biosphere reserve enables the development of forms of tourism that will be economically sustainable over the long term.

193. The Periodic Review proposes a significant extension of the total surface area of the biosphere reserve. Previously, the site consisted of a total surface area of 4,907,657.2 ha. The new review proposes a total surface area of 15,125,611.34 ha, including the Diego Ramirez Islands.

194. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and noted that this Periodic Review should be considered a follow-up report, as the next Periodic Review is due to be submitted in 2019.

195. Due to the size of the proposed extension, the Advisory Committee recommends the Chilean authorities present a proper extension file.

196. **La Campana-Peñuelas Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of the La Campana-Peñuelas Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1984 and extended in 2009. This biosphere reserve includes the Campana National Park and the Lago Peñuelas National Reserve. The relief is gently undulating with some small hills and several gullies. The highest peaks are 'El Roble' (2,222 m above sea level) and 'La Campana' (1,920 m). The major vegetation type is scrubland with looser (*Cryptocarya alba*), a species of the family Lauraceae, boldea fragran (*Peumus boldus*) and winter's bark (*Drimys winteri*).

197. A management plan for the biosphere reserve has been adopted and previous recommendations have been followed, but information is missing since the requested Periodic Review form has not been used.

198. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and noted that this Periodic Review should be considered a follow-up report, as the next Periodic Review is due to be submitted in 2019.

199. **Laguna San Rafael Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of the Laguna San Rafael Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1979. Located in the Valdivian Forest/Chilean Nothofagus biogeographical region, Laguna San Rafael is an area of great scenic beauty with a highly-varied topography. It encompasses the Continental Patagonian Range with rivers and lakes, the Insular Patagonian Range, the Central Plain and the Patagonian Glaciers.

200. Although the authorities are aware of the importance of extending the biosphere reserve and defining a buffer and transition zone, this has not been done and the current

biosphere reserve consists only of a core area. A management plan has been drafted but has not been approved. The biosphere reserve also lacks a management committee.

201. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. In order to fulfil the criteria, the Advisory Committee has requested the submission of an appropriate zonation, a management plan and the formation of a management committee by 15 May 2017.

202. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information and the engagement of the authorities to accomplish an appropriate zonation and a governance structure for the site.

203. However, the MAB Council, concluded that this technical information should be examined by the Advisory Committee at its next session.

204. **Lauca Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Lauca Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1981. This biosphere reserve is situated in the Puna biogeographic region in the northern part of Chile, which forms part of the Andean Chain. One of the most important habitats is the 'Bofedales' or highland wetlands, as they constitute a source of food and water for both wild and domestic fauna.

205. Community participation in management agreements of the Lauca Biosphere Reserve was reactivated in 2014. The following year, a Public Management Committee was established to help shape regional public policies, and ensure that the concept of biosphere reserves is considered an instrument of land management for the region. The Committee will obtain the management and financial resources necessary to implement the Management Plan with public and private participation.

206. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. In order to fulfil the criteria, the Advisory Committee has requested the submission of an appropriate zonation, a management plan and the formation of a management committee by 15 May 2017.

207. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information and the engagement of the authorities to accomplish an appropriate zonation and a governance structure for the site. However, the MAB Council, concluded that this technical information should be examined by the Advisory Committee in its next session.

208. **Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve (Chile).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Torres del Paine Biosphere Reserve, Chile, designated in 1978. Torres del Paine lies between the Andes Mountains and the Patagonian Steppe in southern Chile, and gives on to the Atlantic coast. The area is one of great scenic beauty with many ridges, crags, glaciers, waterfalls, rivers, lakes and lagoons.

209. A working team of professionals was formed to create a proposal for the extension of the biosphere reserve with appropriate zonation. The local communities were contacted and have met during several meetings, and a new zonation is currently under development.

Currently the biosphere reserve is working with the local community on an action plan. Participatory workshops with associations, municipalities, research and livestock centres have been developed.

210. However, the Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve still **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework because it lacks the appropriate zoning. In order to fulfil the criteria, the Advisory Committee has requested the submission of an appropriate zonation, a management plan and the formation of a management committee by 15 May 2017.

211. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information and the great work that authorities and the local population are carrying out since 2014 to accomplish an appropriate zonation and a governance structure for the site. However, the MAB Council, concluded that this technical information should be examined by the Advisory Committee in its next session.

212. **General recommendation to China.** The Advisory Committee highly acknowledged the procedure for all periodic review reports to assess the status of the sites: each biosphere reserve had benefitted from a national periodic review seminar that had been attended by conservation experts, scientists, government officials, local community residents, business representatives and delegates from other national biosphere reserves, who made pertinent recommendations on each site.

213. **Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve (China).** This site is concerned by the Exit Strategy. The Advisory Committee took a note of the official information from Chinese authorities that Dinghushan Biosphere Reserve report will be submitted by 15 May 2017 latest due to a translation process.

214. The MAB Council acknowledged the submission of the Periodic Review Report which included the response to the ICC 1998 recommendations. However, it cannot make the decision as the Periodic Review report has not been examined by the Advisory Committee.

215. **Xilingol Biosphere Reserve (China).** This site is concerned by the Exit Strategy. The Advisory Committee took also note that the official request to extend a submission of Xilingol Biosphere Reserve periodic review until 30 September 2017 was received by the MAB Secretariat.

216. **Changbai Mountain Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the second periodic review for the Changbai Mountain Biosphere Reserve. The site is located in the southeast of Jilin Province. Jilin Changbai Mountain National Nature Reserve extends from Antu County, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, to Fusong County, Baishan City and to Changbai Korean Autonomous County, and borders on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the southeast. With abundant wild animals and plants resources, Changbai Mountain Biosphere Reserve, known as "species gene pool" and "natural museum", is a typical natural complex in North Eurasia which has the most complete and typical forest ecosystem in the world.

217. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for taking action on the recommendations of the previous periodic review report.

218. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the multidisciplinary approach used to conduct the periodic review and the extensive research and consultations invested in the review process.

219. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the biosphere reserve has conducted socio-economic studies to develop a sound basis for ecotourism development and management so as to increase the number of tourists and incomes of nearby residents, and to boost local economy. The reserve has doubled its efforts on the publicity, improved facilities for tourism services, organized international conferences and forums so as to boost its international popularity, attract tourists at home and abroad and to promote the sound development of its ecotourism.

220. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the biosphere reserve has made considerable progresses in its community-based economy by using management model and resources advantages. It noted that local residents are involved in the development of conservation actions and of the management plan for Changbai Mountain Reserve.

221. The Advisory Committee further acknowledge that the reserve has cooperated with nearby communities, forest farms, frontier forces and the forest police to conduct special actions for the conservation.

222. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

223. The Advisory Committee invited the Chinese authorities to submit the zonation map in English. It also invited them to provide the information how the further promote co-operation with Mt Paekdu Biosphere Reserve in PDR Korea in the field of research and management in the transborder area in order to respond fully the previous recommendations.

224. **Fanjingshan Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the very well written second periodic review for the Fanjingshan Biosphere Reserve which is located in an area where the three counties of Jiangkou, Yinjiang and Songtao meet in the northeast of Guizhou Province.

225. Since it was established, Fanjing Mountain Biosphere Reserve has attached great importance to its scientific research. As such, the reserve holds a leading position among China's other reserves of same type in scientific efforts. In particular, scientists carried out intensive research on gray snub-nosed monkeys and dove trees, producing a good number of higher-level achievements in scientific research. These surveys and research lay a reliable scientific foundation for the planning, protection and management of the reserve.

226. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for taking action on the recommendations of the previous periodic review report.

227. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the multidisciplinary approach used to conduct the periodic review and the extensive research and consultations invested in the review process.

228. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the reserve signed several bilateral international memorandums of understanding and cooperation agreements.

229. It welcomed that the co-management mechanism was improved by establishing community co-management organizations, in order to co-manage forest and mineral resources of the reserve and jointly prevent forest fires from occurring. In addition, community cooperatives were established to develop the community economy.

230. It noted that great changes have taken place in communities near the reserve. Firstly, the government-led ecotourism has promoted the economic development of nearby communities.

231. The Advisory Committee noted that the reserve has won eight Science and Technology Progress Awards at national and provincial levels over the past decade through its own development in scientific monitoring by discovering: 5 new species of spermatophyte, 2 new record species in China, 1 new record species in mainland China, a new distribution record of 123 plant species belonging to 52 genera and 25 families in Guizhou, 1 new subspecies of amphibians, 4 new records in Guizhou, 1 new record of reptile, 5 new genera of insect, 115 new species and 30 new records in Guizhou.

232. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

233. **Wolong Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the second periodic review for the Wolong BR.

234. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for taking action on the recommendations of the previous periodic review report.

235. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the multidisciplinary approach used to conduct the periodic review and the extensive research and consultations invested in the review process.

236. The Committee noted that the site carried out the natural forest protection project where the forest resources including natural forests in the experiment zone and buffer zone of the reserve are tended by villagers of Wolong Town and Gengda Town under negotiated contracts.

237. It noted that through the grain for green/bamboo project, the ecological environment of the reserve's experimental zone has been improved; and through the panda habitat monitoring and bamboo monitoring, data have been grasped about how the wild plants and

animals represented by giant pandas are protected.

238. The Advisory Committee commended that local people have been motivated and involved in the protection of natural forest resources according to agreements.

239. The site formulated *Wolong Ecotourism Development Plan* and carried out the Smart Wolong Program on the platform of Digital Wolong.

240. Through the reconstruction after 12 May 2008 earthquake, Wolong has significantly improved its research strength, protection capability and community hardware.

241. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

242. **Shennongjia Biosphere Reserve (China)**. The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the second periodic review for the Shennongjia Biosphere Reserve. It commended Chinese authorities also for responding to the 2001 recommendation of the MAB-ICC to the first periodic review report.

243. The reserve mainly protects rare plants and animals such as the golden monkey, the original ecological environment and terrain.

244. In 2006, Shennongjia Biosphere Reserve was honored as a national demonstration nature reserve and national model organization for nature reserve management by the State General Administration of Environment Protection and the State Forestry Administration. It was also awarded as a provincial model organization, and a provincial model organization for wildlife conservation. In 2011, it was listed as national pilot organization for forest tourism by the State Forestry Administration and China National Tourism Administration. In 2012, it was rated as a national 5A scenic area, and a national pilot organization of forest tourism.

245. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the functions of the reserve authority were enhanced, the forest public security force was strengthened, and basic-level conservation institutions were improved. A research platform was launched and a number of research projects on golden monkey and other topics were carried out in cooperation with relevant institutions from home and abroad.

246. The infrastructure for serving the ecotourism of the experimental zone was further developed. Also, the efforts to develop ecological tourism in the buffer zone and the transition area with emphasis on exhibition of science and research.

247. Efforts were also made to get more fund and organize and guide community development. The local government organized a coordination meeting with stakeholders and the Provincial Forestry Department convened communication meetings with nearby nature reserves. Up to 60% of the local residents are involved in biosphere conservation. The ways of involvement include: 1. direct participation in patrols for resource conservation, 2. serving as assistant farmer households, 3. serving as farmer supervisors, 4. participation in

ecological tourism services, 5. indirect participation in ecological tourism service.

248. After over ten years of efforts, Shennongjia Nature Reserve has put in place 23 regulations, launched a resource management and conservation system with responsibilities clearly defined and assigned, and its work has been highly effective. Its forest coverage increased from 63.4% in the early 1980s to 96%, flagship species represented by golden monkey have witnessed an increase in the population from 501 in 1985 to 1,280 in 2013, and 65 new species have been recorded through successive investigations.

249. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

250. The Advisory Committee invited the Chinese authorities to submit the zonation map in English and in bigger fonts. It also invited them to provide a rationale of zonation and information on the status of core areas not surrounded by buffer and transition areas. It encouraged the national authorities to develop a management plan.

251. **Dimonika Biosphere Reserve (Congo).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of the biosphere reserve, sent after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The site, designated in 1988, is located in southern part of the country. The area comprises of key species such as the chimpanzee and the gorilla considered as endemic to the forests of western Central Africa.

252. The Advisory Committee commended the country for promoting sustainable management mechanisms through conservation of biodiversity, revival of research activities and provision of opportunities to involve local communities in the management of the area. All this is guided by a dedicated management plan.

253. The Advisory Committee noted that the legend of the zonation map is not aligned with the figures provided p. 6 (core area: 910 km²; buffer zone 270 km²; transition area: 180 km²); nevertheless after reconciliation of the map with the figures, the Advisory Committee concluded that the zonation scheme was correct and that it was a typographical error.

254. The Advisory Committee considered that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

255. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send a new map with a revised legend.

256. **Odzala Biosphere Reserve reported as Odzala-Kokoua Biosphere Reserve (Congo).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of the biosphere reserve sent after the Exit Strategy deadline. The area designated as Odzala Biosphere Reserve in 1977 is located in the Northeastern part of the country. It comprises large intact blocks of lowland forest with the presence of a large number of species of large mammals. They support a high level of diversity from a wildlife perspective and the density of these animals is high. This area is also recognized by a large number of endemic species. Indeed, it is one of the regions in the world sheltering the greatest diversity in primates. Odzala is also

found as an important area for birds.

257. The Advisory Committee commended the country for the adoption of the management plan which enshrines its zonation and specifies the management measures that involve local and indigenous communities. However, the management plan is called Park management plan and not biosphere reserve management plan.

258. The Advisory Committee noted that the authorities do not use the appropriate terminology for the buffer zone which is called “buffer or transition zone” and for the transition area which is called “Eco development zone”. After reconciliation, the Advisory Committee concluded that the management of the areas conformed to the statutory framework of biosphere reserves: core area (828,000 ha) is a delimited zone for tourism development; the buffer zone (243,900 ha); and the transition zone is the eco-development zone (223,000 ha).

259. The Advisory Committee noted that the area is co-managed by the national authorities in charge of protected areas and African Park Network, which established a foundation in support to Conservation and Development activities mainly related to tourism.

260. The Advisory Committee noted that the site is named under Odzala-Kokoua Biosphere reserve in the periodic review report and not Odzala as initially indicated in the nomination form. The Advisory Committee questioned the rationale behind this change of name and a possible linkage to the revised zonation, i.e. an extension of the biosphere reserve.

261. The Advisory Committee concluded that the information provided in the periodic review report was **not sufficient to enable to determine if this site meets or does not meet** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

262. Therefore, the Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to send to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:

- the full explanation about the change of name of the site including the rationale behind it and if appropriate, the change in the limits of the biosphere reserve since its nomination in 1977;
- a revised zonation map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area);
- Information on how communities are involved in the management of the biosphere reserve and the impacts of conflicts in the area.

263. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the management body of the biosphere reserve to explore in addition to tourism other substantial livelihoods opportunities for disadvantaged user groups.

264. The Council welcomed the additional information provided about the involvement of local communities and the rationale behind the change of name of the site, which were satisfactory. However, the zonation map and related explanation provided were still not conform to the terminology and the function of the biosphere reserve. The MAB council

decided that the site does not meet the criteria.

265. **Velebit Biosphere Reserve (Croatia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the third periodic review for this biosphere reserve, established in 1978 and located in the western part of Croatia, beside Adriatic Sea, which was received after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The area is distinguished by high level of biodiversity in forests, highland subalpine meadows, and dry and mountain grasslands.

266. The Advisory Committee highlighted that the conservation function is very well developed. It also noted that tourism activities are promoted by the biosphere reserve authorities and concession partners. It also noted that the authorities took part in several projects for training and promotion of sustainable development such as CARDS 2003 project: sustainable development and promotion of traditional crafts in the wider area of Velebit, Karst Ecosystem Conservation. It also noted the very modest involvement of local communities in decision-making process and development activities.

267. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided following the Advisory Committee's recommendations in 2003. In 2007, the authorities prepared management plans for the three protected areas that included in the biosphere reserve (Paklenica National Park, Northern Velebit National Park and Velebit Nature Park). However, it noted that the joint management plan for biosphere reserve was not prepared. It also welcomed the establishment of the transition area on the coastal part of the biosphere reserve covering 7,963 ha in total area of 203, 519 ha. It also noted that the management of the forests is depending on the legal protection of the core areas. For example, sustainable management is implemented in Velebit Nature Park, while in two other core areas the forest is managed by state owned commercial company Hrvatske šume, which has FSC certificate for forest management since 2002.

268. It also noted that the coordinating body was not yet established and that managers of the protected areas are discussing joint actions based on annual work plans.

269. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requested that the management authority submit by 15 May 2017:

- a draft of a comprehensive management plan for entire biosphere reserve with detailed information of the mechanisms implemented for involvement of local community, stakeholders and partners to joint activities;
- To establish a coordinating body that will encompass local communities and authorities;
- To revise the zonation scheme and enlarge the transition area, since it does not enable the provision of development function.

270. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities on the progress made. It acknowledged that the Coordinating Council for Biosphere Reserve Velebit Mountain was established. Members of the Council are representatives of Northern Velebit National Park, Paklenica National Park and Velebit National Park together with Local Action Groups Lika and Bura. It also noted that the draft of memorandum of cooperation was

provided and that the management plan for the site is under preparation according to new MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan. It noted that the zonation is under revision.

271. **Krivoklatsko Biosphere Reserve (The Czech Republic).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review for this biosphere reserve, which was received after the deadline of the Exit Strategy, established in 1977 and located in the central part of the Czech Republic, 40 km west of the city of Prague.

272. It covers the area of 63,000 ha. The landscape is distinguished by Berounka river valley and its tributaries. The area is part of Natura 2000 and is very attractive for tourists and it is experiencing the strong pressure of tourism.

273. The biosphere reserve is managed by the “Administration of the Krivoklatsko Biosphere Reserve and Protected Landscape Area”. All relevant aspects of the biosphere reserve are integrated into the new Management plan of the Krivoklatsko BR/PLA for the time period of 2007-2016.

274. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided as regards the 2002 recommendations. It also noted that the management authorities have taken steps to study way and means to improve the benefits of tourism for local population and that a Development Programme for the Region was elaborated. It also noted that the authorities provided measures to conduct increased research on terrestrial biological resources and that the biosphere was declared as Czech Long Term Ecological Research Sites.

275. However, the Advisory Committee regretted that the zonation map provided was not specifying the different zones of the statutory framework in English. It also considered that there was not enough information as regards the implementation of the development function.

276. The Advisory Committee concluded that it **was not able to assess whether the biosphere reserve does or does not meet the criteria** of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Therefore, it requested the authorities to provide a zonation map specifying the three zones as per the statutory framework as well as to provide detailed information on implementation of the development function and involvement of the local communities in the development function and in the management of the biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017.

277. The MAB Council welcomed the report and additional information provided. It noted that the core area consists of several clusters. It was noted that many of them are not surrounded by the buffer zone. It requested further clarifications for the central part of core areas clusters not surrounded by buffer, as well as part at the south west and north. It also noted that several small parts of the buffer zone are not surrounded by transition area, larger parts at north and east. It also noted that the development function is performed mainly by cultural and educational tourism, sustainable forestry and that projects of sustainable farming were listed. It finally noted that local communities are involved in several projects related to management of the site and to implementation of development function. It therefore concluded that it was necessary to clarify the zonation and explain further the process of

establishing transition area around buffer zones, as well as to encourage to involve local communities in management of the site as well as in the decision-making process and to implement sustainable development.

278. **Šumava Biosphere Reserve (The Czech Republic).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review for this biosphere reserve, which was received after the deadline of the Exit Strategy, established in 1990 and located in the south-western part of the Czech Republic, near the German and Austrian border. The area is distinguished by montane forest, glacial lakes and montane and valley raised bogs. The Šumava peat bogs have been listed on the Ramsar list of internationally important wetlands since 1991, and most of the area is Natura 2000.

279. The research is focused on the main ecosystems – forests, peat bogs, lakes, waterways and grasslands, and on the relevant fauna and flora species (grouse, beaver, and freshwater pearl mussel).

280. The main source of income for the local population is tourism, which gradually spreads also outside the boundaries of the national park. The coordination authorities of the biosphere reserve ensure the sustainability of tourism in all its activities.

281. The biosphere reserve is managed by the two partners that have joint coordination according to a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation: Šumava Regional Development Agency (RRAŠ) and the Administration of the Šumava National Park (Šumava NP). The latest coordinates partners from private sector and promote tourism, including through projects such as Šumava Biosphere Reserve – a Good Place to Live. The Advisory Committee noted that the management Plan for the Šumava Biosphere Reserve has not been yet been prepared. It also noted that the education programme is implemented with local schools and that there are education and recreational activities for visitors. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the changes made in the size of the core and buffer zones and transition areas in response to the adoption of new technologies for developing maps.

282. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

283. The Advisory Committee encouraged the management authority to continue the implementation of participatory approach in the management of the biosphere reserve, and to finalize the management plan. It further recommended to actively participate in the WNBR.

284. **Yasuní Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review Report of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, Ecuador, designated in 1989. This Periodic report was submitted to the MAB Secretariat on 9 January 2017, after the deadline of 30 September 2016 (a letter was sent to the MAB Secretariat on 30 September, explaining the delay and on 9 October it was finally sent the Periodic Review).

285. To date, a number of initiatives have been carried out to manage the biosphere reserve from an approach to sustainable development at the community level, and concerning its natural and cultural heritage. The general objective of the biosphere reserve

management committee is to maintain the ecological and cultural integrity of Yasuni by participation of the actors involved in the protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

286. This periodic review report looks like a new submission of the Yasuni BR, the zonation changed significantly; the core area currently comprises almost the whole BR. An additional buffer zone and transition area is requested where the core area meets the border of the biosphere reserve.

287. The Ecuadorian Authorities informed that a formal extension request will be submitted in 2017.

288. The Advisory Committee welcomed this periodic review, particularly its quality and the proposed changes. However, the Advisory Committee noted that in the Western and Northern part of the BR, a buffer or transition zone does not surround the core area. Moreover, the transition areas located within the core areas concern the exploitation of oil.

289. Therefore, the Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework and encourages the Ecuadorian Authorities to submit as soon as possible the extension request including an appropriate zonation scheme and explain exactly in which location of the park the oil exploitation will take place.

290. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information sent by the authorities on an appropriate zonation and on the oil extraction in the biosphere reserve. However, the MAB Council, concluded that this technical information should be examined by the Advisory Committee in its next session.

291. **Archipelago Sea Area Biosphere Reserve (Finland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this very detailed second periodic review report for the site established in 1996. The Advisory Committee appreciated the review of the boundaries of the biosphere reserve to expand the transition area, which now includes about 3,500 residents. The Advisory Committee furthermore appreciated the yearly action plan which is reviewed by the steering committee, as well as the activities deployed to engage more residents, including activities aimed at promoting new economic opportunities in relation to the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also noted with appreciation the changes implemented in relation to the reorganization of local government structures in Finland, which appears to have resulted in a better embeddedness of the biosphere reserve within these structures and a more important role for the municipalities. It also noted that linkages of cooperation have been extended through the Pro-Archipelago programme.

292. Finally, the Advisory Committee commended the approach taken to include local knowledge in the management and learning/research functions of the biosphere reserve, as well as the inclusion of recently arrived immigrants (refugees). It also noted the difficulties in maintaining the budget determined every year and requested the authorities to provide more information on the source of income in the coming years.

293. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria.

294. **Fakarava Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the detailed periodic review report for this site designated in 1977, extended and renamed in 2006. It noted with approval that a management plan has been developed for the core areas of the biosphere reserve. The zonation has been updated and adapted to local legislation and has been approved by the municipality. The Advisory Committee appreciates the approval by the communities regarding the establishment of the new transition area as an integral part of the biosphere reserve. The management committee furthermore has been extended to include five associations covering the different atolls, in which the different stakeholders are represented.

295. The periodic review report states that in 2006 it was difficult to calculate the precise surfaces designated as core, buffer and transition zones. In 2008 a cadastral service has been introduced in the area. The table provided indicates that some changes in the areas are planned for – including a reduction of the size of the terrestrial core areas and an increase in the marine core areas.

296. The Advisory Committee requested the biosphere reserve management to submit the final delineation and provide a rationale for the changes. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the establishment of an interdisciplinary research council, which aims to coordinate research and ensure the societal relevance of the research and linkages with the communities. The Advisory Committee also noted that the review report includes a detailed section on the continued importance of local knowledge and practices. While it is clear and commendable that institutions are in place to ensure transmission to the next generation, it is not clear how this knowledge and these practices are included in the management of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee commended the local initiatives to promote the utilisation of the biosphere label to attract tourism and funding, as well as initiatives to promote the biosphere reserve through education.

297. The Advisory Committee noted the important increase in the number of tourists visiting the biosphere reserve. While this is a positive development in relation to the fostering of local development (especially given the decline of the pearl culture and general increase of unemployment), the Advisory Committee suggested the development of a management plan to ensure the sustainability of the tourism development. Furthermore, it recommended establishing links between the biosphere reserve management plan and broader regional plans currently developed for the region. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria.

298. **Delta du Rhône - Camargue Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this third detailed periodic review report provided for this site designated in 1977, extended and renamed in 2006. The Delta du Rhone Biosphere Reserve is a complex site with many different actors involved, and the Advisory Committee appreciated the participatory character of the review.

299. The last periodic review was conducted in 2006, after which the Advisory Committee encouraged the promotion of sustainable development at a regional scale, and the Advisory Committee asked for further clarification of the zonation and stressed the need to render the zones more compatible with management structures.

300. Since the last periodic review (extension and renaming) the area of the biosphere reserve has been extended and the zonation has been adapted – land has been obtained from the Compagnie de Salins du Midi, and several core areas have been created, including in the western part of the biosphere reserve. The zonation meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

301. The Advisory Committee applauded the establishment of the scientific council and the observatory to coordinate research conducted in the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the attempts to connect scientific and local knowledge. The Advisory Committee welcomed the attempts to establish more coherence in the management of the biosphere reserve as a whole – notably through the merger of the Parc de Camargue with the Syndicat mixte de la Camargue gardoise. Furthermore, two major contracts have been concluded, one focusing on the delta (on water and water-related issues) and the SAGE contract. The Advisory Committee understood that in such an extensive biosphere reserve containing different protected sites under different forms of legislation proves to be a challenge, even though they are now all part of Natura 2000. The Advisory Committee, however, noted that it has been difficult to reunite the management committee of the biosphere reserve, on which elected local government representatives are serving. The Advisory Committee urges promoting the importance of the meetings of the management committee, especially to ensure stakeholder participation, as well as to monitor and manage the impacts of private land transfers and increased tourism.

302. The Advisory Committee noted that the stakeholder signatures were missing from the documents provided, as well as some of the legislative documents, and the agreement between the two management bodies, and the updated version of the research projects and requested that all these be provided by 30 September 2017.

303. It further encouraged the authorities to pursue the efforts for collaborative management between the two management bodies. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria.

304. **Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve which was designated in 1996. The site, comprising the largest contiguous pond landscape in Germany, is situated to the north-east of Dresden and covers over 30,100 ha. Apart from historical fishponds the biosphere reserve consist of bogs, heathlands, pine forests, floodplains as well as a post-mining landscape, presenting an area, where in core areas, the soil formation and natural succession can take place unhindered. The region has also specific cultural values thanks to minority of the Sorbs, a West Slavic people, who lived in the area since the 6th century and have successfully maintained their traditional customs and language to these days.

305. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the site worked on implementing the recommendations made by the German MAB National Committee, in particular motivating forest owners to participate in certification schemes, participating in decision-making regarding EU agricultural funding or use of synergies via a coordinated approach with other

German biosphere reserves.

306. The Advisory Committee commended the biosphere reserve for opening the House of a Thousand Ponds, an information and environmental education centre. Its permanent exhibition raises awareness related to the biosphere reserve amongst visitors and local communities as well, helping to fulfill the site's logistic functions. Amongst other successful projects is the "Upper Lausitz organic carp" project for designation of origin, promoting sustainable fish farming or Wild Bee Project, which tests suitable local seed mixes and technologies in relation to bee-keeping can be mentioned.

307. The Advisory Committee encouraged the expansion of educational programs that would be focused on sustainable development as well as participation in international cooperation. It requested more detailed information as regards activities in the core area in the northern part.

308. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria.

309. **Bia Biosphere Reserve (Ghana).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this second periodic review of the Bia Biosphere Reserve sent after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The site, designated in 1983, is located in Southwestern part of the country. The ecosystem is the finest example of rainforest remaining in Ghana today. Sixty-one species of mammals have been recorded. These include 9 primates amongst which are Colobus monkeys and chimpanzees. The forest elephant and the highly threatened bongo are present. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded including the internationally endangered white-breasted guinea fowl.

310. The Advisory Committee commended the country for its effort to address recommendations formulated by the MAB ICC following the 1998 periodic review. An updated zonation and zonation map was done and communicated to the MAB Secretariat in 2011. After further consultations with the management authority, it was revised in 2013.

311. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the national authorities for their effort to address the concerns of all stakeholders through the collaborative framework called the Community Resources Management Area (CREMA), which allows benefit sharing with local communities. A management plan updated in 2010 is currently used. Extensive community awareness has also been undertaken on the importance of the reserve.

312. The biosphere reserve is involved in a project for the development of transboundary corridors with Cote d'Ivoire started in 2014 by the Conservation Alliance for which baseline studies have been completed.

313. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Bia Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

314. The Advisory Committee noted that the buffer zone was narrow. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer zone by negotiating with municipalities and communities in order to increase the size of the buffer zone and to

reinforce the development function of the biosphere reserve. It encouraged the authorities to submit an application for extension of the biosphere reserve by 30 September 2017 and to raise the necessary funds for developing the project of a transboundary biosphere reserve.

315. **General recommendations to the Guinea national authorities.** The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the MAB Secretariat sent all required letters, following the process described in the Exit Strategy to the country, including several e-mails. It also acknowledged that particular attention has been paid to the various ICC recommendations by national authorities who promised that the periodic reports of the four biosphere reserves Badiar, Haut Niger, Mount Nimba and Zama will be submitted before the end of December 2016.

316. The Advisory Committee noted that the MAB Secretariat never received the periodic review reports of the four sites Badiar, Haut Niger, Mount Nimba and Zama under the Exit Strategy as promised by the end of December 2016.

317. **Kerry Biosphere Reserve - extension and renaming (former Killarney Biosphere Reserve) (Ireland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report provided by the Killarney Biosphere Reserve, which was received after the deadline set by the Exit Strategy. This biosphere reserve was designated in 1982 within the perimeter of the national park.

318. The report is proposing to extend the zonation of the buffer zone and transition areas in its broader landscape context and to change its name in order to facilitate participation of local communities. The new proposed Kerry Biosphere Reserve has a core area of 10,260 ha made of the National Park unit, a buffer area of 531 ha between Killarney National Park and Killarney town, and a transition area of 54,210 ha. The entire boundary reflects the catchment area of Lough Leane. This region contains several tributary rivers, streams and lakes, and drains an area of 560 km².

319. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of an efficient management and governance for the new biosphere reserve that integrates local stakeholders.

320. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to clarify the zonation as the new buffer zone seems pretty small and doesn't surround the core area, as well as to clarify the management of wildlife, the management of tourism industry and the efforts made to develop both scientific studies and collaborative sustainable activities of the biosphere reserve.

321. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to continue the upgrading and requested that the authorities provide the comprehensive periodic review report to document the ongoing upgrading process, including the signatures of stakeholders and communities that will be part of the extended biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017. Moreover, it further encouraged the authorities to pursue and intensify their efforts towards integrated conservation and development actions.

322. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided, including the

comprehensive periodic review report as well as the revised zonation map and commended the efforts made by the authorities to engage with stakeholders and to upgrade the site to meet the criteria. It concluded that the **site meets the criteria** and encouraged the authorities to pursue a close dialogue with the stakeholders to secure their long term engagement and to address their concerns on the wildlife conservation and to provide update report on this to the MAB Secretariat by end of 2018.

323. **Amboseli Biosphere Reserve (Kenya).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the second periodic review for the biosphere reserve after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The site designated in 1980, is located in the southern part of Kenya along the boundary with Tanzania and comprises savannah forests and swamps. With a current core area of 39,206 ha, a buffer of 213,921 ha and a transition of 545,171 ha, the area is inhabited by about 123,000 persons and houses over 120 species of birds and 300 mammal species and over 400 species of vascular plants.

324. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the multi-stakeholder approach used for the periodic review and in management activities, the updated zonation and the satisfactory zonation map provided.

325. The Advisory Committee observed that the traditional livelihoods were changing from nomadic pastoralism to group ranching and dairy farming. The increasing acceptance of eco-tourism, the research activities conducted by the Elephant Trust and the collaborative research conducted by the national universities was also recognized.

326. The Advisory Committee noted the reduction of the buffer zone from 244,000 ha to 213,921 ha, an increase in the transition area from 200,000 ha to 545,171.5 ha and the need to prepare a participatory management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.

327. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria.

328. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to submit, by 30 September 2017, an application for extension of the biosphere reserve.

329. **Kiunga Biosphere Reserve (Kenya).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of the first periodic review report sent after the Exit Strategy deadline. The biosphere reserve, designated in 1980, is located in the South Eastern part of Kenya's coast in the Lamu County and houses the Lamu Old Town, a World Heritage Site. The main vegetation types are shrubs and mangroves forest, characteristic of marine and brackish ecosystems. The coastal strip has sandy beaches with sand dunes, which provide a source of clean water in the area while the islands consist of coral reefs and organic debris. Faunal groups that nest in the area include endangered species of seabirds, turtles and dugongs.

330. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts by the national authorities to upgrade the zonation of the area in compliance with the biosphere reserve criteria through the delineation of a buffer to protect the core areas, which cover an area of 239,577.47 ha.

331. The Advisory Committee also commended the collaboration of the County with the

Water Resources Management Authority to protect water catchment areas. It noted with satisfaction the involvement of the Kenya Forest Service and the Kenya Wildlife Service in management and for the initiation of community participation through the formation of community forest associations and water resource users associations, thereby reducing the incidence of illegal activities.

332. With respect to the development function, the biosphere reserve had contributed to growth in the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, manufacturing and construction and tourism sectors since the designation of the area with a positive impact on livelihoods and the local economy as a whole.

333. The Advisory Committee however, observed that some key information required determining whether the area meets, the criteria were still not provided.

334. In order to enable the MAB ICC determine if the area meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory framework of the WNBR; the Advisory Committee requested the national authorities to submit to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:

- electronic and hard copies of the current zonation clearly indicating the spatial configuration of each zone,
- data on the populations and their distributions in the respective zones,
- the management plan(s) for the area, and,
- the species list and the land use map

335. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information sent by the national authorities. The electronic map of the site was provided with a management plan including list of species as well as a land use map. The MAB council decided that the site **meets** the criteria.

336. **Malindi Watamu Biosphere Reserve (Kenya).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the re-submission of the first periodic review report sent after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The site designated in 1979 is located 100 km from Mombasa and is one of the main recreational and tourism centers in Kenya. The population is about 20,000 inhabitants.

337. The area comprises marine and coastal ecosystems encompassing the Malindi Marine National Park and Watamu Marine Park and is rich in coral reefs, sea grasses and mangroves. The coral reefs support growing fisheries and tourism sectors that contribute significantly to the national economy.

338. The Advisory Committee commended the diversity of stakeholders involved in the periodic review process and in management activities and research through the Marine Association and Community Fisheries Associations. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for developing in collaboration with the local administration, a multi protected area plan for the entire biosphere reserve that includes the Arabuko Sukoke forest in the core area.

339. The Advisory Committee noted with concern the discrepancies in the previous report

data between the figures related to the zonation of three areas of the biosphere reserve in the first version of the periodic report compared to the current one, including the complete disappearance of the marine transition area in the later.

340. The Advisory Committee noted that in the current version of the periodic review, the planned addition of a terrestrial transition zone of 13,341 ha which would constitute an extension of the biosphere reserve is not yet completed. However, there was a partnership seeking to extend the biosphere reserve in the near future to include the globally acclaimed Arabuko-Sokoke forest and its neighbouring types within the biosphere reserve as another core area. The Advisory Committee also acknowledged that consultation has started on this but not to the degree, that permits a successful new nomination document.

341. The Advisory Committee concluded that the information provided with regard to the current zonation was not clear for the committee to conclude if the site meets the criteria or not.

342. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to submit to the MAB Secretariat either a consolidated map and figures for the zonation based on the nomination of 1979 or an application for extension of the biosphere reserve together with all relevant management plans by 15 May 2017.

343. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information sent by the national authorities. The updated map provided do not address the issue raised by the Advisory committee and there is still discrepancies between the figures related to the zonation and the map. The MAB Council therefore decided that the site does not meet the criteria of the WNBR.

344. **Mount Elgon Biosphere Reserve (Kenya).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of this first periodic review report of the area, which was designated in 2003 after the deadline of the MAB Exit Strategy. The area is a volcanic massif located north east of Lake Victoria on the border with Uganda and includes Mt Elgon National park, Mount Elgon forest reserve and Chepkitale National Reserve. With a human population of 805,903 that has a rich cultural diversity, it has over 240 species of birds, 30 mammal species and over 4,000 species of vascular plants. The area contributes significantly to the national economy through the tourism, forestry construction and agriculture sectors.

345. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the well prepared zonation map and noted the increased dimensions of the three zones as follows:

- Core area from 16,916 ha to 85,900 ha;
- Buffer zone from 90,905 ha to 91,270 ha;
- Transition from 101,000 ha to 189,200 ha.

346. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the use of community based organizations in ecotourism activities and for the implementation of the participatory forest management plan. The Advisory Committee appreciated the involvement of universities and research institutions, local administrators such as chiefs, tea zone conservancies, coffee research group and indigenous youth and women's groups in management and research

activities.

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

348. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to:

- develop an integrated management plan for the entire area,
- submit an application for extension by 30 September 2017,
- explore opportunities for a transboundary biosphere reserve with Uganda.

349. **La Encrucijada (Mexico)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve, Mexico, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in the Pacific Coastal Lowlands physiographic region. It consists of two large coastal lagoon systems that correspond to two core areas (La Encrucijada and Palmarcito), and a wide variety of natural ecosystems including mangroves, Malabar chestnut (*Pachira aquatica*), tule swamps and marshes, as well as patches of tropical seasonal forest, coastal dunes and palm trees. The biological diversity and richness of the site is extraordinary and includes a high number of wildlife species.

350. La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve has a marine area of 29,213.72 ha within its buffer zone, which forms a continuum from the north-west limit of the reserve to its southeastern boundary. Based on a recommendation following designation, a marine area of 37,560.37 ha was added to the transition zone. This extension strengthened the conservation of fish species (around 150), which is reflected in the high production of fishery resources.

351. The reserve has been given a federal status and is administered by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), a decentralized body of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). Within the established legal framework, the principal legal and planning instrument of the reserve is the Management Programme. SEMARNAT regulates the activities of harvesting of wild species through the General Directorate of Wildlife, and tourist activities are administered by CONANP, which also issues tourist permits.

352. The powers of CONANP are determined under the Internal Regulations of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (2012). The biosphere reserve has an Advisory Council that promotes the participation and integration of civil society in the conservation and development of protected natural areas.

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

354. **Sierra de Huautla (Mexico)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Sierra de Huautla Biosphere Reserve, Mexico, designated in 2006. Sierra de Huautla Biosphere Reserve is located in the Balsas Basin and hosts a rich reservoir of endemic species. Its topography is notable for its altitudinal variation, which ranges from 700 to 2,240 metres above sea level, and a broad of representative ecosystems, in particular low deciduous forest, gallery vegetation and pine-oak forest.

355. The National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) administers the biosphere reserve. The Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) regulates activities to harvest wild species through the General Directorate of Wildlife, within an established legal framework. The Management Programme is the principal legal and planning instrument of the biosphere reserve.

356. Co-administration of the reserve is carried out with the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos (UAEM) in accordance with a signed agreement. UAEM, through the Research Centre in Biodiversity and Conservation, has committed to implement measures to achieve the objectives of the Sierra de Huautla Biosphere Reserve.

357. Decision-making under the co-administration scheme is performed through communication mechanisms established between CONANP and UAEM. In the absence of an advisory council, these bodies carry out consultations with communities on issues that may affect their lives. The periodic review corrected the zonation and included a management plan.

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

359. **Volcán Tacaná (Mexico)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Volcán Tacaná Biosphere Reserve, Mexico, designated in 2006. Volcán Tacaná is located on the border with Guatemala, and forms part of the Central American volcanic chain. It contains fragile ecosystems rich in wild flora and fauna species of cultural, scientific, economic and biological importance. Significant levels of biodiversity and endemism are found particularly in the high mountain ecosystem and landscapes, and in the volcanic area, which presents geophysical features of great scientific and aesthetic value, representative of humid environments of Andean origin found in Mexico.

360. Cross-border cooperation with Guatemala is being revived, with joint progress on other protected areas in Guatemala pending reactivation. In 2008, the Volcán Tacaná Biosphere Reserve Advisory Council was established, consisting of representatives of communities, organized civil society, academic institutions, and municipal and state authorities. In addition, programmes for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) were established in the ejidos (common land).

361. Changes in the zonation of the biosphere reserve have affected the core area and buffer zone. The buffer zone no longer surrounds the core area, as was the case during the nomination process.

362. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. However the Advisory Committee recommends that the core area should be surrounded by a buffer zone in those areas where this is currently not the case.

363. **Dornod Mongol Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia)**. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on the re-submission of the first periodic review report in the

official form of periodic review report, focusing on the whole biosphere reserve.

364. The biosphere reserves, approved in 2005, lies in the Great geomorphologic zone of Central Asia and the sub zone of Nukht Davaa of Mongolian Eastern zone. The terrain is characterized by medium-sized low steppe mountains above 890 to 1,099 m hummocks, knolls and narrow feather-grass valleys between them, with few flat plains and rich in biodiversity including diverse birds, wolves, the Mongolian gazelle, reptiles and amphibians.

365. The Advisory Committee commended the approaches used to promote sustainable development of the area such as partnership with local communities, training on range management, organization of educational camps, and public awareness for schools especially the Young Naturalists Club. The promotion of indigenous values and relationship with local communities through the empowerment of communities in protection of local springs, the creation of an information centre employing local people and the formulation of an Act of law concerning the negotiated costs for hunting wolves was appreciated. It further noted a collaboration with China and Russian Federation.

366. The Advisory Committee acknowledged a submission of the new zonation map but noted that it has not yet been approved by the central government. It also noted that an area of the biosphere reserve was reduced.

367. After the review of the materials submitted by the Mongolian authorities, the Advisory Committee could not conclude if the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Therefore, it requested the authorities to provide a rationale for reduction of an area of biosphere reserve. If a zonation is reasonable then to approve it by the central government. All this information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

368. **Great Gobi Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on the re-submission of the first periodic review report in the official form of periodic review report, focusing on the whole biosphere reserve.

369. Established in 1990 and located in the south-west of Mongolia at the border with the People's Republic of China, Great Gobi Biosphere Reserve represents the Central Asian deserts.

370. After the review of the materials submitted by the Mongolian authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site. It noted with satisfaction that the new zonation map was provided.

371. The Advisory Committee noted that a management plan was drafted but it encouraged to develop a comprehensive management plan. It invited the national authorities to clarify data discrepancy on population and submit a vegetation map of the biosphere reserve area not of entire Mongolia.

372. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of

the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

373. **Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve (Montenegro).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the letter concerning the lack of human resources encountered by the biosphere reserve, received after the Exit Strategy deadline. The Advisory Committee appreciated the plan to include the results of an expert mission from the UNESCO Venice office in the periodic review. The Advisory Committee was not able to assess if the site meets the criteria without the report. The Advisory Committee requested that the periodic review report be submitted by 15 May 2017, including more information on the current human resource issue, and how this issue will influence the BRs activities in the future.

374. The MAB Council welcomed this first periodic review report and the engagement of the authorities and acknowledged the support of the UNESCO Venice office as well as various international and national organizations to develop a collaborative governance structure for the site, and explore ways to fulfil the development function of the site. However, since the report arrived late, the advisory committee could not examine it.

375. **Oasis du sud marocain Biosphere Reserve (Morocco).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review of the biosphere reserve established in 2000, encompassing mountainous regions of the High Atlas in the north and the Anti-Atlas in the west, alluvial plains and depressions as well as stony deserts. Set at the border with Algeria, the diversity of the ecosystems of the Oasis du sud marocain Biosphere Reserve (RBOSM) is important. : Biodiversity is therefore high at the floristic and wildlife levels. Wildlife endemism is high for fish, amphibians and reptiles, more restricted for birds and mammals. As its name indicates, the reserve include a rich system of oases with a rich agro-diversity including date-palms. These agro-ecosystems are critically important for the regional economy and for local inhabitants that have settled here for a thousand years.

376. The Advisory Committee commended the country for the participatory process of the periodic review at local and national levels, which involved all categories of stakeholders. The Advisory Committee noted that a new National Agency for the Development of the Oases Zones and the Arganier (ANDZOA) has been established providing valuable support for the overall management of the reserve, regionally and locally. The Advisory Committee noted that the biosphere reserve interests and associates an appropriate range of stakeholders, including government, local communities and private interests. The Advisory Committee further acknowledged the initiated research program involving a dozen institutions and about 100 researchers and that the results of the research are applied on the ground. The Advisory Committee took note with appreciation that Morocco launched a new initiative during UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakech, Morocco, November 2016, entitled "Sustainable Oasis Initiative: Recognition, Preservation and Solidarity Development of Oases as Models of Resilience to Climate Change" and that the biosphere reserve will play an important role therein.

377. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Oasis du sud marocain Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR). The Advisory Committee invited the Moroccan authorities to consider sharing additional information with the MAB Secretariat in relation to local institutional

management arrangements in view of the fact that the biosphere reserve covers such a large and complex region and that ANDZOA may have further strengthened its management support in the last few years.

378. **Darién Biosphere Reserve (Panama).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second Periodic Review of the Darién Biosphere Reserve, Panama, designated in 1983. The Darién Biosphere Reserve, National Park and World Heritage site is located in the province of Darién, and covers the region adjacent to the Colombian border. This reserve is a unique site, forming the bridge between the two continents of the Western Hemisphere. In its terrestrial portion, the Darien Site contains four of the six eco-regions of Panama: moist forests of Chocó-Darién, montane forests of eastern Panama, dry Panama forests, moist forests on the Pacific side of the isthmus and one of three mangrove complexes of the country: the Gulf of Panama. The reserve also encompasses the freshwater ecoregion Río Tuira and a marine ecoregion located in the Panama Bay.

379. The Ministry of Environment is in charge of administration of the reserve through its provincial, district and local agencies. However, citizen participation structures involving local governments and traditional authorities have agreed to implement a common agenda to support the reserve. The process of municipal decentralization began in 2016, with the aim of promoting the best and most efficient use of local resources in direct cooperation with the communities. According to the 2004 Management Plan, the reserve is managed by a chief who receives the support of different organizations (Natura Foundation, GEMAS) through the Darien Fund.

380. This report includes actions reported during the evaluation of the Madrid Action Plan for the period 2011–2013, but which are still under implementation. These relate to the extension of surface and marine boundaries of the Darien Biosphere Reserve. In 2015, the reserve joined the MAB project 'Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the South-East Pacific Region (BRESEP)'. The funds obtained through this project have permitted implementation of the extension of the biosphere reserve to the coastal and marine areas of the Pacific.

381. The description of the geographical coordinates in the Garachiné sector and the lifting of information in the marine part to incorporate the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve remain pending.

382. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve. However, the authorities are requested to send the zonation maps to the MAB Secretariat before 15 May 2017.

383. The MAB Council welcomed the zonation map submitted by the national authorities and concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

384. **La Amistad Biosphere Reserve (Panama).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve, Panama, designated in 2000. This biosphere reserve is located in the northwest of Panama, bordering Costa Rica and the

Caribbean Sea. It comprises a variety of different habitats, ranging from low humid mountain forest to mangrove forest and coral reefs. In the highlands, several important lagoons have received international recognition under the Ramsar Convention as habitats for migratory bird species. The biosphere reserve is also home to endemic mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. The biosphere reserve has a total surface of 655,000 ha of which some 35,000 ha comprises marine area. The population consists of 415,000 inhabitants.

385. Terms of reference have been developed for the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve and are in the process of being revised to update management plans for the protected areas. Ecotourism activities have increased over the last 10 years, directly and indirectly supporting the local population and boosting the local economy. Over the same period, significant changes have taken place in the biosphere reserve with the construction of hydroelectric plants.

386. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. However, the authorities are requested to send the zonation maps to the MAB Secretariat before 15 May 2017.

387. The MAB Council welcomed the zonation map submitted by the national authorities and concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

388. **Astrakhan Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the third periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, established in 1984, examined in 2016. It is located near Russian – Kazakhstan border, beside Caspian Sea. It covers the area of Volga Delta and it is designated as Ramsar wetland of international importance.

389. The biosphere reserve was affected by the many years of low-level and short seasonal tides that resulted in reduced fish stock. Alternative activities in tourism, such as excursions to lotus fields, rural and ethnic tourism have been initiated to reduce the outside pressure from hunting and fishing. Buffer zone was used for breeding areas of fish. Since the surface of drying territories induced by lower level of the Caspian sea and the increase of shallowness in Volga basin, an increase in animal husbandry is observed, as well as haylands and pasture areas in the buffer zone. Local people were involved in education and training to prevent and fight wildland fires. The Advisory Committee also noted the space monitoring of forest fires in Volga delta because of non-profit programme "Transparent world".

390. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the updated information provided on the zonation and commended the management authority on the efforts done for establishing a transition area for two core areas in 2016 following the MAB Council recommendation. The additional transition area encompasses 272,620 ha for the terrestrial part and 161,000 for the marine part. It is a result of the agreement signed by the Volodarsky and Kamyzyarsky District. The Advisory Committee noted that the third cluster along the western border with Damchiksky site is not yet included in the transition area and that this is expected to be completed by 2020.

391. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

392. The Advisory Committee requested the management authority to continue the process of enlargement of the transition area, including to the west with the Damchikskiy and to the east to the Obzhorovskiy in order to have a compact united site by 2020 and to send progress reports and updated information, including zonation map, as well as clarification on the number of inhabitants, including in the enlarged transition areas to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2017. It further encouraged the authorities to adopt measures for sustainable planning of tourism activities and tourism impacts monitoring.

393. **Kenozersky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, established in 2004. It is located on the borders of the Baltic Crystalline Shield and the Russian Platform, and borders on the north and south by the Kenozero National Park, inscribed in 2014 on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage. The area encompasses nearly 300 lakes, rivers and streams, surrounded by coniferous and coniferous-deciduous forests, birch forests, aspen forests, meadows and moor swamps. The historical-cultural heritage is embedded in conservation, research and education activities, and these links between nature and culture are underlined in the development programmes.

394. The governance is achieved by the Kenozero National Park authorities and institutions that involve several stakeholders, such as the Interdepartmental Coordination Council and two Councils of Local Communities, based on participatory approach. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the area is implementing several projects for sustainable development. It also welcomed the increase of quality of life of local people, benefiting from the implementation of the “Program of social-economical development of the area included in the borders of the Kenozersky BR”. It also took note of the education programmes for youth and local people, based on local knowledge promotion and sustainable use of natural resources. It also noted that a special programme started in 2006, led by a Non-Profit Partnership “Friends of Kenozero National Park” crediting funds which are available for local people aiming at establishing small ecologically oriented business. Tourism as economic activity is promoted in consideration of natural values conservation and cultural heritage promotion. The Advisory Committee noted the well designed communication through the media and published materials and labelling products.

395. It also noted the on-going research to evaluate and protect genetic resources, such as the reintroduction of reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*), fish breeding work on recreation of Lake sig (*Coregonus lavaretus*) and cisco (*Coregonus albula*) and reduction of alien species.

396. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

397. The Advisory Committee recommended to the national authorities to provide the following information by 30 September 2017:

- to provide updated information on the process of establishment of protected areas on eastern and western borders adjacent to core areas;
- to provide the exact number of people living in the area;
- to provide updated information on the management plan preparation for the period beyond 2016 including the measures taken to monitor tourism impact.

398. **Khankiskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve designated in 2005 and located in the south of Russian Federation Far East, near the border of Republic of China. It is located on south-eastern part of Lake Khanka, which is the largest natural freshwater lake in east of Asia. This site encompasses aquatic habitats of relic plants prickly water lily and lotus lily, habitat for far eastern tortoise listed in the Red Book of Russia.

399. The biosphere reserve is managed by the Scientific - Technical Council that was created to coordinate the work and the cooperation of several stakeholders. It works under the supervision of “Federal State Budgetary Institution “Khanka” State Nature Biosphere Reserve”. The work is based upon State task programme that is prepared for period of two years. Since 2014, the site has been affected by the water level rise of Lake Khanka in flooded areas.

400. Conservation function is well in place along with research and monitoring activities. “Primorsky Research Experimental Rice Station of Primorsky Research Institute for Agriculture” works on the development of new rice varieties, other cereals and vegetable crops that are more resistant with high yield and nutritional value. The education programmes are included in education campaigns named "Protected wave", "Cedar – Tree of Life", "Year of the Tiger". Programmes for volunteers are also established. The development of local communities is oriented towards ecological tourism, aquaculture, private horse breeding, gardening, farming, beekeeping, animal husbandry. The Advisory Committee also noted that cross border cooperation is established with People's Republic of China in the Russian – Chinese reserve “Lake Khanka” in the field of scientific research and environmental education.

401. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

402. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to clarify the functionality of the buffer zone in the northern part. The Advisory Committee encouraged the management authority to continue the implementation of participatory approach in the management of the biosphere reserve, and recommended the finalization of management plan. It also further recommended participating in the WNBR for useful sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas. It also recommended that the authorities provide further information on the measures and procedures taken for reducing the pressure of extensive rice cultivation and wastewater treatment in settlements.

403. **Laplandskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the periodic review report of the site established in 1985, after the recommendation of the MAB Council in 2016 and appreciates the efforts to respond to earlier

questions and recommendations.

404. The Advisory Committee has noted that the zonation of the biosphere reserve now meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee appreciates attempts to cooperate with the Kola Mining Metallurgic company, and is pleased to learn that the company has adapted its production processes in a way that reduces pollution. The Advisory Committee appreciates the financial support offered by Kola company, but is somewhat concerned about a growing dependency on one, powerful stakeholder. Furthermore, the impact of the nuclear power plant in the vicinity of the biosphere reserve is not well documented.

405. The social-ecological interactions between the three zones are still unclear. The development function of the biosphere reserve seems to be limited to tourism development in the buffer zone. No plans have been developed to promote or support local economic development, and research only focuses on conservation aspects. Furthermore, the management structure has not been adapted to allow for stakeholder participation.

406. The review report states that there are some conflicts in relation to illegal hunting and fishing. The main response seems to be one of increasing control and security rather than dialogue with local communities and/or promoting alternative livelihood strategies.

407. The periodic review report states that one of the main goals of the biosphere reserve is to collect knowledge about the Sami traditions and practices and promote and preserve these. However, it appears that Sami people are not active participants. Similar comments apply to the municipal social organizations which does not seem to be actively involved.

408. The Advisory Committee noted some ambiguities in relation to the question of whether a management plan exists. Section 7.7.2. states that there is no management plan for the biosphere reserve – only strict protection regulations pertaining to the core areas appear to have been developed. However, on page 33, a plan is mentioned including tourism and research, but there is still no mention of strategies relating to the participation or development of local communities.

409. The Advisory Committee concluded that because of the weakness of the development function including the lack of active involvement of the Sami community, the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve, and recommended to the authorities to consider that the site to be withdrawn.

410. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information on the social-ecological interactions between the three zones. Additional information shows that the development function of the biosphere reserve is not limited to tourism development in the buffer zone, but also includes activities in the transition zone – notably support for the development of frost-resistance crops. The Council also appreciated the additional information provided that explains that Sami residents are actively participating in the designing and implementation of tourism activities, as well as in the Coordinating Council. The Council welcomed the detailed information about the Coordinating Council, including its Statutory Framework. On the basis of the additional information provided, the Council concluded that the site **meets** the criteria

of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

411. **Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report of the Middle Volga Complex Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006.

412. It noted that strategies concerning the involvement of local communities seem to be restricted to attempts at awareness raising and tourism. The Advisory Committee did note, however, that a development programme for the Samara-Tolyatti agglomeration has been successfully implemented in 2015, without providing details. The Advisory Committee encouraged the biosphere reserve management to provide details on the programme, and consult members of the local populations concerning new ways of involving them – both in development activities and the management of the biosphere reserve.

413. The review process equally seems to have suffered from a lack of cooperation with local communities – participation of municipal experts is mentioned, but no details are provided. The Advisory Committee recommended that such details are supplied, and that community participation in future periodic reviews be improved.

414. In terms of strengthening the overall governance, the report mentions that new networks of cooperation have been initiated, without providing details. The Advisory Committee would welcome more information on these networks.

415. The Advisory Committee noted that information on ecosystem services was missing, and advises the management to seek advice in order to be able to provide an analysis of ecosystem services.

416. The Advisory Committee considered that based on the information provided it could not assess if the site meets or does not meet the criteria. Therefore, it requested that the authorities submit by 30 September 2017 the following information:

- details on the development programme of the Samara-Tolyatti agglomeration;
- provide details the involvement of local communities representatives in the review process;
- provide more information on the new networks of cooperation that have been established;
- seek advice within the WNBR in order to be able to document better the ecosystem services in the site.

417. **Rostovskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report for the Rostovskiy Biosphere Reserve designated in 2006.

418. The Advisory Committee noted with approval that the biosphere reserve indeed caters to the three different functions of biosphere reserve. However, the report is not always consistent in responding to the questions about agriculture, throughout the text the issue of grazing and attempts to maintain cattle breeding and rendering it more sustainable is addressed in detail. The Advisory Committee welcomed these attempts in addition to

attempts to stimulate tourism.

419. The Advisory Committee applauded the involvement of the heads of the municipal settlements in the management of the biosphere reserve through their participation in the Coordinating Council of the biosphere reserve. The review process does not seem to have included that council or the heads – consultations with members of local government and business mentioned, but no details are provided. The Advisory Committee recommended that such details are supplied, and that community participation in future periodic reviews be improved.

420. The report mentions that a number of networks for cooperation have been formed, but details are lacking. The Advisory Committee recommends that information on these networks is supplied by 30 September 2017. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria.

421. **Sayan-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report by Sayan-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve which was designated in 1984. The site, covering over 390,300 ha is located in the Krasnoyarsk Territory of Siberia. The area includes large coniferous and mixed forests, sub-alpine and alpine meadows, mountain tundra, mountain steppe, taiga, streams and marshlands.

422. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for achievements in the field of nature conservation and research at the site. It however noted that the development function, participation management or cooperation with stakeholders has not been addressed at all. It took note that the main reason is that there is no human population on the territory of the biosphere reserve and only the employees and research experts are granted the access to the biosphere reserve. Due to these conditions the site works very well as a nature conservation area but does not fulfill other functions.

423. The Advisory Committee concluded that this biosphere reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

424. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities may consider withdrawal of the current site due to the following reasons:

- a. there are no inhabitants in the biosphere reserve;
- b. the three functions are not being equally implemented as the main objective of the site is the preservation of biodiversity.

425. **Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report by Valdaisky Biosphere Reserve which was designated in 2004. The site, covering nearly 244,000 ha is located in the Valdai Highlands the northwest part of the country. Its hilly glacial relief includes ecosystems of the Eastern European taiga. The area has been influenced by human activities for centuries. The native forests, bogs and lake-river ecosystems, are mixed with former agricultural landscapes, and with areas of regenerating clear-cut forest. The biosphere reserve is very rich in biodiversity as well as cultural heritage. There are about 35,000 permanent residents in the site with

seasonal population reaching 100,000.

426. The Advisory Committee commended the biosphere reserve authorities for activities in the area of nature conservation, logistics, namely cooperation with universities and research institutes as well as support of sustainable development through soft tourism approaches or work with "green" alternative solutions for the development of the local economy associated primarily with the development of fish farming.

427. It also noted with appreciation the involvement of the local people in the management of the biosphere reserve through the Scientific and Technical Council, composed of representatives of the district administrations and heads of settlements located on the territory of the biosphere reserve, representatives of business, scientific and educational institutions. The Advisory Committee supported the plan to incorporate the above-mentioned Council into the new Coordinating Council of biosphere reserve whose main task will be co-management of the biosphere reserve territory. This step would remedy weak interaction with local authorities and public organizations and improve involvement of local people in the work of the biosphere reserve that is indicated in the periodic review report.

428. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested an update on improvement of the biosphere reserve management structure in terms of direct stakeholder participation by 30 September 2017.

429. **General information on Rwanda.** The Advisory Committee took note of the letter sent by the MAB national committee to the MAB Secretariat in September informing that they were planning to complete the periodic review report of Volcanoes Biosphere Reserve by end of 2014. In December 2014, another letter was sent by the MAB national committee reporting that the country was lacking technical capacity and called for UNESCO support.

430. The MAB Council acknowledge receipt of a periodic review report sent after the deadline, which therefore was not reviewed by the advisory committee.

431. **General information on Senegal.** The Advisory Committee took note of the information sent in September 2016 by national authorities that the periodic review of Niokolo Koba Biosphere Reserve could not be ready by 30 September 2016. They also informed that the national authorities are managing to address the recommendations made by the MAB ICC in 2015.

432. **East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia).** The Advisory Committee has noted that the MAB National Committee has applied for an extension of the deadline of the national periodic review report for this site which are part of the transboundary biosphere reserve and concerned by the Exit Strategy. The Transboundary Biosphere Reserve was assessed in 2014 and 2016 and the MAB Council concluded that the transboundary biosphere reserve does address the Pamplona recommendations.

433. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national report be finalized as soon as possible.

434. **Tatry Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia, transboundary biosphere reserve national).** The Advisory Committee has duly noted that the National Committee has applied for an extension of the deadline of the national periodic review report of this site which is part of the transboundary biosphere reserve and concerned by the Exit Strategy. The Transboundary Biosphere Reserve was assessed in 2014 and 2016 and the MAB Council concluded that the transboundary biosphere reserve does address the Pamplona recommendations.

435. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national report be finalized as soon as possible.

436. **Camili Biosphere Reserve (Turkey).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report by Camili Biosphere Reserve, which was designated in 2005. The total area of the site exceeds 27,000 ha with population of 1,600 residents. This mountainous biosphere reserve is located in the northeastern part of Turkey. The main ecosystems include boreal coniferous forests and temperate deciduous forests. The site is important part of the Black Sea bird migration route. The main economic activities in the reserve are sustainable hazelnut farming and honey production. Camili is also a place of historical and specific cultural values.

437. The Advisory Committee commended the biosphere reserve for achievements in the field of sustainable development, through support of eco-tourism, organic agriculture and apiculture. It also welcomed the research and monitoring activities as well as conservation projects, in particular Forest Management Plan and erosion mitigating measures taken.

438. The Advisory Committee encouraged the creation of formal biosphere reserve management and/or consultative body that would include various local stakeholders e.g. representatives of local communities, entrepreneurs, etc., that would directly participate in the management and decision-making processes instead of ad hoc consultations. The WNBR can provide some models for creating such group.

439. However, the Advisory Committee was not able to assess the site, as many parts of the periodic review form were not filled. Therefore, the Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide a comprehensive periodic review report, including accurate zonation map since the one provided is different from the original zonation map submitted and approved in 2005 by 30 September 2017.

440. **Sierras de Bejar y Francia Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Sierras de Bejar y Francia Biosphere Reserve, Spain, designated in 2006. The biosphere reserve is located in the southeast part of the Salamanca Province on the eastern edge of the Iberian Peninsula. The west of the reserve includes the Sierra de Gata mountain range.

441. The biosphere reserve has initiated a number of communication activities, and has also undertaken research, educational and conservation projects.

442. The management body of the biosphere reserve is the ASAM Association. This non-

profit association includes partners from different sectors of the population, including local government bodies, community associations, and associations of livestock, agrarian and tourism entrepreneurs. A Strategic Action Plan was designed for 2008-2013, but has not yet been revised or updated.

443. The Advisory Committee noted that three of the core areas are not surrounded by buffer zones, and has requested a revised zonation and updated Management Plan by 30 September 2017.

444. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

445. **Os Ancares Lucenses y Montes de Cervantes, Navia y Becerreá Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Os Ancares Lucenses y Montes de Cervantes, Navia y Becerreá Biosphere Reserve, Spain, designated in 2006. This biosphere reserve is situated among the upper elevations of the Cantabrian Mountains in the northwest of Spain. Its isolated location limits many of the endemic flora and fauna species to the reserve. Additionally, the biosphere reserve is located between the Euro-Siberian and Mediterranean biogeographic regions, which leads to a highly complex biodiversity.

446. Follow-up actions on the biosphere reserve have been carried out from different perspectives. The monitoring of ecosystems from a technical scientific point of view is carried out by the autonomous body responsible for nature conservation (Xunta de Galicia), as well as by several research groups. Similarly, several networks monitor meteorological, air quality and water quality parameters, dependent of the autonomous regional authority (Xunta de Galicia). In addition, the reserve has approved its own Sustainable Management Plan, which includes the establishment of a system of monitoring indicators, as well as the implementation of monitoring protocols comprising measures and strategies that aim to achieve the objectives of biosphere reserves.

447. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

448. **Los Ancares Leoneses Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first Periodic Review Report of Los Ancares Leoneses Biosphere Reserve, Spain, designated in 2006. This biosphere reserve is located in the extreme northeast of the province of Leon. The reserve is named after the river Ancares, which flows through the area.

449. Since 2010, the consortium of Los Ancares Leoneses Biosphere Reserve has been the governing body and management committee of the reserve. The consortium comprises the four municipalities that make up the biosphere reserve and a supramunicipal body. The site also has a technician and a consulting company in charge of technical assistance. The Strategic Action Plan of the biosphere reserve was approved in February 2012.

450. An evaluation of the biosphere reserve was carried out in 2012, including an analysis of progress made in achieving the objectives of the Madrid Plan of Action (MAP) and the

Montseny Plan of Action (PAMO).

451. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

452. **Sierra de las Nieves y su entorno Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of the Sierra de las Nieves y su entorno Biosphere Reserve, Spain, designated in 1995. The biosphere reserve is geographically situated near the Mediterranean and Atlantic coast (Gibraltar Strait), and the altitudes of its mountains produce the Mediterranean humid climate found in the Sierra de las Nieves. The reserve consists of a mountainous limestone landscape characterized by rocks and lithologies belonging to the Betica Mountain Range.

453. The Advisory Committee noted that the previous recommendations were followed. The biosphere reserve has created a Management Plan, which is in the process of being submitted to UNESCO. The biosphere reserve has also established a Management Committee, which is representative of the different municipalities.

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

455. **Menorca Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the second periodic review report of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve, Spain, which was designated in 1993 and changed its zonation in 2004. The main characteristic of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve is the diversity characteristic of nearly all Mediterranean island ecosystems. The most notable habitats are gullies, caves, wetlands made up of ponds, lagoons and marshes, dune systems, coasts and islets. Some 220 species of birds, and 1,000 species of plants (60 of which are endemic) have been recorded in these habitats.

456. The Advisory Committee noted that several follow-up actions have been carried out in the biosphere reserve over the last decade, including a Preliminary and Coordination Report on the MBR (2007) and a Preliminary Survey on the Situation of the MBR (2008). These two studies aimed to determine, based on specific enquiry, the state of the reserve during the initial stages of the work of the Scientific Council of the MAB Spain Programme. The Scientific Council produced two follow-up reports on the status of the biosphere reserve (2009 and 2010-2011).

457. The Advisory Committee congratulates the authorities for its excellent work and concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

458. **Repetek State Biosphere Reserve (Turkmenistan).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of the very well prepared second periodic review for the Repetek State Biosphere Reserve. It commended Turkmenistan authorities also for responding to the 2005 recommendation of the MAB-ICC to the first periodic review report.

459. This site, designated in 1978, is one of the first biosphere reserves and before the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves existed. The site fulfilled the conservation and logistic support functions of a biosphere reserve, in particular in terms of scientific studies on dryland ecosystems. However the site had no sustainable development function, as only about 100 persons lived at a railway station (as railway workers and scientific staff), which was sporadically visited by nomads. A very small buffer zone and transition area surrounded the large core area.

460. The Advisory Committee commended the national authorities for their effort to respond to 2005 recommendations. It acknowledged that the submitted Periodic Review report has also served as an official request to extend this biosphere reserve. It noted that the buffer zone and transition area of the reserve have been enlarged from 0.5 km up to 4.0 km width (from 330 ha up to 47,324 ha) and from 1.0 km up to 10.0 km width (from 704 ha up to 169,394 ha) respectively which has become effective since 2014. Revised maps of the Repetek State Biosphere Reserve have been prepared with the new zonation.

461. Scientific studies have been carried out on the socio-economic situation of the wider area in relation to the Repetek Biosphere Reserve, in particular focusing on the nomadic population and their pastoral management regimes, with a view to study human-environment interactions in the area. It is ongoing project (2013-2017) aimed at long-term activities.

462. Programme of activities to further enhance the sustainable development function of the Repetek Biosphere Reserve for 2016-2020 has been developed. The Programme determines its strategic objectives and the functions necessary to achieve the objectives. The programme partners are the Reserve's staff, Secretariat of Turkmenistan National Commission for UNESCO, state authorities, local authorities, State Committee of Turkmenistan on tourism, Institute of Botany of Turkmenistan Academy of Sciences, representatives of institutions of secondary and higher education institutions.

463. The Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the extension of the biosphere reserve and invited the national authorities to consider increasing of a transition area to include more local population.

464. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

465. **Big Thicket Biosphere Reserve (USA)** The Advisory Committee welcomed this first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, established in 1981 and located in the Western part of Texas. The area is also known as Pineywoods and Coastal Marsh ecoregions of the state. The diverse habitats of south-eastern swamps, eastern deciduous forests, central plains, pine savannas, and dry sand hills allow an impressive array of species to coexist, including approximately 1,320 species of trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses, 60 mammal species, 86 reptile and amphibian species, 34 species of freshwater mussels, nearly 1,800 invertebrate species just in the Lepidoptera Family (butterflies, moths, skippers), 97 fish species, and at least 300 bird species. The biosphere reserve encompasses 5,899,040 ha (core area 28,248 ha; buffer zone 21,213 ha and transition zone 5,849,579 ha) and is established among 19 countries with a human population over 5 million people.

466. The Advisory Committee commended the management authority on the very well prepared periodic review report. It noted with satisfaction the efforts made for the site to comply with the criteria. The periodic review report demonstrates the synergy among different authorities, plans and research studies that were put in place in order for all stakeholders involved and the management body to benefit from it.

467. The biosphere reserve management body is hosted by Big Thicket National Preserve that is responsible for the management of the core areas, buffer zone and transition area. The Advisory Committee welcomed the establishment of a 5-year agreement on partnership with Big Thicket Association, The Nature Conservancy and Texas Parks and Wildlife and informal cooperation with Big Thicket National Trust. Beside Big Thicket National Preserve General Management Plan, a Foundation Document prepared in 2014 is used for agreements and smaller issue-driven plans.

468. It noted with satisfaction that the logistic and conservation functions are well in place. It also noted the land acquisition and donation programme to preserve wetland and upland habitat, while mitigating impacts for oil and gas developments within the biosphere reserve. It also welcomed the initiatives to reduce consumption of energy and water and to establish nature oriented tourism.

469. It took note of the diverse set of stakeholder groups and local people, which are involved in biosphere reserve activities and decision-making process. The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas participates in various programs also beyond borders of the site to promote their cultural heritage.

470. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

471. The Advisory Committee encouraged the management authority to continue the implementation of programmes for the biosphere reserve promotion in the area, to pursue the involvement of stakeholders including companies and to prepare a communication strategy on the biosphere reserve. It further recommended to actively participate in the WNBR and establish cooperation with Camargue (delta du Rhône) Biosphere Reserve, in France.

472. **Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for an extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. The authorities justified their request by the need to submit the report that is finalized to the Florida department of environmental protection lawyers for their review before the report is made public. The Advisory Committee noted that they hoped they would be able to submit the report to US Department of State by January 2017.

473. The Advisory Committee noted that the new deadline proposed by the authorities.

474. It recommended that the report be finalized and submitted by 15 May 2017. The MAB Council acknowledged receipt of the report but it could not be examined by the Advisory Committee.

475. **Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, established in 1989 and located northeast of the State of New York and northwest of the State of Vermont, bordering with Canada. It encompasses Lake Champlain, the sixth largest lake in the United States and Adirondack and Green Mountains with extensive temperate coniferous and deciduous forests, alpine mountain peaks, and extensive rivers, lakes, bogs, and freshwater wetlands. There are three agencies engaged in management of the area: Vermont Agency for Natural Resources, Adirondack Park Agency and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. There are several research, monitoring and education programs well in place. Several stakeholders were involved in activities through Lake Champlain Basin Program which aims to coordinate and fund efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin's water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources through partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, and individuals. It also noted the Common Ground Alliance, which was formed 10 years ago to identify and implement solutions that will benefit communities, their economies and the environment. The conservation function is well fulfilled, there are several research, monitoring and education programme in place.

476. The Advisory Committee noted the willingness of authorities to revitalise the site and acknowledged the efforts made for preparing the periodic review by New York State University's College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) Adirondack Ecological Center.

477. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the relevant authorities to comply with the criteria and considered that this biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

478. The Advisory Committee recommended that the national authorities:

- to provide a higher resolution map by 15 May 2017;
- to provide endorsements of authorities responsible for management of core area and buffer zone and local authorities in transition area and to provide these at the next periodic review report;
- to establish a management body of CABR, that would be able to coordinate the activities and work of biosphere reserve, with already existing formal networks and other interested institutions and to provide these at the next periodic review report.

479. The MAB Council welcomed the information received above.

480. **Congaree Biosphere Reserve (USA) – extension and renaming (former South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the detailed periodic review report and appreciated the efforts made to meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework of the WNBR – including the submission of a periodic review using the standard format.

481. The Advisory Committee welcomed the new zonation map of the site clearly presenting the core area, the buffer zone and the transition/cooperation area. The Advisory

Committee noted that the southern part of the core area is not bordered by an officially designated buffer zone. However, Advisory Committee has noted that there is a de facto buffer zone, formed by private landowners who have obtained conservation easements, as well as by the River. The Advisory Committee hence concludes that the zonation meets the requirements of the Statutory Framework of WNBR.

482. The Advisory Committee welcomed the detailed information about the development function of the biosphere reserve. Interactions focus strongly, but surely not only on tourism development. Cooperation is sought with private landowners, and initiatives are developed in relation to farming, forestry, fishing and hunting. The focus on green energy is also appreciated. The Strategic Community Master Plan for Lower Richland County is welcomed by the Advisory Committee and may serve as an example for other parts of the transition/cooperation area. Furthermore, the Wild Pig Management Plan – which extends beyond the core and buffer zones – also testifies to the importance of community consultation and involvement.

483. The Advisory Committee understood that in the USA there is a specific expectation of sovereignty such that individual private property rights, and those authorities of state and the federal government, remain with such authority and independence, and that the primary legal way in which to implement the biosphere concept is through voluntary agreements. In that respect, the Advisory Committee applauded the plan to establish an Advisory Council in which local communities, local government representatives and other stakeholders would be represented, and which will contribute to the development of management plans. The Advisory Committee also welcomes the many partnership agreements that have been concluded with a whole range of local organizations.

484. Based on the information provided the Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities submit the founding documents of the Advisory Council containing the signatures of the representatives serving on the council at a suitable time. The Advisory Committee recommended to approve the change of the name of the site, as it reflects a more inclusive approach. The MAB Council thanked the authorities for sending the requested elements.

485. **Alto Orinoco-Casiquiare Biosphere Reserve (Venezuela).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report of the Alto Orinoco-Casiquiare Biosphere Reserve, Venezuela, designated in 1993. The biosphere reserve is located in the Venezuelan Amazon, and contains tropical rainforest with Ombrofilis wood. The primary aim of the biosphere reserve is to secure the ancestral homelands and traditional lifestyles of Yanomami and Ye'kwana indigenous peoples.

486. The new territorial and political organization of the Venezuelan State has led to local government models that favour indigenous representation, and the formation of indigenous settlements of Ye'kuana and Yanomami peoples, which are situated within the reserve. The reserve is also one of the largest protected areas of tropical forest on the planet, due to its extension. Another relevant event concerns the formation of the Venezuelan Peoples for the Biosphere Committee, which carries out actions aimed at promoting conservation and the sustainable use of this reserve. Finally, it should be noted that the area covered by the

reserve is exposed to only minimal pressures from unsustainable activities, with no significant changes in landscapes or habitat uses.

487. Concerning the area and spatial configuration, there is no difference between the buffer zone and the transition area. However, small changes in the zonation data have been noticed – an increase in the size of the core area from 5,190,000 ha in 1993 to 5,648,348.65 ha today and a decrease in the size of the buffer zone/transition area from 3,510,000 ha in 1993 to 2,829,117.35 ha today. This results in an overall decrease in total surface from 8,700,000 ha to 8,477,466 ha.

488. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee has recommended that the national authorities submit a revised zonation map, establish a constitutional management committee and submit an action plan by 15 May 2017.

489. **Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve (Vietnam).** The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities on submission of the first periodic review report prepared in very good quality. The Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2006, is located on the southwestern tip of Viet Nam. It comprises 105 islands, the biggest of which is Phu Quoc Island. The waters around the islands are considered some of the best fishing grounds in the southwestern region of Viet Nam of which the most important resources are squid and cuttlefish. The biosphere reserve has three core zones overlapping with three National Parks and one nature reserve. The area is recognized as an area of very rich marine resources which play an important role in the livelihoods of local people and the provincial and district economy.

490. As marine protection and management is a challenge, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to cooperate with other marine biosphere reserves in the South-East Asia region - in particular, with Indonesia. It noted that due to an importance of mangroves for wildlife and ecosystem services and adaptation to climate change a conversion of mangrove forests to shrimp farming is matter of concern.

491. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

B. Follow-Up Information Received since the last MAB MAB ICC Meeting

492. **Laguna Oca y Herraduras del Rio Paraguay Biosphere Reserve (Argentina).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the letter submitted by the national authorities and is looking forward to receiving the information by 30 September 2017.

493. **Pantanal Biosphere Reserve (Brazil).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Brazilian authorities following its recommendations in 2016. A biosphere reserve executive committee has been created as well as a communication plan. A Pantanal Action Plan has been drafted in accordance with the Lima Action Plan. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

494. **Benoué Biosphere Reserve (Cameroon).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information provided by the national authorities through a letter responding to the recommendations of the MAB ICC of 2016. The Advisory Committee noted that the authorities of Cameroon reported that they are in the process of implementing appropriate measures to safeguard the Benoué Biosphere Reserve threatened by the Exit Strategy. It also noted that Cameroon has been engaged since the beginning of 2016 with the support of the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) in the process of revising the management plan of the site and that the revision of this plan incorporates the phase of prior consultations of the various actors in order to update the transition area. In addition, a new zoning compatible with the 3 functions of a biosphere reserve is to be completed in the future.

495. The Advisory Committee regretted that the authorities did not send an updated zonation map as requested by the Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site still **does not meet** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

496. The Advisory Committee invited the country to send the updated zonation map by 15 May 2017.

497. The MAB Council acknowledge the information received from of the authorities on the participatory process on going in the area. However, the zonation map and the updated management plan, which were requested, are still missing. Therefore, the MAB Council decided that the site still **does not meet** the criteria of the WNBR.

498. **Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Corporation of Charlevoix BR. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the update of the zoning and the clarification of the buffer zone surrounding the new core area located in the Marine Park.

499. The Advisory Committee also took note of the good integration of the Lima recommendations within both its strategic plan and its management plan. It also took note of the ongoing development activities with cooperation with local private partners, as well as the funding of the management which history and culture of the proposed area, and the public-private funding of the Corporation. The Advisory Committee suggested that the next periodic review report should provide more detailed information regarding the new zoning, especially the implementation of the new buffer zone.

500. The Advisory Committee concluded that Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria.

501. **Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Southwest Nova BR. The Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made to implement a new buffer zone of 457,669 ha partially surrounding the core area, and the progress made in terms of strategic plan development, partnership and collaboration with science agencies, local stakeholders and governments.

502. The Advisory Committee suggested clarifying in the next periodic review report the funding and management capacity of the BR, as well as its governance functioning.

503. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria.

504. **Waterton Biosphere Reserve (Canada).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Waterton Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the clarification provided concerning the new zoning of the biosphere reserve, as well as the efforts to pursue the dialogue with the Blood Tribe, the Piikani Nation, and other neighboring municipalities regarding possible future expansion of the boundaries of the biosphere reserve.

505. The Advisory Committee noted with interest the consideration given in the future to the creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve with Glacier Biosphere Reserve in the United States.

506. The Advisory Committee emphasized how the Waterton Biosphere Reserve successfully addressed the recommendations from its 2008 periodic review report. The strategic plan and management plan have been completed.

507. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Waterton biosphere reserve meets the criteria, congratulated the biosphere reserve team for its long-term engagement and high quality standards, and encouraged the dissemination of both the periodic review report and progress report within the WNBR.

508. **General recommendation to China.** For all the reports on the status of implementation of the ICC recommendations submitted by the Chinese authorities, the Advisory Committee highly acknowledged the participatory procedure and process used to provide comprehensive information.

509. **Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve (China).** The Advisory Committee took a note of the official information from Chinese authorities that Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve report will be submitted by 15 May 2017 latest due to a translation process.

510. The MAB Council acknowledged the submission of the periodic review report which included the response to the ICC 2004 recommendations. However, it cannot make the decision as the periodic review report has not been examined by the Advisory Committee.

511. **Baishuijiang Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2011 recommendation by the MAB-ICC. It acknowledged explanations and responses to the recommendations.

512. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction strengthening the management system of the nature reserve by integrating the reform of collective forest ownership system and the establishment of an ecological compensation system. It also noted that actions were taken to strengthen the application of advanced technology and the transformation of scientific achievements. It welcomed a promotion of alternative livelihoods and energy conservation projects and an effort to improve the ways and mechanisms for community participation in the biosphere reserve. It notes with satisfaction that management of the site was strengthened in accordance with the law to stop the progress of illegal activities in the reserve. The Advisory Committee appreciated an effort to strengthen further domestic and international cooperation to create a sound model for the WNBR.

513. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

514. It invited the Chinese authorities to provide a clarification on the spatial extent of the buffer and transition zones.

515. **Baotianman Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2012 recommendation by the MAB-ICC. It noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations were responded and detailed information provided.

516. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

517. **Bogeda Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015.

518. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2011 recommendation by the MAB-ICC. It noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations were responded and detailed information provided. The Advisory Committee congratulated the Chinese authorities for submitting an overall management plan for the Bogeda biosphere reserve.

519. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

520. **Gaoligong Mountain Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2011 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

521. It noted with thanks actions taken to build a strengthened unified mechanism, to combine efficiently daily patrol with scientific monitoring, to create community identity and to improve the mechanisms for social participation in managing the site by the enhanced concept of “People in Gaoligong Mountainous Region”. It acknowledged that a process to strengthen scientific communication between domestic and foreign partners in the context of the WNBR was catalyzed.

522. The Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

523. It invited the Chinese authorities to provide a clearer zonation map with exact data on zonation.

524. **Huanglong Biosphere Reserve (China).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2011 recommendation by the MAB-ICC.

525. It welcomed an explanation on a further improvement of the management system of the nature reserve by integrating the reform of collective forest ownership system and the establishment of an ecological compensation system. It noted strengthening of the construction of protection-related infrastructure and plans to ensure a technical support

capacity-building. The Advisory Committee welcomed that actions were taken to improve the construction and management of the animal corridors in the transit roads in the reserve. Furthermore, it noted actions taken to intensify a law enforcement to prohibit illegal mining, logging and other unlawful activities in the reserve, and to consolidate the co-management mechanism between the local community and the adjacent protected areas. It appreciated an effort to strengthen scientific communication between domestic and foreign partners in the context of the WNBR was catalyzed.

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

527. It invited the Chinese authorities to provide a clearer zonation map with exact data on zonation.

528. **Jiuzhaigou Valley Biosphere Reserve (China)**. The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2012 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

529. It noted with satisfaction that the recommendations were responded and the detailed explanation provided.

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

531. It invited the Chinese authorities to provide a clearer zonation map with exact data on zonation.

532. **Saihanwula Biosphere Reserve (China)**. The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2012 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

533. It noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations were responded and detailed information provided.

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

535. **Shankou Mangrove Biosphere Reserve (China)**. The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of China on the status of the implementation of the 2011 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

536. It noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations were responded and detailed information provided.

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

538. **Yangambi Biosphere Reserve (Democratic Republic of Congo)**. The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo and welcomed the

report on the implementation of the recommendations of the periodic review with information on development of the management plan, which will address the zoning and will provide the number of resident population. This report was received after the deadline of 30 September 2015.

539. The Advisory Committee regretted that the authorities did not send the zonation map showing clearly the core (s) area(s), the buffer zone and transition area and including the N'gazi Forest Reserve and Lokombe Lokombe reforestation area as requested by the MAB Council in 2016.

540. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site still **does not meet** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

541. The Advisory Committee invited the country to send the updated zonation map by 15 May 2017.

542. **Northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve (Denmark).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Northeast Greenland Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the issue of zonation with the establishment of a working group in order to map the various stakeholders' interests and improve dialogue. The Advisory Committee also noted the on-going legal assessment of the existing executive order.

543. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to pursue the ongoing work to build an efficient biosphere reserve and to continue to share information and skills with the NordMAB network and especially the Canadian Manicouagan Uapishka BR.

544. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site is still not meeting the criteria of the Statutory framework of Biosphere Reserves and requested that the national authorities provide by 15 May 2017 further detailed information on the revision of the legal framework as well as the results of the public hearing, as well as the precise timeline for the implementation of the new zonation.

545. The Council welcomed the update provided on the status of the legal framework and the commitment of the authorities to revise the zonation.

546. **Wadi Allaqi Biosphere Reserve (Egypt).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the report from Wadi Allaqi Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB Advisory Committee in 2013, requesting more information about the impacts of the various conservation and sustainable development initiatives undertaken in the biosphere reserve.

547. The Advisory Committee took note that clarification about ongoing conservation and development projects has not been provided yet. On this basis, the Advisory Committee cannot evaluate the ecological and socio-economic improvement of the site and requests the following information by 15 May 2017:

- Detailed information about the main conservation projects having impacts on the Wadi Allaqi ecosystems, the stakeholders involved in them, socio-economic development projects and to what extent they support the local population, research projects and their results.

548. The Advisory Committee encourages Wadi Allaqi authorities to involve the local population in the conception and implementation of the biosphere reserve.

549. Based on the additional information, the MAB Bureau concluded that Wadi Allaqui Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

550. **Omayed Biosphere Reserve (Egypt).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the report from Omayed Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB Advisory Committee in 2013, requesting a revision of the zonation as well as additional information about research, conservation and sustainable development projects implemented in the biosphere reserve.

551. No zonation map has been provided with the report. The Advisory Committee considered that no substantial information has been added about research, conservation and development projects. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee is not able to assess if the site is meeting the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves and requests following information by 15 May 2017:

- Zonation map,
- Detailed information about the main conservation projects having impacts on Omayed ecosystems, the stakeholders involved in them, socio-economic development projects and to what extent they support the local population, research projects and their results. The Advisory Committee encourages Omayed authorities to involve the local population in the conception and implementation of the biosphere reserve.

552. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information from Omayed Biosphere Reserve. This included a revised zonation map as requested in 2013. The new zonation foresees a total displacement of the core and buffer zones due to severe land-use transformations and territorial development in the former core and buffer areas related to agriculture, urbanization, tourism resulting in the last years in land fragmentation, pollution and in particular water pollution, as well as impacting the conservation function of these areas. The legal status of the new proposed core area is unclear and so is the rationale behind the rectangular shapes of all BR zones. A management plan has been proposed based on the Lima Action Plan. It does not specify to what extent the local population and local decision-makers were involved in this process and particularly when and with whom this action plan is foreseen to be implemented. Based on the additional information, the MAB Bureau concluded that Omayed Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

553. **West-Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve (Estonia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as requested by the MAB ICC in 2016. It welcomed the biosphere reserve zonation map in higher resolution as well as the legal and spatial justification for the zonation, in particular legally based requirements for at least 50m wide buffer zone around all core areas.

554. The Advisory Committee also appreciated additional information related to the improvement of the visibility of the site. It noted with satisfaction that the site is using new official logo since May 2016, enhancing the biosphere reserve visibility through cooperation with entrepreneurs with sustainable production as well as ongoing works on the biosphere reserve web site or marking all major entry points to the biosphere reserve.

555. The Advisory Committee concluded that the West-Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

556. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue participation processes in the biosphere reserve management and further cooperation with stakeholders.

557. **Fango Biosphere Reserve (France).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the update provided and noted with satisfaction the on-going activities to extend the area and develop a new charter in order for the site to meet the Statutory Framework requirements.

558. The Advisory Committee applauded the progress made regarding the development of the new charter. In the meantime, a number of important initiatives have been developed to strengthen the Biosphere Reserve functions, such as, for example, the local commission interacting with the Biosphere Reserve management, and the organisation of several local meetings and workshops.

559. The Advisory Committee appreciated the agreement reached with 9 additional communes to be included in the biosphere reserve, which also results in an extension of the (transition) terrestrial area of the biosphere reserve – in addition to the marine extension. The Advisory Committee noted with approval the reflections on the possibilities of redefining the zonation once the extension of the biosphere reserve is approved through the new charter. The proposals for rezonation – including the Natura 2000 areas - would indeed contribute to meeting the Statutory Framework criteria. The Advisory Committee understood the importance of following local consultation and legislation procedures in order for the charter to be valid and legitimate, and understood that this has made it difficult to respond before the Exit Strategy deadline.

560. Hence, the Advisory Committee considered that the site **does not meet** the criteria and requested to receive the charter, the new zonation maps and governance structure by 15 May 2017 for its consideration by the MAB Council.

561. **General recommendations to Germany.** The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation to the German authorities for its cooperation and its effort to introduce changes in zonation and for providing rationale for existing status as well as the adoption of joint management measures between the three sites in order for them to meet the criteria. It noted with high appreciation that all the steps taken by the German authorities addressed the issues raised by the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the significant steps taken in the form of the Cooperation Agreement of the German Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserves. This agreement aims to pave the way towards a transboundary biosphere region across the three German Federal States.

562. **Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve (Germany).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided following the MAB Council requests and recommendations. It also noted its participation in joint actions related to the Cooperation Agreement of the German Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserves.

563. The Advisory Committee accepts the legal and spatial justification for the zonation and takes into consideration regional specificity of this marine biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that all zones - formal and informal ones, e.g. buffer zone functions carried out by the dike adjacent to outside of the site border - have appropriate permanent legal protection status (Natura 2000 and others), and that they have been based on ecosystem research and fulfill their purpose. The Advisory Committee supported the authorities to continue in the process of establishment of one national transboundary biosphere reserve that would eventually lead to more conventional zonation layout.

564. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested an update on the process of creation of national transboundary Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserve.

565. **Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve (Germany)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided which addressed all MAB Council requests and recommendations. It also noted participation in joint actions related to the Cooperation Agreement of the German Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserves.

566. The Advisory Committee took note of the physical limits of this marine biosphere reserve for increasing the transition area and welcomed the continuation of the process of enlarging the transition area in cooperation with the neighbouring municipalities. The Advisory Committee also took note of the regional legal and spatial justification for the zonation taking into account the specificity of this marine biosphere reserve.

567. The Advisory Committee highly valued the extent of participation of stakeholders and island communities and encouraged further negotiations related to the extension of transition areas.

568. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee also requested an update on the process of creation of national transboundary Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserve.

569. **Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve (Germany)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided following the periodic review report for this biosphere reserve and the MAB Council request. It noted with satisfaction the participation in joint actions related to the Cooperation Agreement of the German Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserves.

570. The Advisory Committee took note that legal and spatial conditions does not allow for conventional zonation layout in this marine biosphere reserve and takes into account regional specificities. It also took note that all formal and informal parts of the zonation bear legal protection. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the proposed Strategy for completing the transition areas of this site.

571. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to continue the process of enlargement of the transition areas and requested an update on the process of creation of national transboundary Wadden Sea of Biosphere Reserve.

572. **Mount Olympus Biosphere Reserve (Greece)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information following the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2015. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts of the biosphere reserve to fulfil the recommendation of the MAB Council and to prepare detailed report on the progress.

573. It noted that the operation and funding of Olympus National Park and Biosphere Reserve Management Agency was secured for 2016 and 2017 by national funds by Ministry Environment and Energy. It also noted that additional funding by Forestry Directorate of Pieria and Ellassona and income from newly established Olympus National Park Visitor Centre will be

secured. Financial support will be assured through the international projects as well.

574. The Advisory Committee noted that legal documents on the approval of updated zonation were provided. The legal authorities in transition area Municipality of Elassona and Region of Thessaly signed the endorsements. The support from local communities and stakeholders was assured through participatory approach.

575. The Advisory Committee considered that the zonation is meeting the criteria. It also noted that the management authorities will continue the efforts of expanding the transition area with support of Greek MAB National Committee. It also welcomed that the management plan for the entire biosphere reserve has been prepared. It noted that the approval from the Ministry of Environment and Energy is still pending, but the management authorities are already implementing its programme also through Priority Action Framework that was approved by Ministry of Environment and Energy. It also noted that a comprehensive draft of sustainable development activities in biosphere reserve was presented, addressing the carrying capacity study, waste treatment, branding and entrepreneurship, including also conservation and educational activities.

576. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

577. **Gorge of Samaria Biosphere Reserve (Greece).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information following the second periodic review report for this biosphere reserve in 2015. Samaria Gorge represents the core area surrounded by mountain peaks complexes, gorges and areas for traditional landscape as a buffer zone. At the north, the core area is buffered by mountains area with no human settlements. Extensive grazing is the only economic activity. The borders of core area is following mountain ridge. The Advisory Committee noted that two proposals have been prepared to provide wildlife refuge at the north of the core areas or landslide. Two-year monitoring project was carried out to assess the zonation that resulted in proposal of small extensions at the southeast corner of the area and the extension of the marine protected area. It also noted that the management plan that will include management of other designations beside national park, such as Council of Europe diploma for protected areas and Natura 2000. It also welcomed the presentation of a comprehensive draft of compliance of the current and planned management activities with the Seville strategy.

578. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

579. **Maya Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Guatemalan authorities, which included a new strategy, monitoring information on biosphere reserve governance and information regarding some core areas. The last periodic review report was sent in 2001; therefore, the Advisory Committee requests a new periodic review. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

580. **Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve (Guatemala).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Guatemalan authorities following its recommendations in 2013. Further information on the sustainable development function has been provided, as well as more information about the 'recovered zone' and its location within the overall zonation scheme of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encourages the management authorities to create an Action Plan.

581. **Pilis Biosphere Reserve (Hungary).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this additional information provided by the biosphere reserve, following the MAB Council recommendation of 2016. It acknowledged the efforts made by the authorities to enlarge the transition area that would encompass buffer zones. It welcomed the start of negotiations with local governments to join in the biosphere reserve. It noted that on September 2015 successful negotiations were concluded with 12 municipalities. The core areas are strictly protected areas that are adjacent to settlements in some cases. The establishment of the buffer zone would result in decrease of the core area.

582. It however noted that the information provided, with the proposed transition area was the same as contained in the management Plan presented in 2016, paragraph 2.4.

583. The Advisory Committee concluded that it was **not able to assess if the site meets or does not meet** the criteria in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to pursue the negotiations with local authorities and to provide evidence on their active involvement in the biosphere reserve by 30 September 2017.

584. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities which will be examined at the forthcoming advisory committee session in 2018.

585. **Kiskunság Biosphere Reserve (Hungary).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this additional information following the MAB Council's recommendation of 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made in establishing the zonation map that would encompass different clusters into one entity as demonstrated in a map provided in the progress report. However, it also noted that consultations with municipalities in the transition area are still planned in the near future as stated in paragraph 2.4. in Management plan. There is no clear evidence of the increase in transition area since the same size of 68,000 ha was presented in Management plan prepared in 2015 and in 2016.

586. The Advisory Committee concluded that it was **not able to assess if the site meets or does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requested the authorities to provide clarifications about the status of transition area, further encouraged the authorities to pursue the negotiations with local communities and to provide evidence on their active involvement in the biosphere reserve by 30 September 2017.

587. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided by the authorities which will be examined at the forthcoming advisory committee session in 2018.

588. **General recommendations to the Islamic Republic of Iran.** The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted all the periodic review reports for these six biosphere reserves in 2013. Based on these reports, the MAB Council recommended that the authorities seek to establish for each biosphere reserve a management plan and a designated management body for the entire biosphere reserve, and to increase efforts with regard to research, education, public awareness and consultation with local people. The Council also asked for more detailed maps for each biosphere reserve and its zones. In conclusion, the Council noted that these biosphere reserves partially fulfilled the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Council requested that the authorities provide the requested information by end of December 2013. In response to these recommendations, the national authorities of Iran have submitted additional information for these six biosphere reserves for the consideration of the Council for its meeting in 2015.

589. Thus, the Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information from the Iranian authorities on the status of the implementation of the 2015 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

590. **Arasbaran Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)** The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the text for the additional information for this site was translated into English and provided together with clear zonation maps to the MAB Secretariat.

591. In its review of the materials submitted by the Iranian authorities, the Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that provided information enabled to assess the site.

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

593. **Arjan Parishan Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information. It noted with satisfaction that a management plan for the biosphere reserve was submitted and the report provided clear information with regard to sustainable development initiatives.

594. After the review of the materials submitted by the Iranian authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site.

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

596. **Geno Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)**. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the Iranian authorities provided additional information. It noted with satisfaction that detailed information on sustainable development activities undertaken in the biosphere reserve was provided.

597. It appreciated a comprehensive information on the development of the management plan “Master Management Plan for Geno Protected Area and Biosphere Reserve” and a management body officially responsible for the implementation of the management plan.

598. It encouraged the Iranian authorities to provide a management plan as an additional document.

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

600. **Golestan Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)**. The Advisory Committee commended the Iranian authorities for providing additional information. It noted with satisfaction that the zonation of this biosphere reserve has been revised in order to better protect the core area and to ensure its conservation function. It acknowledged that a comprehensive information on the existing management plan was provided.

601. After the review of the materials submitted by the Iranian authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site.

602. It encouraged the Iranian authorities to provide a management plan as an additional document.

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

604. **Harra Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information. It noted with satisfaction that a comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve was submitted as well as an information on a management body officially responsible for an implementation of the management plan. It acknowledged elaborated sustainable development programmes.

605. After the review of the materials submitted by the Iranian authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site.

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

607. **Kavir Biosphere Reserve (Islamic Republic of Iran)**. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the Iranian authorities provided additional information. It commended that the detailed management plan was elaborated and annexed to the report.

608. After the review of the materials submitted by the Iranian authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site. It noted with satisfaction that the zonation conforms to the Statutory Framework criteria. As discrepancies were found in the text related to figures on the zonation, the Iranian authorities are invited to revise these figures.

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

610. **Mt. Carmel Biosphere Reserve (Israel)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the authorities on the MAB Council 2016 recommendation, however regretted that no joint management mechanism nor a joint management plan have been established due to continuing differences between the various communities in the biosphere reserve. In their letter, the Israel MAB National Committee stressed that despite these differences between the INPA and Druze communities, all parties consider the biosphere reserve to be important and have asked for a two-year extension to develop a joint management mechanism and management plan.

611. The Advisory Committee recommended that dialogue be pursued to include all communities in the biosphere reserve management and requested that the authorities provide regular updates on the situation. The Advisory Committee noted the request for a two-year's extension to finalize the joint management mechanism. It also encouraged the authorities to seek within the WNBR for inspiring examples of such mechanism.

612. **Mount Mulanje Biosphere Reserve (Malawi)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the update provided with respect to follow-up from the recommendations of the periodic review. The Advisory Committee commended the agreement signed with the United States Forest Service that has facilitated the formation of an inter-stakeholder technical team to lead the development of a management plan.

613. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the site is functioning as a Biosphere Reserve. However, the zonation does not meet the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) by lacking human populations in the transition zone.

614. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to prepare an appropriate zonation scheme for the area and to submit an application for extension together with the management plan once completed. The updated zonation should include the communities who are already effectively involved in management.

615. The MAB Council welcomed the new zonation map, which includes a transition zone encompassing all the communities involved in the activities of the biosphere reserve. The MAB Council took note that the management plan is under development and will be available in six months. The MAB Council, based on this information considered that the site **meets** the criteria of the WNBR.

616. **Boucle de Baoulé Biosphere Reserve (Mali).** The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities of the country and welcomed the report on the implementation of the recommendations of the periodic review providing information about the design of the zoning map so that the site fulfills the 3 functions of a biosphere reserve, the operation of the website (www.opnbb-mali.org) and the appointment of members of the MAB National Committee by Order of 11 August 2016.

617. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).

618. However, the Advisory Committee noted that the buffer zone was narrow. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer zone without compromising the access rights of local communities.

619. **Bogd Khan Uul Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee thanked for the updated information of Mongolia on the status of the implementation of the 2009 recommendation by the MAB-ICC. It commended that the information was provided in the full periodic review format.

620. It noted with satisfaction that specific actions on protection of biological species in the biosphere were sufficiently implemented. It further noted that during 2013-2014 forest recovery works were conducted on a total of 40 ha area in Bogd Khan Uul.

621. The Advisory Committee acknowledged an elaboration and approval of 2014-2018 management plan for the Biosphere Reserve. It noted that the issue on increasing income source of transition area population is being considered in tight connection with social and economic policy of Ulaanbaatar. It also appreciated an effort to develop education and public awareness programmes.

622. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the revised zonation map indicated the spatial extent of the core, buffer and transition zones of the entire biosphere reserve.

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

624. **Uvs Nuur Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee commended the Mongolian authorities for the updated information on the status of the implementation of the 2009 recommendation by the MAB-ICC. It commended that the information was provided in

the full periodic review format.

625. The Advisory Committee welcomed a very well elaborate management plan for the Uvs Nuur Biosphere Reserve. It noted with satisfaction further enhancement of transboundary cooperation with the Russian Federation. It encouraged the national authorities to consider an establishment of some core areas in the forest areas in order to reduce adverse human impacts on the biosphere reserve.

626. After the review of the materials submitted, the Advisory Committee considered that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

627. **W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Benin/Burkina Faso/Niger).** The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities of Niger for sending the additional information and report on follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the periodic review in 2014 on behalf of the Benin/Burkina Faso and Niger. The Advisory committee took note that the updated management plan for the period 2017-2026 is yet to be approved by board of the W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. This updated management plan is a fully functional management tool that ensures the cross-border management of the W Transboundary Biosphere Reserve with all concerned stakeholders.

628. The process of establishing a sustainable financing mechanism called Fondation des Savanes Ouest Africaines (FSOA) began in 2010. It is now operational in Benin; Niger and Burkina Faso will follow. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site addresses the Pamplona recommendations for transboundary Biosphere reserves.

629. It requested the national authorities to inform the MAB Secretariat when the updated management plan is approved by the Board of the W transboundary Biosphere Reserve and to send a copy of the signed agreement.

630. **Omo Biosphere Reserve (Nigeria).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information related to recommendations from 2012. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities on the elaboration of a map with an outline compatible with the biosphere reserve concept. However, the legend was confusing because the appropriate terminology was not used.

631. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria. The Advisory Committee requested the country to submit a map with the appropriate terminology (core area, buffer zone and transition area) by 15 May 2017.

632. **Lal Suhanra Biosphere Reserve (Pakistan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information on the status of the implementation of the 2014 recommendation by the MAB ICC to the second periodic review report. The MAB Council concluded that this site, established in 1977, did not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the authorities were therefore requested to provide additional information.

633. The Advisory Committee commended the Pakistan authorities for an elaboration of a comprehensive management plan as well as information on the biosphere reserve's management team. It noted that the zonation map provided is not clear as well as a clarification of the zonation of the biosphere reserve in relation to the national park is not included in the submitted information. The Advisory Committee further noted that information on population size have not been included yet.

634. After the review of the materials submitted by the Pakistan authorities, the Advisory Committee could not conclude if the site meets or does not meet the criteria due to still insufficient information. Therefore, it requested the authorities to:

- inform the MAB Secretariat whether there is a resident population in the biosphere reserve and, if yes, describe its involvement in managing the site;
- submit a map with the proper zonation;
- provide clarification of the zonation of the biosphere reserve in relation to the national park.

635. This information should be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

636. The MAB Council noted with the satisfaction that all the additional information were provided by the authorities and fully addressed the Advisory Committee's recommendations. Therefore, it concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

637. **Palawan Biosphere Reserve (Philippines).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated information of Philippines on the status of the implementation of the 2012 recommendation by the MAB ICC.

638. The archipelagic biosphere reserve (designated in 1990) contains several islands including the main island of Palawan, with unique endemic flora and fauna species in many diversified habitats including forests, grasslands, brush lands and wetlands. Most coral and mangrove species have been documented. The Palawan Biosphere Reserve is legally recognized through Republic Act 7611. Institutional bodies and mechanisms are established to assist in the implementation of the law.

639. After the review of the materials submitted by the national authorities, the Advisory Committee appreciated that provided information enabled to assess the site. It noted an effort to improve coastal and marine management and to increase research, training and exchange programmes.

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

641. It invited the national authorities to submit a clearer zonation map with an information indicating any significant changes and provide more detailed information on marine areas (important habitats of coral, mangrove and marine animals) considered to be incorporated into the biosphere reserve. This information shall be provided to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

642. **Puerto Galera Biosphere Reserve (Philippines).** The response was submitted to the MAB Secretariat after the deadline of 30 September 2015. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the updated information on the status of the implementation of the 2014 recommendation by the MAB-ICC to the periodic review report.

643. This biosphere reserve was designated in 1977. Economic activities include aquaculture, quarrying of marbles and gold mining. The resident population in the biosphere reserve amounts to approximately 20,000.

644. The MAB Council in 2014 concluded that this site, established in 1977, did not meet

the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the authorities were therefore requested to provide additional information:

- re-zone the area to conform to the zonation criteria for biosphere reserves;
- provide information on the management structure for the biosphere reserve, as well as a management plan.

645. The Philippines authorities submitted to the MAB Secretariat an extensive report with a number of annexes. However, after the review of the materials submitted, the Advisory Committee noted with concern that information provided were not relevant to respond recommendations of the MAB ICC.

646. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve still **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves because the revised zonation map was not provided as well as a management plan.

647. In order to the MAB Council to be able to take the decision if the site meets or does not meet the criteria the Advisory committee requested the following documents and information to be sent by 15 May 2017 to the MAB secretariat:

- integrated management plan,
- number of people living in each zone,
- topographic map with delineated zonation,
- land use and vegetation maps.

648. The MAB Council acknowledged the receipt of the complete additional information requested by the Advisory Committee and found them fully satisfactory. In accordance with it, the Council concluded that this site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

649. **East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland)**. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the national periodic report for this transboundary biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017 in order to assess if the site does meet or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework, as it is concerned by the Exit Strategy.

650. **Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Poland)**. The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of a letter stipulating that a meeting had taken place on the 5 September to discuss a joint management plan for the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. This meeting was held shortly before the deadline of submitting the response to the recommendations issued in 2016.

651. The Advisory Committee unfortunately has to conclude that the brief summary of the meeting does not provide an adequate response to its recommendations and requests for the submission of a management plan that includes plans to properly involve local communities. It also requested that both countries (Slovakia) provide a national periodic review report by 15 May 2017.

652. **Slowinski Biosphere Reserve (Poland)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the efforts made for the extension and to improve the involvement of local stakeholders in the activities of the biosphere reserve following the MAB Council in 2016. It also noted that progress is slow.

653. The site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework, and the Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide more details on the involvement of stakeholders and local communities as well as the management plan by 30 September 2017.

654. **Danube Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Romania/Ukraine).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided following the follow-up recommendation of 2016.

655. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the authorities of Danube Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania.

656. The Advisory Committee welcomed the joint zonation map. It also welcomed the description on the involvement of local stakeholders. It noted that the management authorities of both biosphere reserves have agreed to involve in the management of transboundary biosphere reserve stakeholders from both countries once the joint management structure is established.

657. The establishment of the joint management structure was successfully initiated by Trilateral Joint Commission. It consists of Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environmental protection of Romania and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine, who agreed to provide the management structure for transboundary of the biosphere.

658. The joint activities of coordination, following the requirements of Pamplona will be implemented through annual working plans approved by the Commission. It was further noted that both biosphere reserves committed to the establishment of joint management body that will consist of a focal point in each biosphere reserve, and a joint secretariat made with one representative from Ukraine and two from Romania, and a Joint Coordinating Council. The latter will include 9 stakeholders from Romania and Ukraine will propose at most 5 stakeholders. Its own statute will provide the Coordination Council. Both partners agreed that three working groups would be established: WG for Conservation, biodiversity, natural resources, WG for Monitoring, scientific research, WG for Public awareness and socio-economic problems. The Advisory Committee noted that the agreement was reached in joint meeting to start joint activities in the field of monitoring, research, training, experts exchange, joint public relations strategy, joint communication and information strategy.

659. It welcomed that both biosphere reserves commit to promote the transboundary biosphere reserve in future projects, even when only one partner is engaged in the implementation. It also welcomed the cooperation agreement with Delta du Rhone Biosphere Reserve in France, signed in October 2016.

660. The Advisory Committee noted the efforts of the managing authorities of the transboundary biosphere reserve to provide a working plan for 2017 including vision, objective and actions. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets the Pamplona recommendations.**

661. **Barguzinsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the 2016 recommendation made by the MAB Council. It welcomed the zonation map provided showing the core area buffered on west by Lake Baikal and on north by Barguzinsky mountain ridge. The names of the zones on map comply with the Statutory Framework, though description in text is referring to buffer as a cooperation zone. It noted with satisfaction that the stakeholders, businesses and NGOs are involved in Coordination Council of biosphere reserve. It also welcomed the cooperation agreements signed with municipalities from Severobaikalsky and Barguzinski region.

662. It welcomed the information about medium term management plan for period 2016-

2020 provided, indicating also the actions related to conservation, education, cooperation of local people and stakeholders in tourism. High level of biodiversity was presented by list of phylum for each zone. Six bird species are endangered at global level, twenty are endangered on Russian Federation level as well as seven species of vascular plants.

663. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

664. **Tsentral'nolesnoy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided as a reply to the 2015 recommendation by the MAB Council made in 2016. The Advisory Committee noted that map and description of zonation, though there are some inconsistency between names of the buffer zone and transition area in text and in maps. The Management Plan for the period 2017 to 2021 and its implementation plan is currently being prepared through participatory approach and experts assistance of the Central Forest Biosphere Reserve. Its finalisation is planned for March 2017. Management Plan will address conservation aspect beside education, research, communication.

665. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the submission of third periodic review of the biosphere reserve that was established in 1985.

666. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information on zonation which was modified in 2016 when transition area was enlarged from 13,000 ha to 118,100 ha. The enlargement was agreed with local municipalities and national authorities. The transition area is not adjacent to buffer zone at north, northeast and North West, since the bordering territory is not populated and no economic activities are in place. The management body consists of The Central Forest Biosphere Reserve Zapovednik Administration. Local community is involved in meetings Workforce Council. Conservation function of the Biosphere Reserve is in place and results in established cooperation with Fund for Animal Welfare in the project for rehabilitation of orphan bear cubs. Beside research and education programme for schools that are implemented, the biosphere management also supports social aspects of the local community. Sustainable development has been implemented through activities discussed with local people in relation to farming, wild crops harvesting and public transport services. Local people are involved in education programmes and hospitality services.

667. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

668. The Advisory Committee invited the authorities to submit by 30 September 2017:

- the number of people living in the area;
- a zonation map using the standard terminology of the core, buffer and transition area of the Statutory framework;
- the management plan.

669. It further encouraged the authorities to pursue to involvement of local communities in management of biosphere reserve.

670. **Daursky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the 2016 recommendation made by the MAB Council.

671. The Advisory Committee welcomed the zonation map prepared in compliance to the Statutory framework. There are two federal refuges, Tsaucheytsky bor and Valley of Dzeren, listed by IUCN as category IV of protected area important for management of habitats and

species, and located in the transition area. These protected areas are managed by Daursky Nature Reserve which exerts economical activity in the first refuge. Local farms are providing the economical activity in the second refuge.

672. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

673. **Far East Marine Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information following the request from the MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts undertaken by the authorities in enlarging the zonation and providing a map that complies with Statutory framework. Two core marine areas are not surrounded by a buffer zone on the western part. The boundary of the southern part of the core is coastline, core area in the eastern part encompasses islands and water around them. The transition area has been established along the western border of the biosphere reserve and has followed the Cooperation Agreement signed in August 2016 between Administration of Zarubino settlement and managing authorities. The clusters are not joined since they are surrounded by the sea from north, east and south.

674. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that signed Cooperation Agreement was provided demonstrating the commitment of signed parties in cooperation with local population in Zarubino, Andeeva, Vitaz and recreational areas Bucta Troits, Gamov Peninsula in order to develop tourism, ecological and education activities.

675. A detailed plan for biosphere reserve sustainable development for period 2016–2020 was presented. A plan for participatory management of local communities in biosphere reserve was also presented in the Program to Involve Vityaz Residents in Biosphere Reserve Management for the period 2016-2020. An Advisory Council will be established, involving representatives of authorities, non-profit organisations and local communities. It includes activities related to cooperation with other biosphere reserves, respective research institutions, training and education as well as promotion of small business in the field of tourism and sea farming.

676. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

677. **Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information following the request from MAB Council in 2016 for this site that **meets** the criteria. It considered that the information provided was still not clear and therefore requested that clear explanation on the status of zones of traditional land use and zones of recreation development be provided in terms of their connection with the MAB statutory framework terminology.

678. The Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to submit this information by 30 September 2017.

679. **Kavkazky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of a letter concerning the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The zonation, however, is still not conform to the Statutory Framework. It is not clear whether the transition area actually serves as a buffer zone – quite a number of restrictions on the use of the area are in place. What has been termed the cooperation zone seems to adhere to the principles of a transition area. However, the surfaces are not provided, so it is not clear whether this concerns and extension of the total surface. Furthermore, it is not clear whether there are local people living in the transition area and, if any, how local populations are

included in the management of the biosphere reserve, and whether the biosphere reserve fulfils a development function. The Advisory Committee concluded the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework, and it hence recommended to the authorities to **consider the withdrawal of the site**.

680. The MAB Council acknowledged the receipt of a letter concerning the withdrawal of the biosphere reserve and applauded the commitment made by the authorities to keep the site. However, no information is provided about plans to address the major concerns of the Advisory Committee recommendation, namely the fact that the zonation is still not conform to the Statutory Framework. It is not clear whether the transition area actually serves as a buffer zone – quite a number of restrictions on the use of the area are in place. What has been termed the cooperation zone seems to adhere to the principles of a transition area. However, the surfaces are not provided, so it is not clear whether this concerns and extension of the total surface. While the letter indicates that the Biosphere Reserve covers five municipalities, it is not clear whether there are local people living in the transition area and, if any, how local populations are included in the management of the biosphere reserve, and whether the biosphere reserve fulfils a development function.

681. **Kedrovaya Pad Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the letter responding to recommendations from MAB ICC. The Advisory Committee took note of the new zonation plan. It acknowledged the explanation for the missing buffer zone on the eastern part of the site, as the local authorities do not have jurisdiction over the sea.

682. However, the Advisory Committee noted that some plans have been developed to promote tourism and generate employment for local populations, but plans to actually involve local populations in the activities or the management of the biosphere reserve are only just beginning to be developed.

683. The Advisory Committee, therefore, concludes that, at present, the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework. It recommended to the authorities to consider that the site be withdrawn – with a possibility of resubmitting a proposal for an extension of the site once support from local communities has been obtained and an integrated management plan, including all three functions of the biosphere reserve has been developed.

684. **Kronoksky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information on the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The maps clearly indicate the location of core areas, buffer and transition areas. In a few places, the core areas are not directly bordered by buffer zones, but as the management authorities explain, here the core areas are de facto buffered by rugged mountain ranges. Hence, the zonation does meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework. The Advisory Committee furthermore welcomed the detailed information on the development function of the biosphere reserve, especially in relation to the promotion of tourism and sustainable fisheries. However, the involvement of local communities in the management of the biosphere reserve is currently being negotiated through the development of new management plans.

685. The Advisory Committee considered that the site **meets** the criteria and requested the submission of the new management plan, including detailed plans to cooperate with local populations, before 15 May 2017.

686. **Nerusso-Desnyanskoe Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory

Committee acknowledged receipt of the new zonation maps of the biosphere reserve. The maps provided use the terms transition areas and buffer zones interchangeably – which is confusing. In addition, no response was received to the recommendations to provide a clarification on the development function of the biosphere reserve. An updated periodic review detailing the development function had been requested as well. However, an extension of the deadline has been requested to complete the updated review. The Advisory Committee concluded that it **was not able to assess if the site does or does not meet the criteria** of the Statutory Framework, and requested the authorities to submit an updated periodic review by 15 May 2017.

687. **Nizhegorodskoye Zavolzhye Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee appreciated the responses to the MAB ICC recommendations. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of a new map of the zonation of the biosphere reserve. While there is some confusion between transition zones and buffer zones (the former serve actually as a buffer zone), a clear transition area has been indicated. The Advisory Committee, however, noted that parts of the core area are not bordering or adjacent to a buffer zone; furthermore, it is not clear whether the inclusion of a transition area involves an extension of the biosphere reserve.

688. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information about the involvement of local communities in the governance structure of the biosphere reserve, as well as the additional information about the support for development function of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee welcomed the agreements that have been signed with various government and municipal representatives as well as the stud farm to further explore sustainable development options for the biosphere reserve. However, information is lacking about how research is contributing to the management of the biosphere reserve.

689. The Advisory Committee concluded that more information is needed about this issue as well as the lack of buffer zones before it can re assess whether the site does or does not meet the criteria. It requested that the information be provided by 15 May 2017.

690. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided about the development function of the site, and the participation of local communities in managing the site as well as the extension of the transition area and noted the activities linked to research and monitoring. It considered that the site **meets** the criteria.

691. **Okskiy (Oka) (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee appreciated some of the responses made to the MAB Council recommendations of 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of a new map of the zonation of the biosphere reserve. While there is some confusion between transition zones and buffer zones (the former serve actually as a buffer zone), a clear transition zone has been indicated. The Advisory Committee, however, noted that parts of the core area are not bordering or adjacent to a buffer zone. With the addition of an extensive transition zone, the biosphere reserve has been extended significantly.

692. The Advisory Committee welcomed the cooperation agreements signed with representatives of local government. However, details about a management plan and the development function of the biosphere reserve are still scant and the the management plan is still under development. It also noted that details on the involvement of the local communities were not addressed and provided as requested.

693. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site **does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework, and recommended that the authorities **consider the site to be**

withdrawn.

694. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided in response to its recommendation. The MAB Council welcomed the details provided on the development function of the site, notably in relation to tourism, sustainable agriculture and hunting. Information has also been provided on the membership and meetings of the Coordinating Council. The letter mentions the development of a Management Plan, but this plan has not been submitted. The MAB Council noted the information provided on the scientific function of the site. This function is not very strong at the moment, but plans have been made to improve it – though details are not provided. The MAB Council noted that no response was provided to its queries in relation to the zonation of the site, which **does not meet** the criteria.

695. **Pecholor-Ilychskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee appreciated the update of the zonation map. The map clearly indicates the 3 zones of the biosphere reserve, and is conform to the zonation requirements. The Advisory Committee appreciated the information about the cooperation agreement signed with the local municipality. However, information about how the development function of the biosphere reserve will be fulfilled is still lacking. A summary of a GEF-project to develop this function is attached, but it is not clear what the status of this summary document is – whether it is part of an application or whether the application has been approved, and if so, what the period of the project is.

696. Without further information on how the development function is implemented, including more information about the status of the GEF project in terms of funding and implementation and results, the Advisory Committee is not able to assess if the site does not meet or meet the criteria. Therefore, it requested that this information be provided by 15 May 2017.

697. The MAB Council welcomed the response to the recommendation. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information on the plans to develop recreational activities as well as the development of a management plan. However, the letter does not contain detailed information about the development function of the site. Without this information, the MAB Council is not able to assess if the site does not meet or meet the criteria. Therefore, it requests that the management plan be submitted once it is finalized, and urges the authorities to include detailed information in the plan about the fulfillment of the development function.

698. **Prioksko Terrasnyi Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the recommendation made by the MAB Council in 2016 provided in this periodic review report. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the establishment of transition area that covers 28,780 ha. The total area of Biosphere Reserve has 9,670 ha. Transition area was formed upon agreement among administrations of the Serpukhov Municipal district, the Town of Pushino, Danky rural settlements. The agreement was signed by the Serpukhov District Administration and Prioksko Terrasnyi National Nature Biosphere Reserve. The process of signing by other stakeholders is in process. The Advisory Committee welcomed the clear zonation map, which is in compliance with Statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

699. It was noted that 38,750 people living permanently in the transition area and 15,000 seasonally. The biosphere reserve is now located close to Moscow with 12 millions of people.

700. A multilateral Agreement on Collaboration in the Promotion of the Sustainable Development of the Prioksko-Terrasnyi Biosphere Reserve and a Strategic Management Plan for the period 2015-2025 is being developed.

701. The conservation function is well developed. Genetic resources are being maintained with creation of seedbeds of *Bison bonasus* aiming to introduce population to in the European part of Russia.

702. Local people are involved in provision of tourism services, agriculture and forest activities. Main goals mentioned in the draft of Strategic management plan are focused also in promoting partnership in buffer zone related to environmental tourism, economic development, introducing green technologies in the agriculture and gardening. An environmental network will be created to develop socio-economic development programmes in joint cooperation of regional authorities. The Coordinating Council of biosphere reserve is a joint body of local authorities representatives

703. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

704. The Advisory Committee recommended to submit by 15 May 2017 the clarification for seasonal change in human population in transition area.

705. The Advisory Committee further recommended the authorities to pursue the involvement of local communities in Coordinating Council as well as stakeholders and business companies in the management of biosphere reserve and to submit the management plan after its finalisation.

706. **Sikhote Alin Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the reply to the requests made by the MAB Council in 2016. It took note of the rationale for the definition of the transition area to include majority of settlements in this sparsely populated region.

707. As regards the management plan and its implementation with involvement of local population, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the creation of the working group of the most active representatives of local communities, NGOs, scientific, nature conservation organizations, local administrations, business leaders and interested people to share their ideas on the biosphere reserve management, as well as the CATS (Conservation Assured Tiger Standards) approval.

708. This certificate recognizes high management standards, including involvement of local communities. Despite this achievement, the Advisory Committee emphasized that a biosphere reserve has slightly different goals than conventional nature protection areas. It therefore considered that formal biosphere reserve management plan that would include support of sustainable development activities would be highly appreciated.

709. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the information on the implementation of the development function. It noted that cooperation in the development of sustainable tourism, creating more employment opportunities, is a good field where the biosphere reserve can play a key coordination role.

710. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Sikhote Alin Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide a copy of the SWOT analysis, mentioned in

the document, which shows the gaps in management system to which the biosphere reserve management should pay the major attention during the future work. This document could help to have a better overview of the site. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to finalize the formal biosphere reserve management plan and pursue further dialogue with the local population in terms of the site management.

711. **Sokhondinskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information related to the zonation following the periodic review report for this biosphere examined in 2016 by the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that zonation of this site does not follow the conventional zonation layout of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves due to combination of local geographical and natural conditions and location of the settlements.

712. The zonation map provided in the document shows that the core area is surrounded by proper buffer zone, which also constitutes the border of the biosphere reserve. The transition area is located in the south and southeast part of the site, where the majority of the communities are located.

713. Considering the regional specificities, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Sokhondinskiy Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to finalize the management plan of the biosphere reserve and request and update on the process by 30 September 2017.

714. **Taimyrsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the requests made by the MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the updated information related to zonation and cooperation with the stakeholders.

715. The map provided by the authorities' shows that the core areas are properly buffered and that the revised transition area consists of settlements, providing an opportunity to promote sustainable development projects and incorporate various stakeholders in the life of this biosphere reserve.

716. The Advisory Committee also welcomed the information about cooperation with local stakeholders, in particular all five local ethnic groups. The participation in planning of sustainable use of natural resources and projects related to promotion of indigenous culture are also worth noting. The information about the creation of a stakeholder based Biosphere Reserve Council is very appreciated and the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to finalize the process as soon as possible.

717. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Taimyrsky Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to pursue further involvement of local stakeholders in the management of the biosphere reserve dialogue and requested an update on the progress of the Biosphere Reserve Council by 30 September 2017.

718. **Teberda Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided following the request made by the MAB Council in 2016. It noted that the information provided mentions that 4500 people are living in transition area and more than 139,000 inhabitants in the "corporation area" of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to follow the standard terminology used in description of a biosphere reserve zonation in order to be clear which population lives in which

part of the site.

719. The Advisory Committee also noted the information that there is no resident population living in the core area although it is mentioned that the settlement of Dombai is embedded in the core area.

720. The Advisory Committee also requested clarification on the rationale for significant parts of the core areas not buffered. It also requested more clarification on the finalization of the management plan. It welcomed the Agreement on cooperation and joint activities in the field of assistance to sustainable development of "The Teberda Biosphere Reserve".

721. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that it is not able to assess if the biosphere reserve **does or does not meet** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested the authorities to provide further information related to zonation as well as the management plan by 15 May 2017.

722. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided following the request made by the Advisory Committee. It noted that the documents provided raised some questions related to number of people living in different zones of the biosphere reserve as well as clarification on the settlement embedded in one of the core areas. The authorities however provided additional information on these issues stating that 12 546 people live in the buffer zones, 131 528 inhabitants reside in the transition area and the surrounding the village of Dombai by core area has historical reasons and the settlement has a buffer zone.

723. The Council took note of further information provided on why significant parts of the core areas in the south are not buffered due to state border and the landscape configuration. For remaining buffering in question a new zonation map was provided showing proper placement of missing buffer zones. It also welcomed that more clarification on the finalization of the BR management plan was also submitted. The document structure was introduced and the deadline for its conclusion was set by the authorities on September 2017.

724. The MAB Council concluded that Teberda Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and requested the authorities to submit the BR management plan to the MAB Secretariat by September 30, 2017.

725. **Tsentrāl'no-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the requests made by the MAB Council in 2016. It noted that the authorities submitted the zonation map showing position of all the 3 zones of this cluster type biosphere reserve accompanied by figures related to size of each zone in hectares as well as an overview of the social and economic interactions between the 3 zones of BR. It also noted that the authorities provided information on the process of creation of the biosphere reserve management plan and indicated that stakeholders should approve it by March 2017.

726. The authorities also provided a Plan to promote research with local stakeholders on social-ecological changes and their dynamics which covers majority of issues related to the biosphere reserve and Plan to implement studies and monitoring of social, economic and ecological impacts of tourism development and the surrounding agro-food and farming industry.

727. The Advisory Committee welcomed the creation of the Coordination Council of the Biosphere reserve "Tsentrālno-Chernozemny Reserve" in July 2016 and its regulations that

describe the involvement of local stakeholders in the site management.

728. It noted that the additional document however did not include the requested clarification of the land use, land covers changes inside, and outside the biosphere reserve and lacks description of sustainable activity development.

729. On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Tsentralno-Chernozemny biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

730. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities provide the following information by 30 September 2017:

- a) the land use and land covers changes inside and outside the biosphere reserve;
- b) description of sustainable activity development;
- c) a management plan approved by stakeholders;
- d) detailed information on the coordination of the four clusters.

731. **Tsentralnosibirsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the requests made by the MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information about ongoing cooperation with local stakeholders, in the form of two agreements on the traditional use of natural resources. It also welcomed the information provided on cooperation with indigenous people. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to involve the local communities in the biosphere reserve management as much as possible.

732. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the updated information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities shows that the revised transition area forms one unified unit now and one of the core areas is properly buffered. However, it noted that the second core area located in the western part of the site lacks any buffering and is adjacent directly to the transition area.

733. On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that it is not able to assess if the Tsentralnosibirsky Biosphere Reserve meet or does not meet the criteria as the zonation is not in line with the criteria. The Advisory Committee requested information on why one of the core area is not properly buffered or provide further explanation for the absence of the buffer zone by 15 May 2017.

734. The MAB Council welcomed the response to the requests made by the AC. It welcomed the information about ongoing cooperation with local stakeholders, in the form of two agreements on the traditional use of natural resources. It also welcomed the information provided on cooperation with indigenous people. The MAB Council acknowledged the updated information related to zonation, however the map provided by the authorities raised some questions related to buffering of core areas. Additional explanation provided by the authorities and corrected map clarified the situation, that the site has only one core area and buffer zone situated in State Nature Reserve Tsentralnosibirsky and the Federal State Nature Sanctuary Eloguysky forms surrounding transition area.

735. On the basis of the information provided, the MAB Council concluded that the Tsentralnosibirsky Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to involve the local communities in the biosphere reserve management as much as possible.

736. **Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory

Committee welcomed the response to the requests made by the MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the receipt of the updated information related to zonation, as well as the new management plan for the biosphere reserve and the on-going cooperation with neighboring Mongolia.

737. The map provided by the authorities shows that all the nine core areas are properly buffered, even though some of the buffering functions are carried out by adjacent protected areas outside the biosphere reserve. The zonation is complemented by transition areas with settlements to pursue sustainable development activities.

738. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to pursue further cooperation with Mongolia in submitting a transboundary biosphere reserve nomination.

739. **Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve following the 2016 recommendation of the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the update of the functional zonation of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee also took note of the ongoing development activities with the tourist project launched by the end of 2016 and that it will be possible to make an integrated assessment of the economic and social impact of the biosphere reserve, and to conduct a respective analysis in 2018.

740. The Advisory Committee suggested that the future progress report should provide more detailed information regarding the new zoning, especially the implementation of the new transition area. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to pursue the engagement of community in the transition area.

741. The Advisory Committee considered that the Visimskiy Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria.

742. **Vodlozersky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Vodlozersky Biosphere Reserve following the 2016 recommendation from the MAB Council. The Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made to engage local communities in sustainable activities and to clarify the functions of the zonation of the site. It noted that a buffer zone is partially surrounding the core area, and welcomed the progress made in terms of integrated conservation and development projects, local public-private partnerships and collaborations with local communities, and governments.

743. The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to assess if Vodlozersky Biosphere Reserve **does or does not meet** the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It requested the authorities to provide detailed information related to the development function, involvement of stakeholders in the governance and management in the biosphere reserve and to clarify the partial surrounding of buffer zone close to the core areas by 15 May 2017.

744. The MAB Council welcomed the response to the requests made by the AC. It acknowledged the letter explaining further the development function as well as the zonation map that addresses the queries. Based on the information provided the MAB Council concluded that the sites **meets** the criteria.

745. **Voronezhsky Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee

welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Voronezhsky Biosphere Reserve following the MAB Council recommendation 2016. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of a management plan for the site that integrates the issues of illegal harvesting, illegal occupation of land and illegal constructions. The Advisory Committee noted with interest the development of new cooperation with local stakeholders and users consideration, new research project on social-ecological changes and dynamics involving stakeholders, as well as the implementation of studies and monitoring of social, economic and ecological impacts of tourism industry development.

746. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Voronezhsky Biosphere Reserve to pursue its efforts for sustainable development of the area. It concluded that the Voronezhsky Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria.

747. **Golija Studenica Biosphere Reserve (Serbia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Golija Studenica Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the progress made regarding the development and implementation of an efficient governance for the site that integrates local stakeholders. The new biosphere reserve council is the executive, decision-making body responsible for the planning and management of the biosphere reserve and the Golija interested parties' forum should act as an advisory body composed of 15 members, which presents a wide range of the stakeholders' interests from all five municipalities. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to create this forum as soon as possible, as well as to pursue its efforts for collaborative sustainable development of the biosphere reserve.

748. The Advisory Committee concluded that Golija Studenica Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria.

749. **Slovensky Kras Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the response to the MAB Council recommendation made in 2016. The Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the updated information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities' shows that the zonation scheme consist of all three required zones. However, it noted that some of the core areas lack buffer zones and are adjacent to the transition area.

750. The Advisory Committee also noted with regret that some of the requested information was not addressed, in particular endorsements from the representatives serving on the Biosphere Reserve Coordination Board as well as detailed information on the procedures of their involvement in the management of the biosphere reserve. It welcomed the information provided on priorities of the biosphere reserve management but regretted that the authorities submitted the biosphere reserve management plan in Slovak with some bullet points in English.

751. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Slovensky kras Biosphere Reserve does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework, as the zonation is not in line with the criteria. The Advisory Committee requested to receive the following information by 30 September 2017:

1. clarification on why some of the core areas are not properly buffered or provide rationale for the absence of the buffer zones;
2. more detailed information on the new management plan of the biosphere reserve;
3. signed endorsements from the representatives serving on the Biosphere Reserve Coordination Board;
4. detailed information on the procedures of the involvement of these representatives in

the management of the biosphere reserve.

752. **Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up information submitted by the country in respect of recommendations for action after the first periodic review for the biosphere reserve located on the southwestern coast of South Africa, north of the Cape Town metropolitan area. The area stretches between the Diep River mouth in the south and the Berg River in the north. The Langebaan Lagoon and Lower Berg River support a high diversity of wader bird species, with the latter providing the highest number of wader birds in South Africa.

753. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities on the exclusion of the Koeberg Nuclear plant footprint from the core area of the biosphere reserve and the fact that this does not affect the functioning of the biosphere reserve in any way as per the map submitted. The Advisory Committee also noted the implementation of the Koeberg precautionary action zone (PAZ) within 5 km of the reactor as part of the steps to completely eliminate the Koeberg footprint from the entire reserve and the stakeholder consultations started in this regard.

754. The Advisory Committee noted, however, that the country did not provide a map clearly indicating the location of the nuclear plant within the biosphere reserve with respect to the three functional zones. The Advisory Committee requests the country to provide by 15 May 2017: a detailed map showing the location of the Koeberg nuclear plant within the CWCBR to enable the MAB Council decide whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

755. The MAB Council welcomed the new map sent by the authorities excluding the nuclear plant from the perimeter of the biosphere reserve and their confirmation that this new zonation will now be the reference for the Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve. The MAB Council, based on these clarifications, considered that the site meets the criteria of the WNBR.

756. **Area de Allariz Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Spanish authorities following MAB ICC recommendations in 2016. The Management Committee has established an Action Plan, and is in the process of establishing a new zonation. The Advisory Committee concluded that the additional information it requested in 2016 have been provided and concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

757. **Cuenca Alta de Manzanares Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the letter submitted by the Spanish authorities. Re-organisation of the entire biosphere reserve and a re-zonation is in the process of being implemented. It has noted that a new re-zonation proposal will be sent to the MAB Secretariat. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

758. **Valles de Omana y Luna Biosphere Reserve (Spain).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the information provided by the Spanish authorities following MAB ICC recommendations in 2016. A new Management Committee has been created and approved by the local authorities. The Management Committee is in the process of creating a new zonation. The Advisory Committee concluded that the additional information it requested 2016 have been provided and concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

759. **Radom Biosphere Reserve (Sudan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report

from Radom Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB ICC in 2001, requesting to revise totally the functioning of the site in order to conform better with the criteria of a biosphere reserve.

760. Beyond insisting on the great environmental value of the site and its vulnerability (many species have disappeared from the area), the biosphere reserve authorities could not meet the MAB ICC recommendations because of the political instability of the region and related security reasons. Indeed, Radom Biosphere Reserve is located in an area of continued civil conflict in Darfur State lasting for more than 15 years. Because of the Darfour conflict, communities migrated within the biosphere reserve and rebel groups are present as well, which is currently an obstacle to a precisely defined zonation of the site as well as to any other activity.

761. The Advisory Committee notes that the recommended technical and financial support by the ArabMAB network has not been provided to the biosphere reserve yet and no field mission has been undertaken by the MAB Secretariat as requested, because of the above-mentioned security reasons.

762. Subsequently, and with regard to the difficult situation on the ground, the Advisory Committee concluded that the Radom Biosphere Reserve should be provided more time to answer the recommendations once a peaceful and secure situation will be achieved.

763. **Parc National Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve (Switzerland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review report provided by the authority. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the rationales of the extension of the biosphere reserve perimeter, and of the new buffer and transition area, as well as the efforts made to develop the three functions of the biosphere reserve.

764. The core area is the Swiss National Park that covers 17,032 ha. The buffer and transition areas, which respectively encompass 17,373 ha and 10,451 ha, are traditional rural alpine landscapes mixing fields and meadows with sustainably harvested forests. The buffer and transitions zones are mostly located between the Swiss national park and the Italian national park of Stelvio. Combined with the adjacent natural regional park of Adamello-Brenta in Italy the whole area constitutes one of the most important cluster of protected areas in the Alp chain where animals can freely move. The EVM Biosphere reserve contributes promoting local traditional practices, the local Rheto-Romanche language, and as such to preserve cultural diversity within one of the 23-priority area for biodiversity conservation in the Alps.

765. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to pursue their efforts in engaging local stakeholders, in the management and governance of the site, especially in the buffer and transition zones, as well as to pursue its efforts for integrated conservation and development projects within the transition area, as well as its partnerships with other protected areas to create an efficient ecological network between Engadine, Tyrol and Trentin-Haut-Adige regions.

766. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Parc national Val Müstair Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

767. **General recommendation to Tunisia.** The Advisory Committee acknowledged that due to political transition and reorganization in the Tunisian ministries in charge of the MAB Programme, the relevance of the Exit Strategy to Tunisian Biosphere Reserves has not been understood in time. In the frame of several projects supported by international funds, several activities have nevertheless been implemented in the last years and followed-up with the

recommendations of MAB ICC made in 1999.

768. **Djebel Bou Hedma Biosphere Reserve (Tunisia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from Bou-Hedma Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB ICC in 1999. It was requested to explore the possibility of creating a transition zone, to establish a management plan of the entire Biosphere Reserve with regard to the new zonation, and a reinforced participation of the local population in the Biosphere Reserve was strongly encouraged.

769. The Advisory Committee highly welcomed the numerous ways in which the local population of the Biosphere Reserve has been involved in recent years, through recruitment of local people by the BR, participatory workshops regarding conservation in and management of the site, environmental education programs and training of eco-guards as eco-guides to ensure additional income sources, the establishment of conventions with local NGOs, the realization of household surveys, the financing of 70 micro-credit projects, and collaborations with farmers on pilot silvopastoral projects.

770. The creation of a transition area corresponds to the conversion of the “zones of agricultural production” (zones d’exploitation agricole) into a transition zone following the MAB terminology to be finalized in 2017. The discussion of the zonation has brought up the issue of the land tenure status of the families inhabiting the biosphere reserve as “temporary” which is being contested by the concerned families.

771. A management plan of the Biosphere reserve, elaborated in a participatory process, has been joined to the report. This plan is to be up-dated in 2017 in the frame of an ongoing conservation and development project and will benefit from the several research and monitoring activities reported to be carried out in the biosphere reserve.

772. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the good progress and concluded that the Djebel Bou Hedma Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

773. The Advisory Committee Progress recommends to further improve the zonation through the extension of the transition zone and the addition of complementary buffer zones around the core zones, notably by including further territory currently outside the biosphere reserve. The authorities are further invited to specify how the temporary land tenure status of local families will be handled and land tenure regularization achieved in the coming future.

774. **Djebel Châambi Biosphere Reserve (Tunisia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from Djebel Châambi Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB ICC in 1999. It was requested to explore the possibility of creating a transition zone, to establish a management plan of the entire Biosphere Reserve with regard to the new zonation, and a reinforced participation of the local population in the Biosphere Reserve was strongly encouraged.

775. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that in addition to the political transition in Tunisia, Châambi Biosphere Reserve is currently designated as a military zone for security reasons. Despite this, the authorities in charge of the biosphere reserve managed to carry out projects, through monitoring activities can currently only be undertaken using satellite images.

776. Following the provided map, the zonation of Châambi Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of a Biosphere Reserve with three well defined zones, including the requested transition zone made of 9 Douars and a total of 574 families.

777. The new management plan for the Biosphere reserve following the new zonation is available as well as the necessary funds to implement it, but the current security situation has prevented this to happen yet.

778. The participation of the local population consists mainly in its inclusion in microcredit projects that are being implemented by an NGO and financed by the Tunisian Ministry of Environment. To be mentioned among these activities, the creation of apicultural units, of family gardens and orchards etc. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged that once the military status of the biosphere reserve will be lifted, the biosphere reserve authorities establish more participatory processes notably in decision-making.

779. Subsequently, and with regard to the difficult situation on the ground, the Advisory Committee considers with appreciation that all MAB ICC recommendations have been met and that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

780. **Ichkeul Biosphere Reserve (Tunisia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from Ichkeul Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB Advisory Committee in 1999. The prominent importance of this wetland was emphasized and consequently, it was requested to ensure a long-term monitoring of the site. Further, authorities were asked to explore the possibility of creating an external transition zone integrating water catchment areas, to establish a management plan of the entire Biosphere Reserve with regard to the new zonation, as well as to reinforce local participation especially with regard to overgrazing issues.

781. Ichkeul Biosphere Reserve benefits since 2008 from scientific monitoring and research (including Phd and master theses) targeting the ecosystem's water needs and its response to the evolution and changes of environmental conditions, in order to better inform the management of Ichkeul Lake.

782. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the creation of a transition zone that takes into account the water management issue. The good hydrological functioning of the lake-marsh system is a priority in the provided management plan. A further objective of the management plan is the sustainable management of natural resources that considers also the needs of the local population. In this regard, several initiatives are implemented in order to better include the population. Among these, the creation of an artificial pasture zone of 122 ha dedicated to grazing in order to halt overgrazing in other vulnerable parts of the site, and which is maintained in collaboration with the local population, the creation of a "Groupement de Développement agricole" of Ichkeul Biosphere reserve whose members received project management training, finance pilot projects and related training sessions related to apiculture and oleoculture, the elaboration of ecotouristic circuits to provide further income opportunities for the population, as well as a communication and awareness raising programme targeting the general public.

783. Subsequently, together with other positive developments reported on, the Advisory Committee considers with appreciation that all its recommendations have been met and the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of Biosphere Reserves.

784. The Advisory Committee recommends the further extension of the current transition zone, outside of the legal borders of Ichkeul National Park. More information is invited about the current state of implementation of the autonomous management structure of the site and that is reported to be accomplished on a step-by-step basis.

785. **Zembra and Zembretta Biosphere Reserve (Tunisia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report from Zembra and Zembretta Biosphere Reserve (received after the deadline of September 2015) as a reply to the recommendations issued by the MAB ICC in 1999. Tunisian authorities were invited to consider the relevance of maintaining the site as a biosphere reserve because of its isolation and the lack of people living on the site. A response was requested by the end of 2000 at the following Advisory Committee and Tunisian authorities replied in 2002, reiterating the reasons why Zembra and Zembretta constitute a valid Biosphere Reserve.

786. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the biosphere reserve has the regular tripartite zonation as well as a management plan according to this zonation since 2004. With regard to the presence or absence of a local population in the Biosphere Reserve, it appears that this is a question of interpretation. Civilians are not housed on the site (there is a military base), but local people from the nearby coast, mainly traditional fishermen make their living from using the resources of the BR's transition zone. The latter is thus an important part of the life of many local families.

787. The Advisory Committee took note that the management plan is currently under revision and it is planned to extend the transition area to the coast around Jebel Haouaria and Sidi Daoued, where environmental education activities focusing on the Zembra archipelago are carried out since 2005. In the Terms of Reference regarding the updating of the management plan, reference is explicitly made to the criteria of the MAB Programme, including zonation and participatory involvement of the population in drafting the new management plan.

788. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee considers the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves and encourages the work in progress regarding the extension of the transition zone to the nearby mainland.

789. **Askania Nova Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information following the request from MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee welcomed the zonation map presented with a core area surrounded by the buffer zone except in small part in the centre where village and road are buffering the core. Three parts of buffer area on the east, south and north do not have transition area adjacent due to the forests as evidenced in the map.

790. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

791. **Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) - Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided upon recommendation from the MAB Council in 2016. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that zonation was changed in 2016 due to enlarged transition area that encompasses all cluster of core area and was designed in order to establish ecological corridor. The transition area has 124,300 ha and the total biosphere reserve has 181,138.8 hectares. The zonation complies with the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

792. Transition area was established in agreement with management authority of biosphere reserve and the Transcarpathian Regional Forestry and Hunting Department. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed demonstrating the commitment to ensure forest management based on the principles of sustainable development in the region. A new management plan is in the process of elaboration in order to comply with the change in zonation.

793. The Advisory Committee noted that in 2012 and 2013 a memorandum of understanding with the local governments and municipalities of Rakhiv and Tiachiv districts of Transcarpathian region was signed and included provisions for the involvement of local communities in activities and management of biosphere reserve. It also noted the recreational infrastructure, taking into account the economical, environmental, social and other interests of local communities, and measures to increase the environment.

794. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

795. **Shatkskyi Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated zonation map of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee concluded that the zonation meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve.

796. The Advisory Committee furthermore welcomed the additional information about the involvement of local authorities and communities in the management of the site. The updated periodic review report mentions that the Coordination Council includes representative of local authorities and communities, forest and agricultural enterprises, and NGOs. The list provided of permanent members of the council indeed includes the local District Chairpersons. The Advisory Committee encourages the Council to further work towards designing and elaborating the development function of the biosphere reserve.

797. The Advisory Committee concludes that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

798. **East Carpathian Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine).** The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to send the national periodic report for this transboundary biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017 in order to assess if the site does meet or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

799. **General recommendation to USA.** The Advisory Committee expressed its great appreciation of the efforts made to adapt the USA sites in order to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves. An impressive number of sites have (re)submitted detailed periodic review reports and adopted significant changes. Many sites have been extended to fulfil the zonation criteria and functions. The Advisory Committee has taken into account the agreement in relation to the terminology used by most of the USA sites maps, and has reviewed the new zonation accordingly. However, in its recommendations, the Advisory Committee applies the official zonation terminology in accordance with the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee also recommended that when possible the sites could change their names in order to fully reflect the biosphere reserve designation as distinct from national parks that often serves as core areas. It also encouraged the authorities to work on a specific communication and branding strategy at the national level. The Advisory Committee encouraged other US sites to follow the successful examples of upgrading the biosphere reserve by submitting new nomination and /or periodic review reports. Finally, the Advisory Committee greatly encouraged the authorities and the biosphere reserves to actively participate in the WNBR meetings and MAB activities.

800. **Big Bend Biosphere Reserve (USA) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this follow-up to the MAB Council recommendation made in 2014 after the submission of first periodic review report. The Advisory Committee recognized the efforts done

in preparing the periodic review in new form and providing solutions for changes in zonation.

801. It welcomed the new zonation map provided. The site covers the total area of 2,535,675 ha, of which core area is 11,470 ha, buffer zone 306,166 and transition area is 2,207,773 ha. There are two core areas: Burro Mesa and North Chisos included in National Park Big Bend area that is designed as buffer. Transition area is delineated on the adjacent territories on east and west in state owned land and in the north in private land. State border with Mexico is also a border of Big Bend Biosphere Reserve, though protected areas exist on the Mexican side of the border. Big Bend National Park is the administrative authority for core area and buffer zone. Partnerships are established in the transition area among private landowners and Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife.

802. The conservation function is implemented along with well-developed research and education programme. Ecological restoration of Terlingua Creek riparian habitats was performed by planting willow aiming to re-establish cottonwood stands in the area. Research and education function is well in place.

803. The biosphere authorities work closely with local community in Mexico, especially in wildland fire prevention, ecotourism and management activities. There is a volunteers programme implemented, programme for encouragement of young women involved in business activities. Cooperation is established with 17 groups of indigenous communities living in the area. A programme for reduction of water consumption and recycling is in place in buffer zone.

804. The management authorities are considering the possibility of establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve with Maderas del Carmen Biosphere Reserve in Mexico in the near future following the good cooperation in field of cooperation and tourism management.

805. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

806. It further encouraged the authorities to pursue the involvement of local communities in management of the biosphere reserve, to pursue the sustainable development especially in transition area, to promote the MAB programme in the area and to participate in the WNBR.

807. **Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve (USA) - Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this follow-up to the MAB Council recommendation of 2014. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts done by the authorities in preparing the periodic review report and providing additional information on the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted the support for biosphere reserve from local authorities and various stakeholders.

808. The managing authority of the biosphere reserve is Cascade Head Experimental Forest. Coordination of activities is provided by Siuslaw National Forest and Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council SDCWC.

809. It noted the efforts to establish the Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve Working group that will prepare a management plan. The zonation map of Cascade Head Biosphere Reserve was provided.

810. Conservation and logistic function is well placed through several projects as restoration of marshes. The list of objectives for future programmes of biosphere reserve was presented.

811. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

812. The Advisory Committee invited the authorities to provide by 15 May the exact size of core area, buffer zone and transition area,

813. It further encouraged the authorities to participate in WNBR and to draft a comprehensive management plan of the entire area prepared in synergy with existing plans and in compliance with Lima Action Plan and to establish twinning programmes with biosphere reserves.

814. **Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve (USA)**. The MAB Council acknowledged and welcomed the first periodic review report for this site. However, since the report arrived late, the advisory committee could not examine it.

815. **Channel Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA) – Extension**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this follow-up to the MAB Council recommendation of 2014. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts in preparing the periodic review report, resubmitted after 2013 by the Channel Islands National Park and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. It noted that the Sanctuary Advisory Council formed many working groups including various stakeholders and participatory approach is assured.

816. The conservation, research and monitoring is well developed, also resulting in conservation measures such as vessels traffic management, development of economically sustainable practices in lobster fishery. Socio-monitoring studies are performed for analysing the local people's use of resources and underlying management decisions.

817. The zonation map was provided including marine and terrestrial core area, buffer zone and transition area.

818. The Advisory Committee noted the efforts to start the process of involvement of local communities and stakeholders in activities of biosphere reserve.

819. The Advisory Committee concluded that the biosphere reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

820. It further encouraged the authorities to submit the information about the formation of coordinating body by 15 May 2017. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to prepare a comprehensive management plan in synergy with existing plans and in compliance with Lima Action Plan, and to participate in WNBR.

821. **Crown of the Continent Biosphere Reserve (USA) - Extension and renaming (former Glacier Biosphere Reserve)**. The Advisory Committee welcomes the (re-)submission of the periodic review report. The Advisory Committee welcomed the extension of the site and the inclusion of a zone of cooperation (following the 'Rocky Mountain' terminology). The zonation now meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework, and the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the possibilities of adding those areas which are currently marked as 'for future consideration'. The extension of the site is accompanied by changes in the governance to involve local communities in the management of the site such as the establishment of the Crown Managers Partnership, the Crown Round Table, the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the Crown Adaptation Partnership.

822. The Advisory Committee welcomed initiatives to provide access to places that are sacred to indigenous populations. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee commended the initiatives taken to promote sustainable tourism and business – paying attention to involving and benefitting local populations – and the monitoring of mining and energy plans. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the on-going transboundary cooperation with Canada Waterton BR.

823. Based on the information supplied, the Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of World Network of Biosphere Reserve and recommended that the new name to be approved.

824. **Denali Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of the periodic review using the correct format. The Advisory Committee, however had some questions in relation to the zonation. Two of the southern core areas are surrounded directly by the transition area cooperation, rather than buffer zone. Furthermore, the northern core area also lacks a buffer zone adjacent. The Advisory Committee therefore requested the authorities to provide clarification on these.

825. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to continue to explore the establishment of a biosphere reserve network and corridor to connect the site to other IUCN category II protected areas, such as other national parks, that connect to the Denali Biosphere Reserve transition areas. The Advisory Committee welcomed the steps taken to improve the development function of the site, and integrate the three functions. Initiatives have been developed to reduce waste to the landfills, and the authorities continue to work closely with community organizations, non-profits, businesses, the tourism sector, the State of Alaska, and multi-national corporations. The periodic review report contains detailed information on the governance core areas and buffer zones – which are all under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

826. The governance for the entire site – including the zones of cooperation – is a bit more fluid and experimental, but there appears to be a strong and active presence of civil society, and participation in the civic sphere with other government, non-governmental, Native, private, and business enterprise entities which according to the review works well for the management and coordination of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee welcomed the Denali Borough Land Management Plan and the Denali Education Center as a positive examples of initiatives related to the development function of biosphere reserves. The Advisory Committee also commended the attempts to reach out to indigenous people as well as immigrant groups – for example through the Denali Subsistence Resources Commission. The site also contains a coal mine, and attempts are made to reduce emissions, and render the production processes more sustainable without jeopardizing local livelihoods – similar initiatives are being deployed in relation to tourism. In relation to the logistical function, the Advisory Committee welcomed the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into its programmes and management.

827. The Advisory Committee applauded the many steps taken to meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site does integrate all three functions of biosphere reserves. However, a few questions remain concerning the zonation. The Advisory Committee therefore concluded that at this moment it is not possible to determine whether the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves or not, and recommended the authorities to submit further information and explanations regarding the zonation by 15 May. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee noted that the appendix concerning partner lists

and agreements was missing, and the Advisory Committee recommends that these be submitted as well.

828. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided on initiatives towards the regional and national branding of the biosphere reserve. The MAB Council appreciated the provision of extensive information about the partners of the site, and noted that the partnership list is very inclusive. It also welcomed the copy of the Denali Subsistence Resource Commission Charter. However the MAB Council requested more clarification on the status of the de facto buffer zones, and encouraged the authorities to apply the zonation used by other US biosphere reserves to comply with the criteria

829. The MAB Council strongly encouraged the authorities to resubmit a proposal once the stakeholder involvement process is more advanced, and the zonation plans have been adapted to meet the criteria.

830. **Everglades and Dry Tortugas Biosphere Reserve (USA)** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission of a periodic review. The Advisory Committee welcomed the steps taken towards the implementation of the biosphere reserve functions. The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of the new zonation maps. It noted that the areas of cooperation and partnership include primarily federal and state protected areas, but they also contain inhabitants. However, the distinction between residential areas and protected areas is not clear on the map. One of the core areas is furthermore also designated as a buffer zone. The Advisory Committee noted the establishment of a number of partnerships and initiatives related to the promotion of sustainable development. The partnership agreements, however, do not appear to be coordinated, hence involvement of local stakeholders appears rather scattered. The Advisory Committee furthermore welcomed the acceptance of the 2012 NPSABSC report on the coupled human-natural systems and connectivity, and encourages the authorities to further stimulate research in this direction. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee recommended the authorities to explore other possibilities of sustainable development than just tourism and waste management, and explore even closer cooperation and involvement of local residents.

831. While the Advisory Committee commended the steps taken, based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee is unable to conclude whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee therefore requested the submission of the following documents by 15 May 2017:

- A more detailed zonation map of the site with explanations concerning the absence of managed use areas bordering some of the core areas and the overlap between core and managed use areas;
- A vision document on how to better coordinate the involvement of stakeholders (including local communities) in the management of the site and the promotion of sustainable development.

832. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided on the zonation of the site. On the basis of this information the MAB Council acknowledged that that the core areas of the site are indeed bordered by de facto buffer zones, either at the Federal or the State level. However the MAB Council requested more clarification on the status of the de facto buffer zones, and encouraged the authorities to apply the zonation used by other US biosphere reserves to comply with the criteria.

833. The MAB Council encouraged the authorities to resubmit a proposal once the stakeholder involvement process is more advanced, and the zonation plans have been adapted to meet the criteria.

834. **Guanica Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The MAB Council acknowledged and welcomed the first periodic review report for this site. However, since the report arrived late, the advisory committee could not examine it.

835. **Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. The authorities justified their request by the temporary lack of expert staff and need for more consultation with peer sites and experts in order to address crucial zonation issue, raised by the MAB Council recommendation. The Advisory Committee took note that the authorities want to prepare changes in zonation layout to comply with the MAB requirements but this action will require more time.

836. The Advisory Committee took note that the new deadline proposed by the authorities for changes in zonation and submitting the report is 29 December 2017.

837. The Advisory Committee recommended that the authorities submit the report by 15th of May.

838. **Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve (USA) - extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review, which has been conducted in a participatory way. The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated zonation map, which does meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, as well as the detailed ecosystem service analysis (which includes beneficiaries). The Advisory Committee welcomes the formal and informal partnerships concluded to render the management of the site more inclusive – including the collaboration with Native American Groups across Partner Lands. The Advisory Committee equally appreciates the inclusion of local knowledge in the management of the marine areas.

839. The Advisory Committee applauded the extensive information on the promotion of sustainable development within the entire site.

840. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

841. **H. J. Andrews Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the request of the authorities for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. The authorities justified their request by the need to discuss with the management authorities of the site and the State Department.

842. It noted that there are questions related to how the site could add value to the larger network and how maintaining the designation would influence future management outcomes. It also noted the need to explore the benefits of possible combining the two sites into one entity. It also noted the possible change in zonation with the Three Sisters and H.J. Andrews as two core areas, with an expanded buffer zone to include the entire Willamette National Forest together with zones of cooperation could be envisioned as part of a revised strategic plan.

843. The Advisory Committee took note that the new deadline proposed by the authorities

for submitting the report is January 2017.

844. It recommended that the report be submitted by 15 May 2017.

845. **Hawaiian Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomes the report of the periodic review using the official review form. The Advisory Committee acknowledged receipt of two zonation maps, as well as explanations of why some core areas are not adjacent to buffer zones (these are de facto buffered by remote, inaccessible areas), and the Advisory Committee concluded that the zonation maps meet the zonation criteria. The Advisory Committee appreciated the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan developed by Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, which emphasizes a multicultural approach for the interpretation of the park resources and includes Native Hawaiian culture.

846. The Advisory Committee also commends the linkages with local development plans. The information provided demonstrates that the site does cater to the development function – including a number of interesting initiatives in energy and environmental design. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee concludes that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

847. **Isle Royal Biosphere Reserve (USA) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the report of the period review using the official review form. The Advisory Committee acknowledges receipt of a new zonation map, and concludes that this map is in accordance with the zonation criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

848. The Advisory Committee commended initiatives taken to involve the lessees in the management of the site, and link up local and indigenous knowledge with scientific research in and management of the site. The committee also noted efforts to repatriate skeletons and artifacts, as well as initiatives to support the maintenance of cultural services of Scandinavian fishing communities.

849. The Advisory Committee appreciates that the transition areas are subject to local and national government arrangements, and appreciates that these are increasingly involved in the development function and management of the site – notably through the Indian Self-Governance programme and the NEPA process.

850. Based on the information received, the Advisory Committee concludes that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

851. **Jornada Biosphere Reserve (USA) - Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the updated periodic review report previously submitted in 2014 by Jornada Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976. The total area of the site exceeds 247,000 ha. The Jornada Biosphere Reserve is one of three biosphere reserves representing the Chihuahuan Desert. The site is located in New Mexico and extends from the crest of the San Andres Mountains, which are dominated by woodlands, to the Jornada Basin occupied by desert grasslands and shrublands. The main and traditional economic activity is livestock grazing. The biosphere reserve continues to be used for rangeland research and education which began in 1912.

852. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for their contribution in the field of sustainable development in particular recent experiments of a new cattle biotype that may be more sustainable in arid, shrubby ecosystems as it may reduce impacts on vegetation. This research involves stakeholder participation and may help to maintain sustainable well-being and preservation of the cultural heritage of ranching community. It also well noted the

fulfilment of the logistic functions of the biosphere reserve through multilateral cooperation with education and research institutions.

853. It also noted that the zonation is in line with criteria despite the fact that transition area is fairly small in comparison to core area and buffer zone. It also noted that limited grazing is allowed in the core area, under the jurisdiction of US Department of Agriculture, and serves conservation goals of the site. Although the transition area includes some settlements, the Advisory Committee lacked information related to human population of the site as well as information related to participation management of the site. The Advisory Committee encouraged the creation of formal biosphere reserve management and/or consultative body that would be based on various local stakeholders e.g. representatives of local communities, entrepreneurs etc. and that would directly participate in the biosphere reserve management and decision-making processes. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves can provide some models for creating of such group.

854. The Advisory Committee encouraged the Jornada Biosphere Reserve authorities to contribute to the WNBR by sharing the results of research and practical experience in the field of sustainable grazing, especially for arid areas.

855. It noted with satisfaction that the Jornada Biosphere Reserve works as living laboratory of sustainable development, and the Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

856. The Advisory Committee requested that the national authorities submit the following information by 15 May 2017:

- a) information related to population of the biosphere reserve and its distribution in each zone;
- b) proposal for increasing the participative management structure that would involve local communities and other stakeholders;
- c) more detailed information regarding the activities for the conservation function.

857. **Luquillo Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve which was designated in 1976. The total area of the site exceeds 3,400 ha. The Luquillo Biosphere Reserve is located in the Luquillo Experimental Forest, situated in the Luquillo Mountains in northeast Puerto Rico. This biosphere reserve comprises a cross section of the natural environments of Caribbean islands, and is valued by the public as an asset for conservation, recreation, tourism, education, and research.

858. The Advisory Committee noted that the site is very well fulfilling the logistic function, and is part of the network of the Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) programme whose main goal is to understand the long-term dynamics of tropical forest ecosystems characterized by large-scale, infrequent disturbance, rapid processing of organic material, and high habitat and species diversity.

859. As regards sustainable development, the Advisory Committee appreciated sustainable approaches to forestry and forestry planning in form of Land and resource management plan. The Advisory Committee also noted the Co-management concept used in the biosphere reserve governance.

860. The Advisory Committee welcomed the quality of the report but noted the absence of a comprehensive zonation map, showing clearly the biosphere reserve borders and the location

of the biosphere reserve zones.

861. The Advisory Committee was not able to conclude whether this biosphere reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

862. The Advisory Committee therefore requested that the authorities submit a biosphere reserve zonation map in line with the criteria of the WNBR to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

863. The MAB Council welcomed the quality of the report as well as additional information including comprehensive zonation map, showing clearly the biosphere reserve borders and the location of the biosphere reserve zones. The MAB Council concluded that the site **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

864. The MAB Council encouraged the authorities to continue to work with stakeholders in order to safeguard that only low impact tourism takes place in buffer zones, where most recreation sites are found.

865. **Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of periodic review report for this biosphere reserve which was designated in 1990 and extended in 1996. The area of the site totals nearly 368,000 ha. The Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve is located in Kentucky and represents a karst system characterized by multilayered caves with unique fauna and mineralization features. The area has also historical and cultural significance due to the evidence of activities of prehistoric people who explored and extracted minerals from the caves, used them for shelter, and cultivated the surface area.

866. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the quality of the report submitted by the authorities. It noted the activities related to nature conservation as well as the cooperation with various partners in research and education in order to fulfill the logistic function of the biosphere reserve.

867. It also noted with high appreciation that the site provides arrangements for the involvement and participation of various stakeholders. The Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve Advisory Council includes key stakeholders such as local elected officials along with members from industry, non-profits, government organizations, and academia.

868. The Advisory Committee appreciated the reception of information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities' showed that the zonation scheme consists of all three required zones. However, it noted that the map provided indicates that a large part of the core area lacks presence of buffer zone and is adjacent to the transition area and to the municipality of Brownsville. It further raised some concerns as regards the development activities/function in the core area as well as the annual number of visitors in the core area, exceeding 500,000 and requested more information on these issues.

869. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee concluded that it cannot assess whether that the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere because of the zonation.

870. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide information on why the western part of the core area is not properly buffered, or provide rationale for the absence of

the buffer zone as well as additional information related to development activities in core area, including environmental and social impact assessment of possible impact of oil and gas exploitation in the buffer zone and the visitors pressure management in core area by 15 May 2017.

871. The MAB Council welcomed the reception of information related to zonation. The map provided showed that the zonation scheme consists of all three required zones. Additional information related to the lack of the buffer zone at the large part of the core area were provided explaining that the configuration of the buffer zone was established to identify and provide collaborative emphasis on the most ecologically sensitive areas outside of the core area based upon research related to the key ecological concerns such as the underground flow of groundwater and the protection of sensitive biota and aquatic resources. Also some concerns as regards the development activities/function in the core area as well as the visitor pressure were additionally explained stating that development is restricted to a very small area of the site. The improvements have occurred to modernize existing facilities to better serve public use and the increase in use of the Core Area has been accommodated with minimal environmental impacts. Also visitor pressure guidelines and regulations are in effect.

872. The MAB Council also acknowledged additional information related to impact of oil and gas exploitation in the buffer zone as there is legal oil and gas development on private properties and there is no way to reduce or restrict this activity under current law. However the authorities are aware of potential threat to the Core Area, particularly with the sensitive nature of Mammoth Cave groundwater system and the Green River. Additionally, another concern mentioned was the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Abandonment and Capacity Restoration Project, that would affect part of the eastern Outer Transition Zone; with the potential impact to groundwater that could extend to both the Buffer Zone and Core Area of the site.

873. Based on the information provided, the MAB Council concluded that the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere. The Council encouraged the authorities to monitor oil and gas exploitation as well as actively participate in negotiations on proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Abandonment and Capacity Restoration Project to ensure that the site's qualities will not be jeopardized.

874. **Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve (USA) - extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of periodic review report for this biosphere reserve which was designated in 1984. The area of the site exceeds 12,243,000 ha of desert and arid lands. The site is situated in south-east California and comprises four management units: the Death Valley National Monument, Joshua Tree National Monument, the Santa Rosa Mountains Wildlife Management Area and Anza Borrego Desert State Park.

875. The Advisory Committee noted the exemplary fulfillment of the conservation and logistic functions, the networking of hundreds of partners, including indigenous people, as well as sustainable development activities in particular promotion of sustainable energy production, ecotourism and outdoor education.

876. The Advisory Committee noted that the majority of all activities is concentrated on and around the core areas, while the rest of the biosphere reserve is lagging behind. It also noted the absence of the management plan for the whole biosphere reserve, whilst each core area has one.

877. It noted that the whole biosphere reserve is missing a unifying coordination structure. It nevertheless welcomed that work is ongoing on developing clear lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability for coordination of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve and noted the discussions on a MOU and a Charter for incorporating into the Desert Managers Group, which should be concluded in the summer of 2017.

878. The Advisory Committee appreciated the information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities shows that the zonation is formed by all three required zones. Based on the information provided, the Advisory Committee considered that the Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere.

879. The Advisory Committee requested the authorities to provide the following information by 15 May 2017: more detailed information on the process for creating an inclusive stakeholder based governance structure and the completion of the overall biosphere reserve management plan.

880. **New Jersey Pinelands Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the resubmission of periodic review report for this biosphere reserve which was designated in 1983. The area of the site covers 445,000 ha of the Atlantic Outer Coast Plain in the state of New Jersey. The pinelands hosts unbroken forests and wetland habitats. The upland areas consist of pine, oak, and heath communities, and the wetland areas are home to Atlantic white cedar swamps, hardwood swamps, pitch pine lowland forests, shrub swamps, marshes and savannas. There are also numerous intermittent ponds located throughout the region and surface waters, including rivers, streams and manmade lakes and bogs.

881. The Advisory Committee noted the fulfillment of the conservation and logistic functions, involving many partners from nature conservation authorities to research and education institutions. It also noted that sustainable development activities are focused mainly on “eco-centric” tourism, promotion of sustainable forestry, water supply planning and creation of green infrastructure.

882. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the biosphere reserve governance performed by The Pinelands Commission that consists of major stakeholders. This model of governance allows development within the parameters of the management plan, while reflecting community’s needs and values. The Pinelands Commission also provides an additional oversight mechanism of the local review process whereby development proposals must also be reviewed by the Pinelands Commission as well as the local municipalities.

883. The Advisory Committee appreciated the information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities’ shows that the zonation is containing the required zones. However, it noted that the map indicates that a fairly large parts of the core area lack presence of buffer zone.

884. On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee cannot assess whether the New Jersey Pinelands Biosphere Reserve meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework as regards the zonation and objectives of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee requested that the authorities send to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:

- information on why some parts of the core area are not properly buffered or the rationale for the absence of the buffer zones
- indication of the limits of the transition area
- the purpose and added value for keeping the biosphere reserve designation.

885. The MAB Council welcomed the information related to zonation. The map provided by the authorities' shows that the zonation is containing the required zones. However, it noted that the map indicates that a large part of the core area lack presence of buffer zone. Additional information stated that these divergences are the result of existing federal and state jurisdictional boundaries that were established by federal and state legislation and that the zonation is consistent with the definitions for zonation in U.S. Biosphere Reserves, as defined in the 1994 Strategic Plan for the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program. Approximately 12 km of un-buffered border abuts a mix of preserved land and agricultural lands that could serve to limit any negative effects that would come from human activities.

886. It also noted that the authorities also provided additional information on added value of the BR designation and are interested in working with other biosphere reserves to address challenges such as: climate change; water supply management; sustainable land use strategies; management of invasive species; and mitigation of environmentally harmful uses of off-road vehicles. On the basis of the information provided, the MAB Council concluded that the New Jersey Pinelands Biosphere Reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework.

887. **Olympic Biosphere Reserve (USA) – extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review provided by the Olympic Biosphere Reserve (OBR). This OBR was designated in 1976, it encompasses 373,383 ha of three distinctly different ecosystems – rugged glacier-capped mountains, more than 113 km of wild Pacific coast, magnificent stands of old growth and temperate rain forest. The OBR protects important cultural resources, with regional and national significance, including more than 650 archaeological sites, hundreds of ethnographic sites, 31 cultural landscapes, and 16 historical districts. The core area is made of the Protected Areas and covers approximately 354,775 ha designated by the United States Congress as wilderness. The buffer zone is made of 369,939 ha of the Managed Use Areas surrounding the Protected Areas where research, educational activities, public recreation, and various economic activities occur according to ecological principles.

888. The transition area covers 1,152,530 ha. The management of the cultural and natural resources of this zone is done in collaboration with other management authorities and partners to facilitate education, research, recreation, and promote sustainable economic development. These joint activities and partnerships are governed by voluntary agreements.

889. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that the OBR participates in several regional multi-agency cooperatives. The Advisory Committee appreciated the information provided on the Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit, the North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative, and the Northwest Climate Science Center, as well as the National Park Service North Coast and Cascade Network.

890. The Advisory Committee noted also the contribution of the OBR to the national and regional tourism industry and commended the authority for their great achievement of the restoration of the Elwha River.

891. The Advisory Committee encouraged the OBR authority to pursue their efforts in collaborative management, establishment of the Foundation Document that will articulate the broad policy and vision for the Core Zones and Managed Use Area, in addition to the General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

892. The Advisory Committee encouraged also the OBR to pursue the negotiation to

establish a sister park agreement with the Pacific Rim and Gulf Islands National Park Reserves of Canada to formalize the current cooperative relationship between the parks. The fundamental objective of this twinning could be to build upon MAB principles and improve its partnerships with all the components of these protected areas.

893. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to pursue their efforts in engaging local stakeholders, especially the different local tribes, in the management and governance of the ONPBR, especially in the buffer and transition zones, as well as to pursue its efforts for collaborative sustainable development of the transition area.

894. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Olympic Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Advisory Committee also recommended to consider possibility to change the name in order to fully reflect the biosphere reserve features beyond the national park limits.

895. **Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Biosphere Reserve (USA)** The Advisory Committee welcomed the periodic review report provided by the OPCNM Biosphere Reserve. This site is a first generation biosphere reserve created in 1976 for the conservation of a unique pristine example of an intact Sonoran Desert ecosystem. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the very high potential of an expansion of the present biosphere reserve perimeter to include other managed lands and areas to include small, local communities, and pursue the idea of the implementation of a transboundary biosphere reserve to provide protections for a larger area, function as buffer and transition areas, and integrate El Pinacate, a CONANP site and Mexican-designated biosphere reserve that is also a World Heritage Site.

896. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to pursue their efforts in engaging local stakeholders, in integrated conservation and development projects, as well as the governance of a new biosphere reserve perimeter, especially in the new buffer and transition zones. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to submit a new biosphere reserve proposal as soon as possible when the conditions of its implementation will be met.

897. The Advisory Committee concluded that the OPCNM Biosphere Reserve **does not meet** the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

898. The MAB Council welcomed the letter provided by the authorities to attempt to reply to the recommendation and endorsed the Advisory Committee recommendation.

899. **San Dimas Experimental Forest Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. It noted that the authorities stated that they prefer to keep the biosphere reserve designation but that they cannot meet the deadline set by the MAB Council. It took note that in order to meet the zonation criteria, the authorities would have to expand the existing boundaries of the site to encompass non-federal lands currently in private holdings. It also noted that the private landowners approval seems initially unlikely. It also took note that a negotiated settlement is possible but would be protracted, taking a minimum of two to three years.

900. The Advisory Committee noted the request for some flexibility and for an extension for the submission of the report of 3 years in order to engage the neighboring landowners in designing a biosphere reserve that meets the criteria. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to submit a report (periodic report or new proposal for a biosphere reserve) that would enable the Advisory Committee to assess if the site meets the criteria. It also

recommended that the request for extension of the deadline for submitting the report be approved by the MAB Council as the site is concerned by the Exit Strategy.

901. **San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation that the periodic review was conducted in consultation with the Agricultural Foundation, the DANRT and with the guidance of the Rocky Mountain BR. The Advisory Committee noted the original place of the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve for science of Mediterranean landscapes, and climate change within the NEON network, as well as the development of research on cattle grazing. The Advisory Committee noted also the increase of educational use of the biosphere reserve, as well as the progress made regarding the economic development with the enterprises venture based on grass fed beef and the farm market. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to engage local stakeholders in the management and governance of the biosphere reserve, especially in the buffer and transition zones, as well as to pursue its efforts for collaborative sustainable development of the biosphere reserve.

902. The Advisory Committee concluded that it was not able to decide if the site meets or does not meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves due to lack of information. The Advisory Committee requested that the San Joaquin Biosphere Reserve send to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:

- more detailed information concerning the rationale of the zonation,
- a clear delineation of the three zones,
- evidence of the engagement of local stakeholders

903. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided but was still not able to clearly assess if the site is meeting the criteria in the absence of a clear zonation map as the three zones are not clearly identified, and noted that the main activities are related to tourism and education activities.

904. **Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the clarification regarding the zonation of the biosphere reserve. The core area covers 339,048 ha and is partially surrounded by 11,212 ha of buffer zone. Two transition areas of 1,898,097 ha and 5,464,585 ha completed the biosphere reserve zonation. The Advisory Committee noted the engagement of the biosphere reserve in various scientific and education networks.

905. The Advisory Committee noted also the huge contribution of the biosphere reserve to the national and regional tourism industry. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authority to pursue their efforts in engaging local stakeholders in the management and governance of the BR, especially in the buffer and transition zones, as well as to pursue its efforts for collaborative sustainable development of the biosphere reserve.

906. The Advisory Committee was not able to assess whether the site meets or does not meet the criteria. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Sequoia and Kings Canyon Biosphere Reserve provides more detailed information concerning the rational of the zonation, a more detailed map showing the buffer area and the engagement of local stakeholders by 15 May 2017.

907. The MAB Council welcomed the additional information provided including the zonation rationale, the map and how the local stakeholders are engaged and it concluded that the site meets the criteria.

908. **Virginia coast Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The MAB Council welcomed the periodic review report, but since it arrived late, the advisory committee could not examine it.

909. **Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the follow-up reporting provided by the SA Biosphere Reserve. Designated in 1988, the biosphere reserve is located in the Southern Appalachians Mountains shared among six states. Encompassing several units, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, based on an innovative cluster approach, the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve engages successfully with a wide range of community, federal, state and academic institutions to foster biodiversity conservation, research, monitoring, environmental education, sustainable tourism and recreation. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the clarification regarding both the new zonation of the biosphere reserve and the function of development of the biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee noted also that the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB) Cooperative established in 1988, is a partnership of eleven U.S. federal and three state agencies to provide a coordinating framework for the SABR.

910. The core area covers 211,418 ha and is the Great Smoky Mountains National Park partially surrounded by a buffer zone of national forests totaling 692,322 ha and a huge transition zone of private and public lands that cover about 14,960,000 ha. The SABR is obviously engaged in biodiversity conservation actions and in the promotion of wise use of natural resources. It facilitates sustainability science and education for sustainable development in relationships to climate change and other dimensions of global environmental change.

911. The Advisory Committee noted also the contribution of the SABR to the national and regional tourism industry with tens of millions visitors. The Advisory Committee highlighted the approval of the SAMAB 2015-2020 strategic plan that aims to encourage wise use of the SABR natural resources and to promote sustainable development, and to foster and support integrated environmental research, education and training in the context of global change. The Advisory Committee highlighted also the development of the Southern Appalachian Vitality Index that seems a very valuable tool to support regional decision making and invited its dissemination in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

912. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to pursue their efforts in engaging local stakeholders, especially the Cherokee community, in the management and governance of the SABR, especially in the buffer and transition zones, as well as to pursue its efforts for collaborative sustainable development of the transition area.

913. The Advisory Committee concluded that the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve **meets** the criteria of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and commended the biosphere reserve authorities for the quality of the review report and the work done to experiment and demonstrate collaborative approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.

914. **Three Sisters Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the request of the authorities for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. The authorities justified their request by the need to discuss with the management authorities of the site and the State Department.

915. It noted that there are questions related to how the site could add value to the larger network and how maintaining the designation would influence future management outcomes. It also noted the need to explore the benefits of possible combining the two sites into one entity.

It also noted the possible change in zonation with the Three Sisters and H.J. Andrews as two core areas, with an expanded buffer zone to include the entire Willamette National Forest together with zones of cooperation could be envisioned as part of a revised strategic plan.

916. The Advisory Committee took note that the new deadline proposed by the authorities for submitting the report to the State Department is January 2017.

917. It recommended that the report be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

918. **University of Michigan Biological Station Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. It noted that the authorities requested to submit the report to the state Department in February 2017.

919. The Advisory Committee recommended that the report be submitted by 15 May 2017.

920. The MAB Council welcomed the first periodic review report for this biosphere reserve, established in 1979. Since the report arrived late, it could not be examined by the advisory committee.

921. **Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. It noted that the authorities justified their request by the lack of expert staff to conduct the report. It finally noted that the new deadline proposed by the authorities for submitting the report to the State Department is 25 March 2017.

922. The Advisory Committee recommended that the report be submitted to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

923. **Yellowstone National Park Biosphere Reserve (USA).** The Advisory Committee acknowledged the authorities' request for extension of the deadline for submission of the periodic review report. It noted that the authorities justified their request by the need for necessary negotiations with stakeholders and experts to change the site boundaries in order to address crucial zonation issue. It also noted that the authorities want to prepare changes in zonation to comply with the criteria but that these changes will require more time. It noted that the new deadline proposed by the authorities for changes in zonation and submitting the periodic review report is September 2017. It finally recommended that the request for extension of the deadline for submitting the report be approved by the MAB Council as the site is concerned by the Exit 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)

924. In introducing this item, the Secretariat referred to document SC-17/CONF.229/8. It outlines that at its 23th meeting held in UNESCO HQ from 23 to 26 January 2017, the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IABCR) had examined 28 proposals for new biosphere reserves, including four (4) transboundary sites and one (1) re-submission of proposals, and 12 requests for expansion and/or renaming of already existing biosphere reserve.

925. At the meeting in March 2017, the Chair proposed to the Bureau members that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee be forwarded to the MAB Council without any change (SC-17/CONF. 228C-Final Report). Therefore, the January 2017 recommendations of the Advisory Committee on each of these proposals are included in document SC-17/CONF.229/8.

926. In some cases, the Advisory Committee had recommended that further information be requested from Member States by 15 May 2017. Additional information received by the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017 was subsequently reviewed by the MAB Bureau that met in conjunction with the 29th MAB ICC and the MAB Bureau's recommendations thereon was reported orally and on the screens to the 29th MAB ICC.

927. Taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves in Annex 3 and the Bureau's further deliberations on 12 and 13 June 2017, the ICC took the following decisions (sites are listed in the order they appear in document SC-17/CONF.229/8):

A. New nominations

928. **Mono (Benin).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

929. **Mono (Togo) Biosphere Reserve.** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

930. **Mono (Benin/Togo).**The MAB Council welcomed this new transboundary proposal between Benin and Togo and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

931. **Savegre (Costa Rica).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

932. **Moen (Denmark).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

933. **Bosques de Paz (Ecuador/Peru).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

934. **Majang Forest (Ethiopia)** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the site.

935. **Black Forest (Germany)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

936. **San Marcos de Colón (Honduras)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

937. **Tepilora, Rio Posada and Montalbo (Italy)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

938. **Sobo, Katamuki and Okue (Japan)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site. The MAB Council acknowledged that the authorities have already started to explore the feasibility to increase the core area by adding other areas of the quasi-national park and to increase the buffer zone by adding prefectural natural parks as suggested by the Advisory Committee

939. **Minakami (Japan)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

940. **Altyn Emel (Kazakhstan)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council acknowledged receipt of improved quality maps in English as the Advisory committee invited them. The MAB Council approved the site.

941. **Gadabedji (Niger)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

942. **Castro Verde (Portugal)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

943. **Khakassky (Russian Federation)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

944. **Great Altay (Russian Federation / Republic of Kazakhstan)**. The MAB Council welcomed this new joint transboundary proposal including the existing Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation designated in 2000) and the Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan designated in 2014) and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

945. **Garden Route (South Africa).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

946. **Jebel Al Dair (Sudan).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council approved the site.

947. **La Selle - Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo (Dominican Republic / Haïti).** The MAB Council welcomed this new transboundary proposal submitted by the authorities of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve includes the existing biosphere reserves of La Selle in Haiti designated in 2012 and Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo in the Dominican Republic, designated in 2002. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council acknowledges receipt of the letter of agreement signed jointly by the highest authorities of both countries for the establishment of the trans-boundary biosphere reserve and approved the site.

948. **Karatau (Kazakhstan).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal and endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council acknowledge receipt of the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely a detailed description of sustainable development programme(s) and revised maps containing all the information in English and with readable legend. The information and maps provided were satisfactory and therefore the MAB Council approved the site.

949. **Termit and Tin Toumma (Niger).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely a clear zonation map showing the location of the oil exploitation and explanation on how the local population is involved in the management of the site. This later has been sent and satisfactory. Concerning the reports of the Environmental Impact Assessment received, they confirm that oil exploitation has impact on the conservation function of the proposed site; the EIA proposed mitigation measures. The authorities did not sent the requested zonation map showing clearly the overlap between the proposed site and the oil exploitation area. Following MAB Bureau recommendation, the MAB Council deferred the proposal. The MAB Council invite the country to resubmit a proposal with a clear zonation and all relevant information showing that the oil exploitation is not compromising the conservation function as well as the information on mitigation measures.

950. **Itaipu (Paraguay).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely clear indication on the total area of the whole biosphere reserve and of each zone (core, buffer and transition). The data provided were satisfactory and

therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site. The MAB Council encourages of the authorities to work together with the bordering Bosque Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve in Paraguay and Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve located on the Brazilian side of the Itaipu Dam.

951. **Indawgyi (Republic of the Union of Myanmar).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely detailed information on the legal protection status of the areas outside the proposed biosphere reserve in its eastern and south-western parts; and if they are not legally or functionally protected, a rationale of that typology of the zoning. The information were satisfactory therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site. National authorities are encouraged to develop a comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve after its designation.

952. **Kizlyar Bay (Russian Federation).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex of this report, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely explanation on the lack of buffer zone adjacent to the core area in the western part. The information were satisfactory therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site. National authorities are invited to consider the establishment of core area also on Tyuleny Island in the future

953. **Metsola (Russian Federation).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal from the Russian Federation, at the border of Finland located on the eastern side of the West Karelian Upland. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely a map with zones using the terminology according to the Statutory framework as regards the buffer zones; detailed information about the size of core areas, buffer zones and transition area; and more detailed information on the management plan for the proposed area. The information provided were satisfactory therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site. The MAB Council thanked the authorities for the additional information provided on cooperation with Finland and on the environmental impact of iron production facility. The MAB Council welcomed and encouraged the on-going cooperation with Finland.

954. **Backo Podunavlje (Serbia).** The MAB Council welcomed this new proposal. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request namely the explanation on the rationale of lack or not complete buffer zone around some core areas and additional information on the status of the boundaries discussions at the international level with Croatia. The information provided were satisfactory therefore, the Council approved the site.

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

955. **Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve – Extension and renaming of former Fitzgerald**

River National Park Biosphere Reserve (Australia). The MAB Council welcomed the re-submission of the extension and renaming of the Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve located in the state of Western Australia designated in 1978. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

956. **Central Balkan Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) - Extension and renaming.** The MAB Council welcomed this proposal for an extension of this site located in the central part of the country, which contains four existing biosphere reserves (i.e. Steneto Biosphere Reserve, Tsaritchina Biosphere Reserve, Djendema Biosphere Reserve and Boatin Biosphere Reserve, all designated in 1977). The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site.

957. **Chervenata Stena Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this nomination for an extension for this site established in 1977. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site. The MAB Council encouraged the authorities to further negotiate with the local community that has not yet agreed to be part of the extended area.

958. **Srebarna Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this proposal for an extension of this site located in the northeast part of the country, including the former Srebarna Biosphere Reserve. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site

959. **Manu Biosphere Reserve (Peru) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Manu Biosphere Reserve designated in 1977. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site. The MAB Council encouraged the inclusion of the local communities and other stakeholders in the management system and action plan.

960. **Masurian Lakes Biosphere Reserve - Extension and renaming of former Lake Luknajno Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The MAB Council welcomed the proposal for extension and renaming submission of Lake Łuknajno Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976 in northern Poland. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension and renaming of the site

961. **Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve (Spain) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve designated in 1983. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site

962. **Lake Manyara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed the well-prepared application for extension of the area located in the East African Rift Valley, which was designated in 1981. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change. The MAB Council **approved** the extension of the site

963. **Serengeti-Ngorongoro Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania).** The MAB Council welcomed the request for extension of this area designated in 1981 and congratulated the authorities for the high level of stakeholder consultations in the preparation of the request. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report without any change and **approved** the extension of the site, which meets the criteria of the statutory framework of the WNBR.

964. **Uzunbudzhak Biosphere Reserve - Extension (Bulgaria).** The MAB Council welcomed the proposal for this site established in 1977. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report. The MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely the creation of formal buffer zones surrounding or adjacent to the core areas with support of the Council of partners as well as formal endorsements. The information were satisfactory therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the site.

965. **Meggido Biosphere Reserve (Israël) - Renaming of former Ramot Menashe Biosphere Reserve.** The MAB council took note of the rationale for changing the name of Ramot Menashe to Meggido, because the name of the biosphere reserve differs from the name of the administrative region to which some communities belong. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex 3 of this report and acknowledged receipt of signed approval of all stakeholders involved in the biosphere reserve. The MAB Council approve the renaming of the site.

966. **East Usambara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The MAB Council welcomed the submission for extension of this area designated in 2000, following recommendations of the periodic review received in 2016 after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. The MAB Council endorsed the full recommendations of the Advisory committee contained in annex ... of this report Based on the recommendation of the Advisory committee, the MAB Bureau examined the additional information sent by the authorities as per Advisory committee request, namely the management plans of the core areas; information on the management of the enclave; copy of the management plan framework of the entire biosphere reserve; and justification for the absence of buffer zones around some of the core areas. The information provided was satisfactory and therefore, the MAB Council **approved** the extension of this site, which meets the criteria of the Statutory framework of the WNBR

967. **Information on the Sao Paulo City Green Belt Biosphere Reserve.** The Government of Brazil requested the MAB Council to categorize Mata Atlântica Biosphere Reserve and the Sao Paulo City Green Belt Biosphere Reserve as two distinct biosphere reserves (making a total of seven Brazilian biosphere reserves). These two biosphere

reserves undertook the designation process independently, and although they work closely together, each has its own identity, management committee, action plan, and Biosphere Reserve certificate. However, Sao Paulo City Green Belt is currently referred as a part of the Mata Atlantica biosphere reserve in the list of the WNBR. Therefore, Brazil requested to the MAB Secretariat and the Advisory Committee to present this request to the MAB Bureau and to the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) of the MAB Programme for a final decision. The MAB Council **approved** the request of the Brazilian authorities.

C. Voluntary withdrawals

968. The MAB Secretariat had received letters for **voluntarily withdrawal** from three Bulgarian sites and seventeen US sites. The **MAB ICC therefore took note that the following biosphere reserves no longer are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves:**

- Doupkata, Bulgaria
- Kamtchia, Bulgaria
- Koupena, Bulgaria
- Aleutian Islands, USA
- Beaver Creek, USA
- California Coast Ranges, USA
- Carolinian-South Atlantic, USA
- Central plains, USA
- Coram, USA
- Desert, USA
- Fraser, USA
- H.J. Andrews, USA
- Hubbard Brook, USA
- Konza Prairie Research Natural Area, USA
- Land between the lake, USA
- Niwot Ridge, USA
- Noatak, USA
- Stanislas-Tuolumne, USA
- Three Sisters, USA
- Virgin Islands, USA

969. The MAB Council also took note that two of these sites (California Coast Ranges and Carolinian-south Atlantic BR) are aiming to submit renewed nomination forms at the next 30 September 2017 deadline.

X. Update on the MAB Communication Strategy and Action Plan

970. The MAB Secretariat updated the Members of the Council on the progress made on the development of a global communication strategy and action plan. She informed on the kick-off meeting with members of the Advisory Committee and of the MAB Secretariat held on 27 January 2017 in UNESCO which addressed the first building block which sets the

communication objectives in order to align all engagement activities to engagement outcomes of the global strategy (which contains 4 blocks see slide in the annex of the document). The engagement goal was tested during the Costa Rica communication national workshop (14-16 March 2017) with the support of the Montevideo and San Jose UNESCO offices as well as at the EuroMAB regional meeting (4-7 April 2017) with support from France. The EuroMAB network at its last meeting in April 2017 also worked on identifying target audiences at national and regional levels (who to engage with and understand what they value so we can connect with them, block 2) and to create inspirational key messages (block 3). A presentation of the work achieved so far, including during the EuroMAB 2017 meeting was shared and presented at the ArabMAB network meeting in May in Algeria.

971. She indicated that the next steps include continuing working on the three other building blocks of the global communication strategy in all regions, including in Africa and Asia where workshops and meetings are scheduled. An online survey will be developed to uncover the common barriers to communication and stakeholders engagement across the WNBR. A webinar will be hosted in October 2017 to answer questions on the draft strategy and encourage the WNBR to test the implementation and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. This will include to select activities and best methods to deliver out MAB message to the target audience in order to have the greatest measurable impact.

972. After the presentation, several member states and observers took the floor to congratulate the secretariat on the quality of the presentation and the very good progress and achievements made so far. All member states and observers who took the floor highlighted the importance of the global strategy, including for capacity building and expressed their support to its development. Several member states and observers expressed their appreciation and their use of the existing tools provided such as the toolkit for developing their national communication strategy. Several member states highlighted the importance of such a strategy to communicate with the general public audience but also with decision makers. Several member states highlighted the fact that increasing the visibility of the MAB programme would support the mobilization of financial support. The issues of languages and access to material was raised by two Member States. The importance of communicating on climate change was also mentioned as an opportunity, including for local communities to express themselves and share on the changes they observe at their scale and location. The issue of labelling of products and of the UNESCO MAB logo was also mentioned. The use of social media was also highlighted especially as youth is one of the target group. One member state praised the use of children as ambassadors of the biosphere reserve.

973. In its response, the Secretariat indicated that this global communication strategy was inclusive and meant to be for everyone. It was hoped that workshops could be held in every region, including the pacific and Caribbean region and for small island developing states, as well as for member states that do not have yet a biosphere reserve. Financial support from member states would be welcomed to support this inclusive strategy. The secretariat will also work on the labeling issue in conjunction with this global communication strategy and reflect on the work done by countries such as Spain, Switzerland, and other countries. The Secretariat will also make available the template for the Lima Action Plan already translated in 6 languages so countries can translate in their own language using the similar format.

XI. MAB Young Scientists Awards Scheme

I. Selection of MAB Young Scientists Awards (MAB YSA)

974. The MAB Secretariat received fifty-five (55) eligible applications, twenty-one (21) of the applicants were females.

975. Applications were received from Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Niger, Peru, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam.

976. The Secretariat explained briefly the selection procedure and informed the Council that the Bureau selected the winners of the 2017 MAB Young Scientist Award. It notified the Council that the Bureau agreed to award in total seven (7) candidates in order to reach the total ceiling for the 2017 Scheme.

977. The MAB Council then endorsed the winners of the 2017 MAB Young Scientist Award. The winners and the titles of their research studies are:

Winner	Title of study	Country
Mr. MOSAVI Amirhosein	Monitoring and assessment of sustainability in the biosphere reserves utilizing sustainable business models	Hungary
Mr. LUNA SANCHEZ Eduardo	Evaluation dilemmas. To punish, hide or embrace failure? Case studies of organizations that implement natural resource management projects in the Sierra Gorda BR	Mexico
Ms. NGO NGWE Marie Florence Sandrine	Genetic and biochemical characterization of forest trees around the Dja-Cameroon Biosphere Reserve for better knowledge and conservation of its biodiversity	Cameroon
Ms. MERAD Isma	Impact of anthropogenic activities on the El Mellah Lake (El Kala, Algeria): assessment of its health through the sentinel species <i>Cerastoderma glaucum</i> (Mollusca: Bivalvia)	Algeria
Ms. SOKPON Stella Marlène B. F.	Involvement of local populations in ecotourism and attitudes towards conservation in the Pendjari Biosphere Reserve	Benin
Mr. HAYYAN Adeeb	Physicochemical properties and cellular toxicity of oil plant seeds available in Tasik Chini Biosphere Reserve as an alternative	Malaysia

	for the conventional natural oils with regards to nutraceutical and food industry	
Ms. ABDURASULOVA Luiza	The study on the biodiversity, monitoring and management of insects of the Karatau Biosphere Reserve	Kazakhstan

II. Proposal to revise criteria and enhance MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme

978. Following a brief presentation by the MAB Secretariat on the second part of the working document SC-17/CONF.229/9, the Council discussed the proposals on: (i) the possible revision of criteria and the conditions for the selection of the MAB Young Scientists Award winners which were adopted by the 21th session of the MAB-ICC in 1996; and (ii) the enhancement of the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme.

979. In accordance with the MAB Bureau recommendations of the meeting in March 2017, the document highlights the need to address the Lima Action Plan and relevant SDGs in applications and thus, boost a contribution of MAB YSA research projects to the research-focused actions of the LAP. It further shows that MAB YSA Scheme may serve for an efficient communication of the LAP within the young scientists and strengthen its visibility.

980. The Member States highly welcomed this proposal, emphasising the importance to link the MAB YSA Scheme to the implementation of the Lima Action Plan and the SDGs. They provided several important comments and suggestions on how to: further gender balance; strengthen a role of MAB National Committees and/or UNESCO National Commissions to enhance a quality assurance process and follow-up actions; focus on target oriented actions; link the Scheme to the MAB global communication strategy. One Member State highlighted an increased interest in the MAB YSA and shared country's success stories. Other representatives reminded the upcoming MAB Youth Forum in September 2017 which may provide excellent opportunities for some MAB YSA winners to be part of it. The Chair fully concurred on this note. In this regard, he suggested to invite also past MAB YSA winners to share their stories and professional achievements, and passed this proposal directly to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Venice, Italy whose representative attended the Council.

981. The Council then adopted this twofold proposal of the working document SC-17/CONF. 229/9 including the new criteria and conditions for the selection of MAB Young Scientists Award winners which are presented in Annex IV.

XII. Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management

982. The Secretariat introduced this item and informed the Council that a MAB Circular Letter (N° 6, September 2016) was sent. The Secretariat received 5 eligible case studies by 30 November 2016. In total, the Secretariat received 6 files from 5 countries. Only 5 files are meeting the criteria for consideration.

983. At its twenty-third session held at UNESCO Headquarters from 23-26 January 2017,

the members of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves recommended Ms Vladimira FABRICIUŠOVA, to be winner of the 2017 Michel Batisse Award for her case study on “Biosphere reserve - the opportunity for people and nature” on the Polana Biosphere Reserve, which received the highest score. The Members of the Bureau of the MAB Council at its March 2017 meeting have endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. Ms Vladimira FABRICIUŠOVA (Slovakia), coordinator of the Polana Biosphere Reserve, is therefore deemed the winner of the 2017 Michel Batisse Award. She presented her case study on “Biosphere reserve - the opportunity for people and nature”.

984. Several member states took the floor to congratulate the 2017 winner and to support the scheme, and highlighted its importance for the visibility of the MAB Programme. It was suggested to better share this success stories and work to enhance its visibility.

985. The Council also reflected on the concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee members on the decreasing quality of the scientific files received for Michel Batisse Award over the last years as well as the number of candidates. After discussion the MAB Council decided that:

The Michel Batisse Award shall be awarded every two MAB Council sessions instead of at each Council session in order to increase the quality and number of applicants. The amount of the Award would thus be increased to a total amount of USD 12,000. This new procedure should be effective and implemented as from this 29th session of the MAB Council. The Secretariat will send a specific circular letter to the UNESCO National Commissions and to the MAB National Committees to communicate this change and to seek for extra budgetary funding, including from the private sector in order to secure the visibility, attractiveness and sustainability of this Award

XIII. Implementation of the Lima Action Plan

986. The MAB Secretariat introduced the item referring document SC-17/CONF.229/12 recalling that the LAP text can be found in the document ‘A new Roadmap for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves: MAB Strategy (2015-2025), Lima Action Plan (2016-2025) and Lima Declaration’ available on the UNESCO MAB web site (i.e. the MABnet) in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

987. LAP Action E3.1 (under Strategic Action Area E: Effective governance of and within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserve) calls on Member States to submit biennial reports to the ICC covering progress made using a template provided by the MAB Secretariat. For this purpose, and with the target that the first biennial reports be submitted prior to the 30th MAB ICC in 2018, the MAB Secretariat had prepared a draft template contained in Annex I to document SC-17/CONF.229/12 for the review of the ICC.

988. On the recommendation of the MAB Bureau, the MAB Secretariat has prepared a preliminary roadmap outlining the MAB Secretariat's responsibilities and related activities under the LAP. This roadmap is contained in Annex II to document SC-17/CONF.229/12.

989. Guided by the Chair, the MAB Council then discussed preliminary experiences, results

challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of the LAP, and reviewed the draft biennial report template in the Annex.

990. Sweden, Rep. of Korea, Slovakia, Germany, UK, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Turkey, Russian Federation, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Kuwait took the floor. While recognizing that the LAP indeed calls for reporting, there was strong agreement that reporting linked to the LAP should serve the purpose of Member States and that it should not be unduly administrative in nature. Rather, it should be useful in terms of generating and sharing lessons learned, and enable a coherent overview of MAB and contribute to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, within and beyond biosphere reserves, and be guided by national LAP priorities and related derivative action plans.

991. The Council referred to the benefits of utilizing on-line, easily accessible reporting tools, and one Member emphasised the guiding principle of open access to information and data. As MAB and biosphere reserves are promoting and benefiting from substantive collaboration and networking, this needs to be taken into account in shaping up the LAP reporting system. Calls were made for improved sharing of research results from biosphere reserves, in order to help inform policy and decision making, such as in relation to the SDGs.

992. Opportunities to forge stronger partnerships with UNESCO Category 2 centres and UNESCO Chairs was mentioned, and so was the opportunities to build synergies between LAP reporting and the MAB communication strategy, and associated tools in terms of promoting sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practises.

993. The Council invited the Secretariat to reflect its comments and suggestions in its work to finalize the draft template contained in Annex 1 to document SC-17/CONF.229/12.

994. The Council also noted that the road map contained in Annex 2 outlining the MAB Secretariat's activities under and in support of the LAP. This road map, which had been requested by the Chair, was viewed as useful to a number of Members. The fact that the Secretariat's road map specifies that financial resources are limited in relation to LAP implementation needs, begged the question about concrete fundraising plans and measures entertained by the MAB Secretariat.

995. The MAB Secretary thanked the Council for all its valuable and constructive guidance that will help the Secretariat to prepare an effective and easy-to-use reporting template. Concerning funding, and as had been referred to by Delegates, MAB was engaged in UNESCO-wide structured finance dialogues combining regular and extrabudgetary resource mobilization and programme planning. Expectations were good that MAB would be in a position to raise additional funds for activities supportive of the realisation of LAP objectives and the SDGs.

996. Two **side events** organized for ICC participants by Spain and Sweden respectively provided valuable opportunities to discuss two important aspects of the LAP: Strategic Action Area C. 'Effective external partnerships and sufficient and sustainable funding for the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves' and Strategic Action Area A. 'The World Network of Biosphere Reserves consisting of effectively functioning models for sustainable development'. These events are summarized below.

997. **Round Table on Public Private Sector Partnership:** On the 14th June from 6:15-7:40 pm took place a Round Table on Public Private Sector Partnership, followed at 8:00 pm by a cocktail. The Abertis Category 2 Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves financed the event.

998. The Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr Han Qunli, opened the event and gave a brief introduction. This was followed by a video, a short introduction to the Abertis Group and the Abertis Foundation and the Category 2 Centre by Mr Salvador Alemany, President of the Abertis Group. Mr Alemany highlighted the corporative social work that Abertis is supporting, i.e. for the Red Cross.

999. Consequently, Prof. Martí Boada, Scientific Coordinator of the UNESCO Centre and researcher at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, explained the various activities of the Centre within the framework of the cooperation between biosphere reserves of the Mediterranean. He stated that in total the Network is working with 67 biosphere reserves in 17 countries of the Mediterranean.

1000. Then, Mr Lutz Möller, Deputy Director of the National Commission of Germany to UNESCO, gave an overview on the cooperation of the Danone Group with biosphere reserves in Germany. He stressed the work done with the Volvic water company and mentioned that 18 projects have been sponsored between 2008 and 2018. This presentation was followed by Mr Javier Ares, President of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve and by Ms Marta Marimón, Director of the Electric Vehicle Department of Nissan Ibérica. They presented jointly a new project on sustainable islands with electric vehicles, which will be implemented in Menorca. The final presentation were given by Dr. James Spalding, Paraguayan Director-General of Itaipú Binational. He highlighted the possibility of promoting electric cars throughout the entire country of Paraguay by using electricity produced by hydropower. He explained how Itaipú Binational is supporting activities in the newly approved Itaipú Biosphere Reserve.

1001. Closing remarks were provided by Ms Teresa Lizaranzu, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Spain to UNESCO. She stressed the importance of social corporative responsibility as a model of cooperation between the private sector and biosphere reserves. She mentioned that in this meeting four different case studies were presented that show the great potential of public private partnership, which all contribute to implement the SDGs 2030 and the Lima Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves 2016-2025. She also invited to a cocktail sponsored by the Abertis Foundation at UNESCO restaurant.

1002. On 15 June 2017, a special presentation was made on **Swedish Biosphere Reserves as Arenas for Implementing the 2030 Agenda**. The Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr Han Qunli, opened the event and gave a brief introduction. This was followed by a welcoming speech by Ms Ulrika Ferenius, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Swedish UNESCO Delegation. In her speech, Ms Ferenius highlighted that successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires a broad ownership of all actors in society - an ownership and participation that develop and expand over time. The shared commitment, based on knowledge and understanding, from the local to the global level, is most needed for the implementation of the Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. She further emphasised that solutions to global challenges are mainly local. Biosphere reserves connect local, national and global levels in order to develop new methods and new knowledge on how we can preserve a natural area at the same time as creating conditions allowing us a sustainable life, contributing to better understanding of biosphere resources. Experiences of

integrated work with sustainable development derived from Swedish biosphere reserves in a Swedish context make them interesting as strategic areas to learn from, invest in, and support when implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Sweden.

1003. Then, Ms Johanna MacTaggart gave a presentation of the report *Swedish Biosphere Reserves as Arenas for implementing the 2030 Agenda*, authored by Ms Malena Heinrup and Ms Lisen Schultz, Stockholm Resilience Center, and funded by Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. In her presentation, Ms MacTaggart gave three practical examples of how biosphere reserves serve as neutral arenas, creating win-win effects between nature conservation interests, economic interests and interests of local communities. The results from the report show that the biosphere reserves compile, connect and integrate already existing local, regional, national and international policies, plans and steering documents on the social, ecological and economic dimensions of development to paint a broader, more holistic picture of the opportunities and challenges of the area.

1004. The practical examples illustrate some of the functions that the Swedish biosphere reserves can fulfil in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden. These functions have also been highlighted by the Swedish delegation for the 2030 Agenda as essential for achieving the SDGs; Serving as platforms for collaboration, Connecting actors vertically and horizontally, “For people, planet and prosperity” connecting the SDGs, Maintaining healthy ecosystems, and Promoting learning and awareness raising. The message is clear, the SDGs show what to do, biosphere reserves show how to do it.

1005. Then, several delegates took the floor in a discussion and session of questions and answers. Sri Lanka, Germany, Switzerland, UK, and Spain expressed their strong support of this pioneering study and some also indicated that they were inspired to do similar studies of the potential of biosphere reserves to contribute to the SDGs in their countries. South Africa was particularly interested in the partnership approach of the Swedish BRs and how stakeholders are included in finding common solutions. Oman raised a question with regards to sustainable tourism collaboration between biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites, China and Egypt were interested to learn more about financial incentives and long-term effects on biodiversity. Italy stated that it would be of great interest to present this work during the MAB Youth Forum in September 2017.

1006. Closing remarks were provided by Mr Han Qunli, Secretary of the MAB Programme. He stressed the importance of the presented report as well as the potentials of biosphere reserves within the world network to contribute to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The side event was closed by Ms Ferenius who invited to a light lunch sponsored by the Swedish Delegation.

XIV. Presentation of the Prototype of the Operational Guidelines Related to the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)

1007. The MAB Secretariat introduced the document SC-17/CONF/229.13 that presents a proposal for the ‘Operational Guidelines for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves’ (referred to as OP-WNBR hereinafter) that the MAB-ICC decided to develop at its 27th session.

The slide presentation accompanying the introduction is available online on the MABnet web site together with other 29th MAB-ICC documents.

1008. The Secretariat underlined the rationale of developing such a new tool, notably with regard to the expansion of the WNBR, which has almost doubled since the adoption in 1995 of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR at which time there were 337 sites in 86 countries. The increased number of Member States and sites involved in the programme concur to widen the variety of ecological and socio-economic situations, hence the need to provide clear technical guidance to the MAB practitioners and for those who want to join the network.

1009. The OP-WNBR will in particular complement the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the WNBR; it will help Member States to implement the BR concept and to foster the implementation of the MAB Lima Action Plan (2016-2025).

1010. As recalled in the working document SC-17/CONF/229.13 the main feature of the OP-WNBR (structure, format, drafting process) have been discussed with the Biosphere Reserve Advisory Committee and the Bureau, but due to workload constraints, the prototype was not ready for review by the MAB Bureau when it met in March 2017.

1011. The proposed OP-WNBR is an **electronic** and **open access web based living** document compiling contributions and experiences from MAB community on specific items.¹ The Secretariat developed and presented an online prototype of the OP-WNBR based on the content presented in annex I of the working document SC-17/CONF/229.13. This online draft prototype is accessible at the following link: <https://en.unesco.org/op-wnbr> for demonstration purposes. It is NOT the final document.

1012. The MAB Secretariat further presented the TORs of the working groups and the profile of the experts who will be entitled to develop the content of the specific items of the OP-WNBR and who are expected to work online due to budgetary constraints.

1013. The Chair then opened the floor for comments on the MAB Secretary's presentation of the working document. He stressed that the MAB Bureau had not revised the prototype. Many Member countries and observers took the floor to welcome this new facility and to congratulate the Secretariat for the proposal. They further expressed their views on the prototype and on the points for which the MAB Council was invited to reflect on.

1014. **Title of the document:** Germany, France, Korea, UK, South Africa, and Peru expressed their views on the title of the document. They underlined that the title should avoid any confusion with other denominations already used in-house at UNESCO. The title should reflect the technical (and not statutory) nature of the document. Finally, following several proposals, the MAB ICC decided on the following denomination: "**Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves**" (thereafter referred to as TGBR).

1015. **Format and content of the TGBR:** Delegates recognized that, the electronic format of

¹ A living document, also known as an evergreen document or dynamic document, is a document that is continually edited and updated.

the TGBR would be very convenient in particular with regard to its living character and the continuous need to add/review items, Germany stated that it would be useful to have a printed version available.

1016. Germany, UK, and Sweden stated that the TGBR should not replicate work already done but rather build on relevant existing materials as much as possible. An example mentioned repeatedly is the Management Manual for UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Africa published in 2015. In this regards, the Chair brought to the attention of the Council the issue of copyright and intellectual property. The UK proposed that a review of all relevant materials should be done prior to developing the TGBR. The delegate also questioned the need of the ICC to approve the content of an online living document.

1017. About the proposed structure and provisional content (Annex I of the working document) it was at the satisfaction of some delegates (South Africa, Colombia and Peru) as it covers a wide variety of useful items while others (Korea, Germany and France) underlined that the TGBR should address fewer topics and focus on concrete, specific issues.

1018. Delegates debated on what should be the priority topics and the following were proposed: zonation, governance, policy, management plans, business plans issue raised through the 'exit strategy' implementation, data management and monitoring. France stated that the content of the paragraph called "nomination of new BR support module" covers all priorities, hence suggesting revising the title to reflect all the items contained which goes beyond only nomination aspects.

1019. To complete this preliminary list of priorities, the MAB Council requested the Secretariat to send a circular letter to Member States asking them to rank priority issues and to select the items that were ranked highest overall.

1020. The Secretariat clarified that the content of the draft TGBR was purposely exhaustive in order to avoid missing listing important topics. This said, it was not the intention to actually develop all the items, or at least not all at once. It requested Member States to inform if critical items were missing.

1021. The MAB Council was not in position to approving the content of the TBGR. The MAB Secretariat recalled that the Council has the authority to constitute working groups, with delegated authority.

1022. UK and Sweden inquired about the languages of the TBGR. **The** MAB Secretary informed that French, English and Spanish versions will be available, and that they could be completed with the three remaining UNESCO languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian), if resources are available.

1023. Korea and France raised the need to set a timeframe for the development of the TGBR.

1024. Australia advocated for simple rather than too complex TGBR documents.

1025. **TORs and selection process of the working groups:** With regard to the proposed selection process of the members of the working groups and their terms of reference as outlined in Annex II of the working document SC-17/CONF/229.13, Delegates agreed with the proposal to establish thematic working groups. Regarding the nomination and selection process, Egypt and Sri Lanka reminded that a MAB expert group had already established and could be entitled to develop the TBGR items. MAB Secretary recalled that this expert group in question had been established specifically for the development of the MAB Strategy and the Lima Action Plan. France pointed out that the profile of these experts may not be relevant for the TGBR working groups.

1026. The MAB Council invited Members States to nominate names of experts to one or several working groups. The MAB Secretariat will compile the nominations and prepare the list of the members of the working groups taking into account regional distribution, expertise and gender balance. The MAB Council entrusted its Bureau to approve the membership of the working groups proposed by MAB Secretariat.

1027. The MAB Council entrusted the MAB Bureau to review the content of the items developed by the working groups and to make its report to the MAB Council at its 30th session.

1028. **Role of IABCR in the drafting process:** the UK recalled that if the IABCR is involved in the development of the TBGR it has to be added to its mandate. However, due to its already heavy workload, it was not agreed that the IABCR should be requested to contribute to the development of the TBGR by now. However, current and previous members could be coopted in the working groups as individuals, if nominated by Member States.

1029. **Financial support to the deliberations of the drafting groups:** France recalled that they offered technical support to the development of the TBGR since 2015 and reiterate its commitment. Argentine offered technical support through nomination of an expert.

XV. Governance issues related to the MAB Programme

1030. The Secretariat introduced item 15 (document SC-17/CONF.229/14) noting it was as a follow up to 38C/101 paragraph 5 that asked subsidiary bodies of UNESCO to take up governance based on external auditor recommendations.

1031. The Secretariat noted it had done this by including governance as item for debate at all MAB intergovernmental meetings. In addition, the Secretariat has submitted information to the open-ended working group on governance. President of council has met with the chair of the working group, and MAB has participated in sub-group 2.

1032. Based on all this dialogue and exchange, the Secretariat brought forward, with guidance of MAB bureau, a draft decision for approval, and the Chair opened the floor for comments. St Vincent and Grenadines thanked the Secretariat for the report, noting overall progress in preparation of documents and transparency in past few years. She highlighted that the sub-group 2 on governance met on 9 June, and set up recommendations and best

practices for all intergovernmental bodies, notably MAB.

1033. The Chair said it was important to note that the working group's comments were still proposals, and that overall governance of MAB was presented as relatively successful. He noted that the key message was that governance of intergovernmental bodies needed to be homogenized. He asked that the elements of the sub-group referred to by St Vincent and the Grenadines be included in the present report. The United Kingdom noted that the Council had decided two years ago that all documents for Council should be available to all online, and asked what progress had been achieved in this respect.

1034. France raised doubts about the priority to be given to a publication on governance for the general public, the priority targets on this subject being the stakeholders of the programme, national and local institutions. Colombia and Germany highlighted the importance of the interactions between the advisory committee and MAB council, and Colombia asked the Secretariat to describe them. Sweden thanked the Secretariat, express support for the proposed action on increased communication between advisory bodies and intergovernmental bodies, and highlighted the importance of open access.

1035. The Secretariat took note of the debate and the recommendations of the open ended Working Group meeting. He noted that the time to bring the working group recommendations to this Council was too short. He welcomed that delegates who participated in the meeting may bring their impressions and ideas to the ICC's attention. He noted that the ICC would follow the Executive Board and General Conference recommendations on governance. He noted in response to the UK that the Secretariat will do all it can to make information available to the working group and to the General Conference as required. He expressed some concern as to the calculating the cost of undertaking this exercise.

1036. The Secretary noted that the ICC had debated the online access item in 2014 and there was some discussion as to whether all biosphere reserve data should be online, noting that some countries had reservations in this regard. He underscored that MAB would follow the overall UNESCO policies with regard to open access, and that many of the documents are available online, and were available in hardcopy. Following an exchange with the UK, the Secretary agreed that further efforts would be made to ensure that documents are available online as per the ICC's earlier decision, unless there are specific objections from Member States.

1037. Following the discussion, the council adopted the draft decision contained in the document C-17/CONF.229/14.

XVI. Date and venue of the 30th session of the MAB-ICC

1038. Indonesia announced that they are willing to host the 30th Session of the MAB Council. As the Government is still identifying the funds for this event, they will confirm the organization of the MAB Council in the next months.

1039. The Chair of the MAB Council and the MAB Secretary warmly thanked Indonesia for

its kind proposal. The final dates and venue will be communicated by the MAB Secretariat after verifying that there will be no other major meeting at the same dates (i.e World Heritage Committee meeting).

1040. The main agenda items of this Council session will include the election of the Bureau I, reports by the Secretary of the MAB Programme as well as countries and networks, the approval of new biosphere reserves, recognition of biosphere reserves that meet the criteria of the Statutory Framework (through the periodic review process), and discussion on the implementation of the Lima Action Plan.

XVII. Other matters

1041. No other matters were discussed.

XVIII. Adoption of the Report

1042. Mr Raul Hidalgo, Rapporteur of the Council, presented the draft report of its 29th 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.

1043. The draft report was adopted with the modifications, additions and deletions proposed during the review of the report on 15 June 2017, the last day of the 29th session of the Council.

XIX. Closure of the session

1044. Mexico and Austria paid tribute to the Secretary of the MAB Programme, Mr. Han Qunli for his excellent work and contributions and for having accompanied the MAB programme through important processes, such as the development of the new MAB Strategy, Lima Action Plan and the Exit Strategy. The MAB Council then gave the MAB Secretary a standing ovation.

1045. The Chair of the MAB Council also thanked the Secretary of the MAB Programme, for all the excellent work that he has done since taking office. Noting that this would be the last Council for the MAB Secretary, he added that he was hoping that the new Secretary would arrive just after the Mr Han's retirement in order to ensure a smooth transition.

1046. The Chair thanked the Advisory Committee, the Bureau, the Secretariat of the MAB Programme, delegates and observers for their hard work and support. He acknowledged that there had been some difficult items on the agenda to discuss, notably the Exit Strategy, but that he was satisfied to see that the ICC always managed to reach consensus.

1047. The Secretary thanked the Council for all the compliments and said that he felt very

honoured to serve the MAB Programme, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and of course, all the Member States. He expressed that he was only part of a great team that was the MAB Secretariat with all its members at the UNESCO headquarters and in the Field Offices.

1048. He added that the three Chairs that followed and worked on the Exit Strategy process participated in this MAB Council: Ms Boshra Salem, Mr Sergio Guevara and Mr Didier Babin.

1049. Finally, Mr. Han said that in his future role he will of course seek to support China's biosphere reserves, as well as the entire WNBR.

1050. Honduras also congratulated the MAB secretariat and the Chair of the MAB Council for the excellent management of the meeting, which they felt had been one of UNESCO's best meetings.

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Annex 2: Full Report of the Chair of the ICC (Mr Didier Babin, France)

Since the election of France as the ICC president in Lima in March 2016, I have the privilege and the honor to share and to exchange with you in order to continue the work, and I was going to say the mission of our predecessors since 1971: putting science, education and capacity building at the service of a more harmonious relationship between humans and planet Earth.

For just over a year now, I am impressed by the work that has been done by all of us, both to implement the new Strategy and the Lima Action Plan and to improve the credibility and quality of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

As President of the ICC, I accompany this movement and this dynamic, but it is essentially driven by our common vision of the issues, opportunities, challenges and the related solutions that we can propose to the world to reach the ideal and necessity of sustainable development.

As early as April 2016, I met with Mrs. Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences on:

1. The importance of the MAB Programme and of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in the context of the Sustainable Development Objectives and the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations and the leadership they can give to UNESCO, based on the Lima Action Plan.
2. The need to "positivize" the so-called Exit Strategy in order to make it a true opportunity for credibility of quality, excellence and mutual reinforcement of our skills, capacities and experiences at the service of all.
3. The indispensable support to be given to the Secretariat of the Programme in order to carry out the enormous task to be accomplished.

I stressed the need not to have a period without a Secretary of the Programme, since at the time there was an imminent departure of Mr. Han Qunli. I am personally glad that he is still working to help us in this critical, yet dynamic moment in the life of the MAB Programme.

In April 2016, I also had an initial meeting with the Secretary and his team to get to know each other and see how to work as effectively as possible notably on the new challenges of the Programme to serve the entire world network. I would like to thank the entire Secretariat team for the work accomplished since the last ICC, for the success in improving and raising the quality of the network, but also for preparing files to facilitate the work of the International Advisory Committee and the ICC Bureau.

In view of the task of starting the implementation of the Action Plan and finalizing the Exit Strategy, I proposed to hold two additional Bureau meetings in September 2016 and in March 2017, and I would like to thank the Regional Vice Presidents for having devoted their time

and energy to the best possible preparation of the proposals and decisions of this 29th ICC.

In January 2017, I requested an interview with the President of the General Conference, His Excellency Stanley Mutumba Simataa, who chairs the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance. The objective of this meeting was to present in detail the governance of the MAB Programme and to answer any questions or suggestions of the Committee in liaison with the Secretariat.

I took this opportunity to pay tribute to and thank the International Advisory Committee for providing exceptional and enormous work in terms of files to be examined. To all again: Thank you.

In December 2016, while attending COP 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity as a researcher, I attended the Muuchtanbal Summit on Indigenous Experiences in Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Yucatan, Mexico, and then I was invited to the general meeting of the ICCA consortium: Association for Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas. I was also able to speak at length with Mr. Braulio F. De Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to facilitate the work of the MAB and the CBD, in particular with the arrival of a new Executive Secretary of the CBD, Ms. Cristiana Pasca Palmer, in February 2017.

Finally, I have recently responded to the request of ECOSOC President Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava for the preparation of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held from 10 to 19 July 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The objective of ECOSOC's request is to collect information on the implementation of sustainable development from international bodies and fora, such as the MAB Programme. This year, the main focus was on eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world. We have responded with the assistance of the Secretariat for next year. It seems to me useful to foresee a wider mobilization of the global network, since the theme will be at the center of our concerns: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

Annex 3



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12-15 June 2017

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item 9 of the provisional agenda: proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions/modifications/RENAMING to biosphere reserves that are part of the world network of biosphere reserves (WNBR)

1. Proposals for new biosphere reserves and extensions to biosphere reserves that are already part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) were considered at the 23rd meeting of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR), which met at UNESCO Headquarters from 23 to 26 January 2017.

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

- 1) *Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval:*** the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve; no additional

information is needed. For already existing sites, the proposed changes are recommended for approval.

2) *Proposals for new biosphere reserves or extensions/modifications/renaming to already existing biosphere reserves recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information:* the proposed site is recommended for approval as a biosphere reserve or the proposed changes for already existing sites are recommended for approval **subject to** receiving the specific information as requested by the Advisory Committee. If the MAB Secretariat receives the information by 15 May 2017, it will be considered by the MAB ICC at its 29th session to be held from 12 to 15 June 2017 and the Council may approve the inclusion of the site in the WNBR.

3. The MAB Secretariat received three letters from three US sites (Desert Biosphere Reserve, California Coast Range Biosphere Reserve and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) for voluntarily withdrawal. It also took note that two of these sites (California Coast Range and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) are aiming to submit renewed nomination forms at the next 30 September 2017 deadline.

4. The Bureau of the MAB ICC will consider the attached recommendations of the IACBR as well as the additional information received by the MAB Secretariat particularly with regard to nominations recommended for approval subject to receiving additional information. The Bureau will recommend for the consideration of the MAB ICC final decisions on all sites included in this document.

5. The MAB ICC is invited to decide on the new sites for inclusion in the WNBR and extensions/modifications and/or renaming of biosphere reserves already included in the WNBR that could be approved.

6. The MAB-ICC is invited to take note of the decision of three US sites authorities (Desert Biosphere Reserve, California Coast Range Biosphere Reserve and Carolinian-south Atlantic Biosphere Reserve) for voluntarily withdrawal.

New nominations recommended for approval

7. **Mono (Benin).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Benin authority. The proposed site is located in South-western part of Benin. The landscape is a mosaic of landscapes and ecosystems that are not yet included in the national protected area network: coastal areas with mangroves, wetlands, savannah, and forests including sacred forest, and flood plain, as well as farmlands used for small-scale palm oil production, coconuts and other crops. The biodiversity flagship species are sea cows, hippos, various monkeys, reptiles, fishes and birds. The core areas cover 595 ha and are made of four community-based conservation areas surrounded by buffer zones totalling 9,462 ha. Most part of the buffer zones are part of the conservation units, or state-owned riverbanks, and marine area (3,580 ha). The transition area comprises 115,655 ha and is made of settlements, roads and crops where almost 179,000 inhabitants are located inside the transition area and the immediate surrounding of the perimeter of the Biosphere reserve. The management structure with a

prominent involvement of local communities is a model of empowerment of local stakeholders. In addition, the proposed biosphere reserve provides an obvious opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.

8. The Advisory Committee commended the Benin authorities for the quality of the proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.

9. The Advisory Committee invites the Benin authority to provide further detailed information on the implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone.

10. **Mono (Togo)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Togo authority. The proposed site is located in South-eastern part of Togo and covers a total area of 203,789 ha. This is a hotspot of biodiversity and encompasses two Ramsar sites. The landscape is a mosaic of coastal ecosystems, mangroves, wetlands, savannah, forests and flood plain, as well as farmlands used for small-scale palm oil production, coconuts and other crops.

11. The biodiversity flagship species are sea cows, hippos, various monkeys, reptiles, fishes and birds such as pelicans. The core areas, surrounded by buffer zones totalling 33,915 ha, cover 13,901 ha including 13,155 ha of national park and protected areas, 52 ha of pool complex for hippos and three ha of sacred forests. Part of buffer zone is a corridor connecting key ecosystems without strictly protected status to the core areas. The transition area comprises 165,368 ha, and is made of settlements, roads and crops. With at least seven languages, various religions the area is also a hotspot in terms of cultural diversity. Presence of sacred forest and isolated sacred trees testifies the vitality of traditional biocultural practices in the region. About 1,835,000 inhabitants are located inside and in the immediate surrounding of the perimeter. The management structure with a prominent involvement of local communities is a model of empowerment of local stakeholders. In addition, the proposed biosphere reserve provides an obvious opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale.

12. The Advisory Committee commended the Togo authorities for the quality of the proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.

13. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to create a Protected Area in the lagoon system in the future in order to secure this important wetland and thus, to create an additional core area in this coastal ecosystem.

14. The Advisory Committee invites the Togo authority to provide further detailed information on the implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone.

15. **Mono (Benin/Togo)** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Benin

and Togo authorities. The proposed site is located in the southern part of Benin and Togo and covers a total area of 346,285 ha. Situated mainly in the alluvial plain and the deltaic and coastal zones of the Mono River, the proposed biosphere reserve is a mosaic of ecosystems composed mainly of: mangroves, savannah, forests including sacred forests, lagoons, coastal wetlands, floodplains, riverine forests, sacred-protected forests, marshes, freshwater habitats, as well as human-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlements. The area of the proposed biosphere reserve is home to about 2,000,000 inhabitants and the main activity is small-scale farming (oil palm trees and coconuts), livestock grazing (nomad herds), forestry and fishing.

16. The Advisory Committee commended the Benin and Togo authorities for the quality of the proposal and for the efforts to protect biocultural diversity in the area. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve proposal is an initiative from the two countries and considered that the transboundary biosphere reserve was a key tool for developing the principles of the MAB Programme into a cooperation programme, which promotes peace, scientific exchange and shared ecosystem management. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the multistakeholders transboundary coordination structure. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the two countries to pursue the scientific and technical cooperation in the field and the Coordinating Council of the proposed transboundary biosphere reserve to hold regular meetings. It also acknowledged the support from GIZ in the nomination process.

17. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts of the countries to protect biocultural and traditional practices. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be approved.

18. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to create a Protected Area in the lagoon system in the future in order to secure this important wetland and thus, to create an additional core area in this coastal ecosystem.

19. The Advisory Committee invites the national authorities to send by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat further detailed information on:

- implementation and the coordination of sustainable management of wetlands, control of human activities and ecological restoration of riverine ecosystems within the buffer zone
- funding and decision-making process within the coordination secretariat of the proposed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

20. **Savegre (Costa Rica).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Costa Rican authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the central Pacific coast of the country, 190 km south of the capital San José. It has a total area of 312,914.32 ha and comprises the area within the watersheds of the rivers Savegre, Pacuar, Naranjo, Barú, Cañas-Paquita, Hatillo Nuevo, Hatillo Viejo and Portalón.

21. The core area covers 32,417.65 ha (terrestrial: 6,544.24 ha; marine: 25,873.41 ha), the buffer zones 199,306.63 ha (terrestrial: 75,679.37 ha; marine: 123,614.61 ha; island: 12.65 ha) and the transition zone 81,190.04 ha.

22. The proposed biosphere reserve borders the existing La Amistad Biosphere Reserve in the north and east, and the Cordillera Volcánica Central Biosphere Reserve in the north. This biosphere reserve would represent the first and only reserve of the country to contain an important marine-coastal component.

23. This site has a high value in terms of ecosystems, biodiversity, water resources and connectivity. Due to its varied topography, as well as its heterogeneity of microclimates, it is one of the most biodiverse sites in the country, being home to 20% of the country's total flora, 54% of its mammals (*Tapirus bairdii*), 59% of its birds and about 330 species of butterflies. The area is composed of two areas with a high level of endemism in Costa Rica, the upper parts of the Cordillera de Talamanca and west of Panama, and the basal forests of the South Pacific. It contains 71 species of endemic plants (e.g. *Passiflora gilbertiana*, *Bartlettina silvicola*, *Pseudima costarricense*, *Sarcaulus spp.*, *Pitcairnia halophila*), palm species (*Chamaedorea piscifolia* and *Chamaedorea incrustata*) and trees (*Matisia tinamastiana* and *Lacmellea zamorae*).

24. The reserve has a population of approximately 50,000 inhabitants, who live mostly in the transition zone with a few inhabiting the buffer area. The main productive activities are agriculture and livestock (about 75%). Crop production is significant in areas with higher altitudes, and includes plantations of apple, plum, pomegranate, blackberry, strawberry and avocado, as well as milk production and trout farming. Coffee and livestock are farmed between 800 and 1,500 m. Below 800 m (the area with the lowest forest cover and therefore greatest intensity of land use), the main economic activities are oil palm, forestry, vanilla, annual crops, cattle rearing and artisan fishing. Ecotourism has increased significantly during recent years, and has become a source of socio-economic growth in the region.

25. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended this site to be **approved**. The Advisory Committee recommends implementing a management committee and plan, and to include the institutions and the different stakeholders to ensure the sustainable management of the marine ecosystems included in the biosphere reserve.

26. **Moen (Denmark).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from Denmark (the first since 1977). The proposal consists of a series of islands and islets in a shallow sea and includes a Ramsar site, with several internationally protected bird species migrating in the site. The proposal is located in the southern Baltic Sea, contains the white cliff of Mons Klint, and is an enclave connected to the cities of Copenhagen, Malmoe, Hamburg and Berlin. Landscapes include woodlands, grasslands, pastures, wetlands, coastal areas, ponds and steep hills, and the Aborrebjerg, one of the highest points in Denmark (143 m).

27. The proposed area is of a total surface of 45,118 ha, including marine areas. The proposed area is characterized by a number of small villages, scattered farms and residential areas with a total number of population of 10,250 inhabitants. It is part of the municipality of Vordingborg (45,806 inhabitants). Main activities are trade, agriculture, fishing and tourism. The initiative also aims to develop economic possibilities for young people to develop a future in the area.

28. The Advisory Committee welcomed the goal of the biosphere reserve which is to “living and working in harmony with nature” and the objective to become an example in implementing sustainable future, including developing activities such as eco-tourism. It also took note of the existing research and monitoring activities with focus on rural development and tourism. It also welcomed the governance structure of the Biosphere Partnership which includes all key stakeholders and commended the high democratic and participative methods used to engage stakeholders, including the advisory board.

29. The Advisory Committee took note that some of the core areas are not fully surrounded by a buffer zone, including one marine core area. It welcomed the additional information provided on why some of the core terrestrial and marine areas are only partially buffered. For the marine core area, creating a buffer zone would reduce the size of the core area and as the biosphere reserve authority does not have jurisdiction over the international water. As regards the core terrestrial areas, de facto buffer zones are designed by land owners who are cooperating and supporting the biosphere reserve proposal but do not wish at this stage to have their private lands officially mapped as a buffer zone.

30. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the site be **approved**.

31. **Bosques de Paz (Ecuador/Peru).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal for the first Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in South America submitted by the Ecuadorian and Peruvian authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the existing Bosque Seco Biosphere Reserve in the southwest of Ecuador and the Noroeste Amotapes – Manglares Biosphere Reserve in the northwest of Peru.

32. The total area is 1,616,988.42 ha with a core area of 237,638.76 ha, buffer zone of 478,165.28 ha and the transition zone of 901,184.38 ha.

33. Following the Declaration of Peace between Peru and Ecuador in 1998, both countries began a phase of strengthening their fraternal ties, trust and cooperation in diverse areas, favoring especially the populations of the Border Integration Zone (ZIF). The countries signed different agreements and diverse activities were carried out by both nations. Both countries participate at the UNESCO Project ‘Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Coastal and Island Management in the South-East Pacific Region (BRESEP)’ which supported the creation of this transboundary biosphere reserve financing of national and binational workshops.

34. The proposed biosphere reserve includes territories from the western foothills of the Andes, with heights that goes from 0 to 3,080 meters, that has generated a unique biological diversity with a high degree of endemism. The northern region of Peru presents about 26% of endemic plant species. The area include the seasonally dry forests of Ecuador and Peru that are biologically important because they form the heart of the Endemic Region of Tumbes, one of the biodiversity hot spots of the world. This region is one of the most important and threatened Endemic Bird Areas. At present, there are 59 species endemic to the Tumbesina Region, fourteen of which are threatened.

35. The proposed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve has 617,260 inhabitants. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement, the families of the border have been strengthening and sustaining a social, cultural and economic dynamic. In small towns, 50% of families are binational families. One of the most important alternatives that are the basis for development in the border area and proposed as a Biosphere Reserve is electricity generation through clean energy. Livestock activities and tourism are also a main economic activity in the area.

36. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**.

37. **Majang Forest (Ethiopia)** The Advisory Committee congratulated the authorities for this well prepared nomination by the Gambala National Regional State to protect a combination of nationally and Community protected Afromontane forest lying in one of the most fragmented and threatened regions in the world. The area has both Ramsar and World Heritage designations and is rich in biodiversity including 550 higher plants, 33 mammals, 130 birds and 20 amphibians, with 39 of the species belong to the IUCN Red List. The Advisory Committee appreciated the detailed presentation of the ecosystem services of the area and the good quality maps provided and multi- stakeholder approach used for the nomination process.

38. The Advisory Committee commended the efforts to protect cultural diversity and traditional livelihoods of the Kobo and Jang people in traditional bee keeping and the Social Empowerment through Group Nature interaction (SEGN) initiatives in environmental education programme for youth that links cultural and biological diversity.

39. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to reconcile the estimated population of the area in all sections of the dossier (225,490 or 224,925) and to provide a copy of the specific law on the biosphere reserve by 15 May 2017.

40. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.

41. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to integrate sustainable tourism development and conflict resolution in the future management plan.

42. **Black Forest (Germany)**. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the south of Germany and borders the agglomerations of the High Rhine and Oberrhein. It contains the most diverse low mountain ranges of Central Europe, silviculturally shaped forests (spruce), lowland and mountain hay meadows and lowland moors. The proposed total surface is 63,235 ha, 70 % of the area of which is forested. 38,000 inhabitants are living in the proposed area with main activities such as agriculture (mainly grazing), as well as secondary and tertiary sector. The proposed area is characterized by a unique cultural identity with customs and handicrafts, and promoting these is an important goal of the biosphere reserve proposal. An impressive amount of research has been and will be conducted. Research includes exploration of human-environment relationships in grassland rich forest landscapes and the effects of climate change and adaptation strategies. The proposed biosphere reserve supports innovative and diverse activities for demonstrating sustainable development, including

sustainable tourism, promotion of a research network and adaptive strategies to climate change.

43. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the high degree of involvement of local stakeholders and their support towards the designation.

44. The Advisory recommended that the proposal be **approved**.

45. The Advisory Committee commended the German authorities for the quality of the nomination form and further recommended that this nomination form is used as a model to be shared in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

46. **San Marcos de Colón (Honduras)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Honduran authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located 192 km from Tegucigalpa and 12 km from the Nicaraguan border at an altitude of 500 m to 1,700 m. The reserve covers an area of 57,810 ha with a core area of 4,069 ha, a buffer zone of 22,411 ha and a transition area of 31,330 ha.

47. There are several endemic species of fauna some of which are present only in small populations. The area also includes species of mammal such as the northern tamandua (*Tamandua mexicana*), the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and the white-faced monkey (*Cebus capucinus*).

48. Significant biological diversity has been recorded among bird species with 129 families registered. However, the highland guan (*Penelopina nigra*) and the Red-tailed hawk are endangered. A total of 18 families of herpetofauna have also been observed. In terms of flora, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the national authorities have classified guayacan trees (*Guaiaecum sanctum*) as being under serious threat.

49. The biosphere reserve contains 18 villages that are home to 26,350 inhabitants. The natural characteristics and peculiar temperate climate of the area enable the development of agricultural activities such as horticulture, fruit and coffee production, the growth of ornamental plants, and cattle rearing and dairy production. These activities contribute to the development of a variety of other productive activities that enhance the economic growth of the reserve.

50. The area is also known for its saddlery products (belts, harness, boots and hats). Other activities include the production of basic grains, the processing of milk products, the production of vegetables, and products derived from maize.

51. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination proposal and recommended that the site be **approved**. It is requested to further specify the management committee and management plan, as well as a topographic map with the limits of the core area bordering with Nicaragua.

52. **Tepilora, Rio Posada and Montalbo (Italy)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal from Italy located in Sardinia. The proposal presents very diverse landscapes,

including mountainous areas to the west and flat strip to the east, rivers, and coastal areas. It includes the Montalbo massif. 50,000 people are living in the 17 municipalities with very diverse human concentration (from 251 to 11,000 inhabitants). Specific form of singing “canto a tenore” was listed in UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

53. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation the rich history and culture of the proposed area, and the connection between humans and nature, documented through different cultural activities and events in the local language (sa limba). The total surface area proposed is 140,495 ha.

54. The Advisory Committee noted that the main objective of the proposed site is to encourage the local residents to engage in sustainable development, by valorizing the traditional activities and ecotourism. It also took note of the ongoing research and monitoring with cooperation with the Sardinian universities of Cagliari and Sassari. The proposed biosphere reserve is committed to development of sustainable tourism that would support local economy also in inland areas with providing services outside the season’s peaks and also strengthening the identity of local people and assure possibilities for involvement of young people. The proposal contains information about several projects aiming to high quality education for youth dealing with conservation and biodiversity, promotion of local food consumption, recycling and pedagogical farms. Several monitoring and research programmes were developed by national and regional research institutions and universities dealing with geology, biology, ecology, climate change, prevention of hydro-geological risk, environmental monitoring, technological development and energy consumption.

55. The proposed governance is designed in innovative and democratic way. The coordinator of the proposed biosphere reserve will be Parco Naturale Regionale di Tepilora and newly established MAB Office with government officials and representatives of Centres for Environmental Education and Sustainability. Scientific and Management Committees will be established to assure scientific and participatory approach. Local communities and stakeholders will be represented in Permanent Advisory Assembly that will approve Management Programme, its three-yearly updates and annual assessment of results.

56. The Advisory Committee thanked the authorities for the clarification provided to the technical questions and recommended that the site be **approved**.

57. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the nomination form and encouraged the authorities to continue with the process of preparing comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve and to share with the WNBR the outcomes of the implementation of “UNESCO MAB Brand & Story Toolkit”.

58. **Sobo, Katamuki and Okue (Japan).** The proposed Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve is characterized by Kyushu's precipitous mountains that include Mt. Sobo. The site is a part of the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Mountain Range which in itself serves as a “natural history museum of Japan”. Total area of the Biosphere Reserve is 243,672 hectares. The core area occupies 1,580 ha, buffer zone 17,748 ha, transition area 224,344 ha.

59. Forests cover 85% of the total area of the proposed site. Sustainable use has been carried out in various forms, including wood production, shiitake mushroom cultivation, charcoal (*binchotan*) production, and traditional bamboo work.

60. Due to the high forest biodiversity, research on fauna and flora in the Sobo-Katamuki Mountain Range has been conducted for quite a long time and the area has become an important base of biodiversity in the region.

61. Six municipalities in the surrounding areas of the Sobo-Katamuki Mountain Range have been playing a central role in promoting Education for Sustainable Development that takes advantage of nature and culture, and in implementing sustainable use of resources.

62. The established Sobo-Katamuki Biosphere Reserve Oita/Miyazaki Council is planned to be restructured after the biosphere reserve designation to facilitate more efficient and practical nature conservation, academic research, and sustainable use. "Sobo, Katamuki and Okue Biosphere Reserve Management Plan" has been formulated, reviewed and approved by the Council and will go into effect immediately following biosphere reserve designation.

63. The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission and commended the authorities of Japan for the very well written proposal with a clear zonation. It commended on-going forest restoration efforts. The Advisory Committee noted that the percentage of the core zone is rather small (0.65%) in comparison with the total area of the proposed Biosphere Reserve. It also noted that the areas of prefectural natural parks are not in the buffer zones. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to explore the feasibility to increase the core area by adding other areas of the quasi-national park and to increase the buffer zone by adding prefectural natural parks." With this in mind, the Advisory Committee recommended that Sobo, Katamuki and Okue be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.

64. **Minakami (Japan).** The proposed site includes the central divide of the island Honshu formed by 2,000 meters high mountainous backbone including the Tanigawa mountain range. Large differences in the environment between the eastern and western slopes as well as between the mountainous and the lowland areas create a distinct biological and cultural diversity. Total area of the proposed biosphere reserve is 91,368 hectares. The core area occupies 9,123 ha, buffer zone 60,421 ha and transition area 21,824 ha. The population is 21,345 and all dwelling in the transition area.

65. The area includes 1,776 species of vascular plants, 64 species of mammals, 161 species of birds, 12 species of reptiles, 18 species of amphibians, 18 species of fish, and 2,866 species of insects. 65 species of the vascular plants are endangered plants listed on the Red List (RL) of Ministry of Environment (2015). Many globally important species groups are seen in the area.

66. In the proposed buffer zone and transition area, there are secondary forests of deciduous broad-leaved trees where local residents have traditionally produced wood for fuel.

67. Main economic activities are agriculture – high quality products, and tourism. The proposed Minakami biosphere reserve site is a tourist spot. Main activities in the transition area include outdoor sports such as mountain climbing, skiing, and rafting; green tourism such as orchards; and the Onsen (hot springs). In around Mt. Tanigawa-dake serving as the buffer zone, mountain climbing and skiing are popular, while ecotourism is making the use of its history and culture with great consideration given to the valuable natural environment.

68. Most of the proposed territory belongs to one town of Gunma Prefecture - Minakami Town currently facing several social challenges including the population decrease and decline of agriculture production. The sustainable development programmes elaborated for the proposed biosphere reserve shall solve these problems.

69. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination and commended the authorities of Japan for the very well elaborated proposal and recommended that Minakami be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.

70. **Altyn Emel (Kazakhstan)**. The proposed site is located in the central part of the Ili intermountain basin. Total area of the proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve is 535,909.4 hectares. The main core area occupies 54,767.5 ha, buffer zone: 252,885.8 ha, transition area: 228,256.1 ha. All zones correspond to the territory of Altyn Emel state national nature park which is one of the largest protected areas in Kazakhstan and is extremely important for the conservation of biological diversity of the region. Flora of proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve today includes 825 species of vascular plants. In addition to rare and endangered species, there are a lot of endemic plants that are unique to the reserve. Fauna of invertebrate animals includes of 1,658 species. Fauna of vertebrates in the reserve consists of 393 species.

71. Ecosystem diversity is composed of various zonal and intrazonal types such as different types of desert, riparian forests of the floodplain of Ili river, deciduous and spruce forests, salt marshes, etc. It also includes the most valuable wetlands of Ili river. Protection regimes and zoning of the reserve allows to minimize harmful effects of human activities on ecosystems and, at the same time, to develop ecotourism.

72. The unique value of the proposed biosphere reserve is justified by the rich historical, natural and cultural heritage of the area. The most important of them - a monument of national importance "Singing Dunes", Saki mounds "Besshatyr", petroglyphs "Tanbalytas" and other objects.

73. The natural conditions of the proposed Altyn Emel Biosphere Reserve and surrounding areas are very diverse for the development of diversified agriculture and tourism. The Kazakhstan segment of the Great Silk Road lies in the region.

74. The transition area with 4,000 inhabitants allows main types of traditional economic activity of land users, providing stable use of nature resources, but prohibiting or limiting types of nature use and economic activity, negatively influencing ecological systems. This zone is used for living by local population, for development of economy, culture and education and

provides function of stable development of the territory.

75. Potential of the region is connected with a development of eco-tourism and recreational tourism, as well as with cattle breeding and plant growing.

76. The area is managed through Altyn Emel State National Park administration and Biosphere Reserve Coordination Council created in 2015. The Council is a collegial public body created to introduce policies of effective management and sustainable use of biosphere reserve's resources, alternative activities, resource-conserving and resource-restoring technologies.

77. The Advisory Committee noted that within the UNDP/GEF Project a research of social-economic situation in rural settlements of the proposed reserve was carried out.

78. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination. It encouraged the national authorities to develop an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve area after its designation.

79. The Advisory Committee recommended that Altyn Emel be **approved** as a biosphere reserve.

80. The Advisory Committee invited the national authorities to send by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat further information as follows:

- Revise all maps to contain the information in English.
- Zonation map: change colors of sub-zones and increase a font size in the legend to be well readable.
- Ecosystem map: increase a font size in the Legend to be well readable.

81. **Gadabedji (Niger).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the well- prepared nomination by Niger. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the Center of the country and straddles the regions of Maradi, Zinder and Agadez. It covers an area of 1,413,625 ha of which the core area is 69,023 ha, buffer zone, 163,925 ha and transition area, 1,180,657 ha. The area lies in the biogeographical zone between the Sahelo-Saharan biome in the North of the Niger and the Sudanian biome in the South. It is one of the first protected areas in the country, legally protected as a forest reserve and as a wildlife sanctuary by a government Order.

82. The area comprises of a mosaic of savannahs, depressions, pits and sand dunes. The fauna is diverse and includes 11 species of large mammals like the dorcas gazelle, rufifron gazelle, patas monkey, burrowing squirrel, pale fox, golden jackal and several birds as dendrocygnes, armed and helmeted ducks and a large colony of storks black.

83. The population of the proposed biosphere reserve belongs to two main ethnic groups (the Tuaregs and the Peulhs) with almost 20,500 inhabitants whose main activity is pastoralism including nomadic lifestyle.

84. At present, the managing authority of the area is the coordinator and his collaborators

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

85. Concerning the logistic function, the Reserve Management Unit is implementing monitoring and environmental education programmes. Few research activities are ongoing and no infrastructure is available.

86. The Advisory Committee considered that there is significant potential for biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, research, monitoring and education. It recommended that the site be **approved**.

87. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to fully implement the management plan in order to formalize the multi stakeholders' consultative platform and to foster sustainable development initiatives.

88. **Castro Verde (Portugal)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Portuguese authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in southern Portugal, in the hinterland of the Baixo Alentejo region, and covers a total area of 56,944.22 ha. The core area covers 6,005.22 ha, the buffer zone 26,562.70 ha and the transition zone 24,376.30 ha.

89. The proposed biosphere reserve encompasses the most important cereal steppe area of Portugal, which, in turn, is one of the most representative of the Iberian Peninsula and all of Europe. Cereal steppe or pseudo-steppe is one of the most threatened rural landscapes of the Mediterranean region. The area has a predominantly flat territory of sub-humid to dry ombroclimate located for the most part in the thermo-Mediterranean level, in some places reaching the meso-Mediterranean level.

90. The list of plant species includes trees and shrubs of plain, leathery and persistent leaves, such as holm oak, cork oak and the *Nerium oleander*. The area has a high degree of endemism in its flora, including 11 Iberian and Mediterranean examples. Two rare endemic Lusitanian species, *Linaria ricardoi* and *Armeria neglecta*, also occur only in the region covered by the proposed biosphere reserve (Alentejo). In terms of fauna, there is a structured and diverse bird community numbering around 200 species, including steppe birds such as the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*). Other endemic species include the emblematic Iberian imperial eagle (*Aquila adalberti*), one of the most endangered birds of prey in Europe and one of the rarest in the world.

91. With an estimated population of 7,276 inhabitants (National Census of 2011), the area has a low population density (12.8 inhabitants/km²). Much of the population lives in the town of Castro Verde (4,199 inhabitants), while the remaining inhabitants are distributed among a score of small and medium-sized villages and some isolated houses.

92. Despite the decline in agricultural employment over recent decades, extensive farming of dryland cereals continues, associated with livestock rearing as a means to maximize sources of income.

93. The mining complex of Neves-Corvo is a major employer in the region, and one of the most important mining centres in Europe, as well as one of the most important extractive industries in Portugal. All the activities and services connected to this complex, and the associated trade, construction and public works, have been instrumental in the reorganization and revitalization of the local economy.

94. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved** and encouraged the authorities to further develop an action plan and management committee.

95. **Khakassky (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, in the Republic of Khakassia, located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, and famous for its rich and high biodiversity and ecosystems. The mountain-taiga areas occupy more than 80 % of the territory.

96. The total proposed area is about 2,029,000 ha with 5,557 permanent inhabitants. The proposed biosphere reserve will be managed by a Coordinating Council, including the Chairman of the Council of Elders of Khakass people. The Advisory Committee also took note that the research and environmental policy of the site will be elaborated by the Scientific and Technical Council of the Khakassky Reserve.

97. It noted as well that social and economic development of the site is linked to traditional and sustainable nature management (such as sustainable forest management and agriculture), wild-honey farming, beekeeping, and tourism (ecotourism, recreational, rural, and educational tourism).

98. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the reserve plans to develop and implement innovative programs for sustainable livelihood of the local population (support and develop environmentally oriented small companies, promote local organic products and local crafts and folklore). It also welcomed that the proposed site plans to work out training programs for the local population that will include traditional souvenir making, business activities, and organization of ecotourism.

99. The Advisory Committee welcomed the biosphere reserve purpose to be a social, economic, cultural and educational center that promotes new types of sustainable activities and revival of national culture with the goal to provide additional income to the region's economy. It also welcomed the plans to design ethnical and environmental programs aimed at preserving indigenous culture and traditional nature management of Khakass peoples.

100. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.

101. **Great Altay (Russian Federation / Republic of Kazakhstan).** The Advisory

Committee welcomed this joint transboundary proposal from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan, composed with the Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation designated in 2000) and the Katon-Karagay Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Kazakhstan designated in 2014).

102. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve of a total surface of 1,543,807 ha consists of core areas of 269,822 ha, buffer zones of 711,070 ha and transition areas of 562,915 ha with 24,400 inhabitants.

103. It commended the three-year participatory planning process (ecosystem-based, adaptive and participatory management approach) that led to the joint nomination form and acknowledged the long-term technical cooperation with several initiatives and activities to promote and foster transboundary nature conservation in the Altai region.

104. The Advisory Committee took note that the proposed joint area is used for livestock, grazing, red deer (maral) farming, fodder production and apiculture. Forestry activities include sanitary cutting and thinning cuts as well as restoration of degraded forest stands. Tourism, hunting, fishing and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is widespread.

105. It also welcomed the Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Vision, translated into a strategy with different objectives such as the Promotion of transboundary understanding and cultural exchange; the Generation of alternative job opportunities and income and the Development of regulated eco-cultural tourism. It also noted with appreciation the numerous joint activities and task forces such as on 'Biodiversity Conservation' which oversees the development of common or coordinated conservation and restoration policies as well as policies for restoration of degraded areas. It also welcomed the increased number of initiatives focusing on the revival and distribution of traditional knowledge, such as the "Ethno-ecological museum of the Altain culture" of the Katunskiy State Nature Biosphere Zapovednik and its educational activities. Nevertheless the Advisory Committee considered the deadline of 2040 for most activities fairly long and encourages the authorities to shorten the period for this ambitious strategy in order to align with the timeline for the implementation of the Lima Action Plan.

106. It welcomed the activities of the International Coordination Council "Altai – Our common home" formed in 2003 aiming at the development of the border regions, sharing cultural and natural heritage and on the improvement of living conditions. It also welcomed the establishment of the 'Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Board' to oversee the coordination of the joint activities.

107. The Advisory Committee also well noted that the Great Altay Transboundary Biosphere Reserve may act as a model region for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in close linkage with sustainable development of local communities in the transboundary Altai region, South Siberia.

108. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the authorities to continue joint action towards a comprehensive

transboundary conservation and management of the ecosystems of the Altai region and pursue a plan for establishment of potential quadrilateral transboundary biosphere reserve among the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Mongolia and the People's Republic of China.

109. **Garden Route (South Africa).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination of this complex of diverse protected ecosystems in the Cape Floristic biodiversity hotspot region located along the southern coast of part of the country. With a total area of 698,363ha (212,375 ha core, 288,032 ha buffer, 197,956 ha transition) and a population of 450,624, the area includes the Tsitsikamma Marine protected area, Wilderness Lake Ramsar site, Garden Route National Park and two World Heritage sites, the Nelson Bay Cave and the Lankloof Valley, this later being critically endangered.

110. Floral diversity includes plateau forest, shrubs and herbs of relevance for indigenous groups such as the KhoiSan people while faunal diversity includes the endangered Knysna seahorse, two near threatened fish species (Eastern Cape redbfin, *Psuedobarbas afer* and the Cape kurper, (*Sandelia capensis*) and large mammals like elephants, rhinos and buffalo.

111. The Advisory Committee recognized the wide range of stakeholders and partners involved in sustainable development initiatives in the area and the various agreements prepared in this regard that had led to the development of eco-tourism and community support in craft and agro-processing. The development of touristic corridors among the various sections of the area and the development of local tourism organizations in collaboration with the local and district municipalities was laudable.

112. The Advisory Committee appreciated the relevance of the six meteorological stations in the area for climate change monitoring and the collaborative research programme with various stakeholders including Nelson Mandela University.

113. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved**.

114. The Advisory Committee strongly encouraged the independent body established for the management of the proposed biosphere reserve to explore in addition to tourism other substantial livelihoods opportunities for disadvantaged user groups and to involve them in management of the area. The Advisory Committee looked forward to receiving the management plan after it has been finalized.

115. **Jebel Al Dair (Sudan).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the nomination file of the Jebel Al Dair site for becoming a biosphere reserve.

116. Jebel Al Dair builds on an existing National Park (established in 2010) and is constituted of the Al Dair massif, composed of dry savannah woodlands, forested ecosystems and a network of streams. The Jebel Al Dair is one of the few remaining area with rich biodiversity in the semi-arid North Kordofan. The main objective of the site to become a biosphere reserve is to secure the ecosystem services in order to allow a sustainable economic and socio-cultural development of the area that rely on natural

resources for their livelihoods. The site counts 220 bird species, as well as 22 mammals and reptiles species such as greater kudu, baboons, rock hyrax, most of them endangered. Among the 112 plant species, 95 are of medicinal and aromatic use. The proposed site includes several small villages and cultural practices are reported to be linked to sites in the Jebel.

117. A comprehensive management plan has been provided and the Advisory Committee congratulated the Jebel Al Dair authorities for the highly participative approach that has been followed for establishing this management plan. This included a stakeholder consultation workshop, consultative meetings with local communities and/or their representatives, a socioeconomic survey, the establishment of various committees with respectively concerned stakeholders, 10 training courses for rangers, and the future involvement of local communities in the management conservation process.

118. Regarding the zonation of the proposed site, clarification should be provided about the overlapping of the Jebel El Dair National Park with the proposed biosphere reserve: where are the limits of the national park within the total area of the biosphere reserve? In the current nomination file, it remains unclear, how the different surfaces of the national park (315 km²), the core area of the proposed biosphere reserve (1,672 km²) and the buffer zone and transition area (respectively 987 km² and 3,715 km²) relate to each other.

119. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee recommended that Jebel Al Dair be **approved** as a biosphere reserve. The Advisory Committee understood that due to meteorological conditions at the time of the submission of the nomination file, Jebel Al Dair was not accessible and authorities could not complete the “Endorsement” part of the nomination file. The Advisory Committee requested authorities to provide all the necessary supporting signatures and to submit additional information about zonation by 30 September 2017.

New nominations recommended for approval pending the submission of specific information

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

121. These biosphere reserves represent ecological corridors that are divided by a political and administrative frontier. The proposed transboundary biosphere reserve presents an opportunity to allow better management of the environment, taking into account the ecological dimension necessary for the survival and welfare of people and communities.

122. Although both biosphere reserve seems to be functioning well and the proposal is well prepared, an accompanying letter of agreement signed jointly by the highest authorities of both countries is missing. Therefore, the proposal of the creation of this trans-boundary biosphere reserve is **approved pending**, the missing agreement will be sent before 15 May

2017.

123. **Karatau Biosphere Reserve (Kazakhstan)** The proposed site is located in the central part of the Karatau ridge, which is a branch of North-Western parts of Tien Shan on the territory of South Kazakhstan region. The total area is 151,792 hectares. The core area (the area of Karatau state nature reserve) occupies 34,300 ha, the buffer zone 17,492 ha and the transition area 100,000 ha with 83,000 inhabitants.

124. The area represents an extremely important natural complex for conservation of West Tien Shan biodiversity. Flora of higher vascular plants of Karatau ridge along its length counts 1,710 species and subspecies from 578 genera and 108 families. By the number of endemic species Karatau occupied the first place among all Middle-Asian regions. A rare and threatened population of Karatau Argali is present only in Karatau. Out of 26 mammal species chosen as indicator for West Tien Shan, the Karatau region hosts 20. Avifauna consists of 118 species.

125. UNDP/GEF projects enabled *i.a.* to carry out a complex research of the region and assess environmental and economic impacts on cultural and social life of local people.

126. Lands of the buffer zone are not withdrawn from the main land users, they consist of the lands of agricultural purpose and are administered by agricultural organizations and private bodies. Within the buffer zone an economic activity in some parts of the protection zone (haymaking, cattle pasture) is carried out by agreement with state authority and under the control of the administration of state nature reserve. Eco-educational, tourism and recreational activities are conducted on the territory of biosphere reserve's buffer zone, as well as scientific research.

127. Around 83,000 people live in the transition area of the proposed biosphere reserve. The majority of the lands adjacent to the nature reserve are in state possession and given for constant or temporary land-use. The largest land users in the transition zone are agricultural enterprises. The potential of the region is connected primarily with the development of cattle breeding and plant growing, as well as with eco-tourism and recreational tourism.

128. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal. It encouraged the national authorities to develop an integrated management plan for the whole biosphere reserve area after its designation. However, it noted that sustainable development programmes are not described in details.

129. The Advisory Committee recommended that Karatau be **approved pending** the receipt and approval of the following information by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat:

- Provide detailed description of sustainable development programme(s).
- Revise all maps to contain all the information in English and increase a font size in the Legend to be well readable.

130. **Termit and Tin Toumma (Niger).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the

submission of this proposal by Niger. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the East of Niger and straddles the regions of Agadez, Zinder and Diffa, particularly in a Sahelo-Saharan zone in the Central-East of Niger. It covers an area of 33,712,442 ha of which the core areas: 2,354,000 ha, buffer zone: 7,644,106 ha and transition area 23,714,260 ha. The legal status of the two core areas and their surrounding buffer zones is national nature reserve, with less restriction in the buffer zone.

131. The area consists of desert zones with a population belonging to Toubous, Arabs, Tuaregs and Peulhs totaling 2,800 inhabitants, whose main activity is pastoralism, including nomadic lifestyle.

132. The biodiversity of the area is important with animal species including among others, Nager dama, *Ammontragus lervia* and for the birds, the vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*. It also includes sahelian species such as the Dorcas gazelle, the mancette, the desert cheetah and many other birds and reptiles. As plant species, *Acacia sp.*, *Salvadora persica*, *Balanites aegyptiaca* and *Boscia senegalensis* are found.

133. For the management of the proposed biosphere reserve, in addition to the coordinator and his collaborators appointed by the national authorities (management unit); a consultative body is in place including representatives of local stakeholders (Advisory Committee) and the Scientific Council.

134. The Advisory Committee noted the ongoing oil exploitation activities in the area without any precision (in core, buffer or transition areas). It recommended that the site be **approved pending** that the oil exploitation is not impacting the conservation function of the biosphere reserve. The country is therefore requested to provide the clarification of the location of oil exploitation and the provision of environmental and social impacts assessment documents and/or outcomes as well as further information on how the local populations are involved in the management of the site by 15 May 2017.

135. **Itaipu (Paraguay)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this new proposal submitted by the Paraguayan authorities. The proposed biosphere reserve is located in the Eastern Region of the country and covers a total area of 1,040,780 ha. There are six core areas (property of Itaipu Binational) that cover 36,505.717 ha, while the buffer zone covers 27,604.49 ha (53% of which is terrestrial and 47% aquatic). The wide transition zone covers 933,738,791 ha and incorporates private property used for agriculture and cattle, urban areas, groups of farmers and indigenous people, and remaining forest cover.

136. The proposed biosphere reserve comprises an area of semi-deciduous subtropical forest, also known as the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. This forest forms part of the Global 200 list of ecoregions identified by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the global conservation organization, as priorities for conservation.

137. The Atlantic Forest is one of the most important ecosystems for the conservation of biological diversity on a global scale, due to its high endemic species, richness of species and the original cover, which is scarce following the accelerated destruction of the habitat for

agricultural purposes. The Upper Parana Atlantic Forest is home to vertebrates including large predators such as harpies (*Harpia harpyja*), crested eagles, jaguars (*Felis concolor*), pumas (*Panthera onca*), and large herbivores such as tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*), species of deer (*Mazama* sp.) and two species of peccaries (*Tayasu* sp.).

138. The permanent population amounts to over 450,000 people and may double during high season. It consists of indigenous communities, and Paraguayan and 'brasiguayos' settlers (Paraguayan descendants of Brazilians who immigrated in the last decades of the twentieth century).

139. This mixture of different cultures sharing the same territory has created an interesting environment for the management of conservation works and sustainable development, due to the diverse forms of productive activity, architecture, customs and gastronomy, among others. These cultures also speak a variety of languages including Castellano, Guaraní and Portuguese), as well as a particular mixture of Guaraní and Castellano known as 'Jopara' (pronounced yopará) (sometimes associated with Portuguese in this border area).

140. The Advisory Committee recommended the site to be **approved pending** provision by the authorities of clear data on the total area of the whole proposed biosphere reserve and of each zone (core, buffer and transition) by 15 May 2017. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to work together with the bordering Bosque Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve in Paraguay and Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve located on the Brazilian side of the Itaipu Dam.

141. The Advisory Committee encourages communicating about the history, concept and importance of the MAB Programme and its biosphere reserve using the official documents of the MAB Programme. The Advisory Committee further recommends establishing new ecological corridors that connect the fragmented core areas.

142. **Indawgyi (Republic of the Union of Myanmar).** Indawgyi Lake is the largest freshwater lake in Myanmar. It consists of a large open lake area, floating vegetation areas, surrounded by herbaceous marsh, semi-inundated swamp forest and seasonally flooded grasslands. The hills surrounding Indawgyi Lake basin are covered by subtropical moist broadleaf forests that harbour a number of threatened forest birds and mammals, including endangered primates.

143. 166 bird species have been recorded for the lake and its surrounding catchments. This amount contains 56 waterbird species, 79 wetland dependent bird species and 31 forest bird species. The proposed biosphere reserve also holds important habitats for mammals such as grassland for the endangered hog deer and forests hosting Eastern Hoolock gibbon and Shortridge langur. 93 fish species are presently known from the lake and its basin. This includes regional endemic species and 6 species new to science, discovered in 2015, which could be restricted to the Indawgyi Lake basin.

144. The proposed site has a total area of 133,715 ha. The core areas occupy an area of 45,170 ha. The buffer zones have a total area of 27,578 ha. The forest buffer zone includes

community-forestry sites and forests with regulated access and utilization by local communities. The transition area has an area of 60,967 ha and is the alluvial plain between the lake and the watershed and consists mostly of agricultural land for paddy rice production. Since these farmlands immediately surround the Lake and its associated wetlands, all agrochemicals applied to the farms will likely impact the lake. The transition area will have a central function to educate all relevant stakeholders, pilot and support sustainable development intervention with a focus on organic farming, responsible tourism, waste and wastewater management systems, and renewable energy for local households and developing solutions to manage environmental impacts from gold mining.

145. Local communities have been involved from the beginning in the biosphere reserve nomination process. The process has fully considered indigenous and customary rights of local indigenous communities and the nomination would not lead to any involuntary access restrictions for local people.

146. Biosphere Reserve Management Unit is to be formed at District level. Its composition and responsibilities will be defined after a successful nomination.

147. The Advisory Committee noted that the Indawgyi Lake became a Ramsar site in 2016 and that the national authorities consider this site to be proposed as the World Natural Heritage site.

148. The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination. It encouraged the national authorities to develop a comprehensive management plan for the biosphere reserve after its designation.

149. The Advisory Committee recommended that the site be **approved pending** the authorities to send detailed information on the legal protection status of the areas outside the proposed biosphere reserve in its eastern and south-western parts, and if they are not legally or functionally protected, a rationale of that typology of the zoning. This information shall be submitted by 15 May 2017 to the MAB Secretariat.

150. **Kizlyar Bay Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation which encompasses Kizlyar Bay (one of the biggest bays of the Caspian Sea), which is a key part of one of the largest migratory routes of birds in Eurasia, with breeding, migration and wintering of more than 280 species of birds.

151. It represents a diversity of water, coastal and arid ecosystems of Caspian Depression and the North-Western Caspian (plain and coastal wetlands; plain deserts, semi deserts and steppes). It contains high biodiversity of marine, coastal, desert-steppe ecosystems, including populations of globally threatened animals (Caspian seal, many species of birds and sturgeons). The entire marine area of the proposed site lies within boundaries of a special North Caspian Protected Fishery Zone which status is close to that of nature sanctuary.

152. The proposed biosphere reserve covers the total area of 354,100 ha for a total

population of 1,600 permanent inhabitants. The purpose is the improvement of socio-economic welfare of local people by the maintenance and development of traditional, eco-friendly forms of nature management, including sustainable fishery, land use (grazing and haymaking), seasonal autumn hunting, recreation, and ecotourism, with special attention paid to the maintenance and development of traditional forms of economic activity and fishery. The Advisory Committee welcomed the establishment of the Scientific-Technical Council and the Community Council, which includes representatives of communities and local authorities of Tarumovka and Kizlyar Districts of Daghestan.

153. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the strong support from the authorities and stakeholders. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the well-prepared nomination file.

154. The Advisory Committee recommended the site to be **approved pending** receiving additional information to explain why there is no buffer zone adjacent to the core area in the eastern part by 15 May 2017. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the national authorities consider the establishment of core area also on Tyuleny Island in the future.

155. **Metsola (Russian Federation)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal from the Russian Federation, at the border of Finland located on the eastern side of the West Karelian Upland. The proposal comprises the Kostomukshsky Reserve and contains one of the oldest north-taiga intact forests in Northwest Russia. The proposed area is 345,700 ha with 30,000 permanent inhabitants, and with forestry, fishing and agriculture as main activities.

156. The Advisory Committee noted that the primary goal of the area is to conserve north-taiga forests, essential for the reproduction of many aboriginal bird species such as grouse, lamellirostral, coastal birds, diurnal birds of prey. It also noted the importance of the culture and historic environment of the area where the Kalevala epos was created. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the designation is expected to enhance tourism and to create employment in Kalevala Town, Voknavolok Village and the City of Kostomuksha. It further noted that the social and economic development is linked to sustainable forestry, agriculture and local activities such as fishing, hunting and collecting non-woody forest products.

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

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

159. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal be **approved pending** the

receipt of the following information by 15 May 2017:

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

160. **Backo Podunavlje (Serbia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed this submission from Serbia. The proposed site is located in the northwestern part of Serbia and comprises 176,635 ha. Situated mainly in recent and historical alluvial zones of the central Danube plain, the proposed biosphere reserve is a mosaic composed mainly of remnants of historic floodplains and human-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlements. The floodplain includes alluvial forests, marshes, reed beds, freshwater habitats, alluvial wetlands, as well as flood-protected forests with significantly changed hydrology dynamics. The area of the proposed biosphere reserve is home to 147,405 inhabitants located in 26 settlements with main activities are agriculture, forestry and industry.

161. The Advisory Committee noted that the proposed site has the same zonation as the one proposed in 2014 which was deferred. It also noted that at the time of the previous submission as part of the Mura Drava Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the creation of the transboundary was an initiative from the five countries which signed a ministerial declaration in 2011, stating that nothing in the Declaration or its subsequent document shall prejudice in any manner the delimitation between the State signatories.

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

163. “The joint zonation map for the entire future transboundary biosphere reserve, designed by all five countries:

- the joint transboundary biosphere reserve nomination form filled in by all five countries;
- clarification of the role of the scientific panel within the coordinating council of the proposed biosphere reserve;
- clarification on how the various projects and research outcomes will be integrated in the functioning of the proposed biosphere reserve”.

164. The Advisory Committee warmly welcomed the additional information provided where the authorities expressed their willingness to continue the process of transboundary cooperation, which lays the basis for the possible future establishment of the whole Mura Drava Danube region as one ecological complex and common cultural heritage. The Advisory Committee took note that this biosphere reserve proposal by no means depart from the idea of transboundary cooperation across the transboundary biosphere reserve Mura Drava Danube. The Advisory Committee also commended the authorities for mobilizing funds

for the project “COOPMDD” through the interregional Danube transnational programme in 2016.

165. The Advisory Committee finally noted that some core areas are not fully surrounded by buffer zones and requested additional information on the rationale.

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

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

167. **Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve – Extension and renaming of former Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve (Australia).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the re-submission of the extension and renaming of the Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve located in the state of Western Australia, which was originally designated in 1978. However, this site being a pre-Seville site has not been fully functioning as a biosphere reserve due to the lack of an appropriate buffer zone and transition area.

168. The Australian authorities submitted the extension and renaming of the site in 2015 to improve the functionality according to the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The total area of this site was 1.529 million ha: comprising 296,390 ha as core area; 140,797 ha as buffer zone; 1,092,208 ha terrestrial transition area and 157,286 ha as marine transition area.

169. However, after careful examination, the MAB Council in 2016 decided that this extension and renaming be deferred and encouraged the national authorities to resubmit the nomination taking into account the recommendation to rezone this area such that the buffer would be contiguous with the core area and to submit a new zonation map accordingly.

170. The Advisory Committee commended the Australian authorities for their extensive consultation with the Biosphere Implementation Group including representation from government, local industry and community stakeholders which resulted into the proposed zonation being now as follows: core area - 164,102 ha, buffer zone - 180,755 ha, and transition area - 1,184,720 ha as shown in the accompanying maps being submitted with this re-submission. The total area is 1,529,577 ha.

171. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposal of the extension with the re-name “Fitzgerald Biosphere” be **approved**.

172. The Advisory Committee invited the Australian authorities to provide a sound rationale to the new zonation and change the relevant information in the revised document taking into account this new zonation. The Advisory Committee encouraged to reconsider the areas

covered with native vegetation to be maintained as buffer zones.

General recommendations to Bulgaria

173. The Advisory Committee warmly welcomed the intense efforts made by the Bulgarian authorities to update their sites to meet the statutory framework criteria. It also very much appreciated the road map and the submission of four nominations proposals based on 8 existing biosphere reserves. It furthermore very much welcomed the on-going dialogue and consultation with stakeholders described in the new proposals. It requested that an update of the road map be provided in order to assess the status of the other 8 sites, especially for the sites where consultation with local communities have indicated that they were not supported or against the proposal to update the biosphere reserve. It requested that this information and the update of the road map be provided to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017.

174. **Central Balkan Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) - Extension and renaming.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal located in the central part of the country which contains four existing biosphere reserves (i.e. Steneto Biosphere Reserve, Tsaritchina Biosphere Reserve, Djendemama Biosphere Reserve and Boatin Biosphere Reserve, all designated in 1977). The proposal is a follow up of the periodic review reports examined by the MAB Council in 2016. The proposal includes the central and higher portions of the Balkan Mountain Range. The core area is made of the Central Balkan national park and contains rare and endangered wildlife species as well as cultural sites. It contains the most important old beech forest massif (71% of the national park) of the country. Main activities include transhumance, grazing, walking tourism. The total proposed area is 369,000 ha with 129,647 inhabitants.

175. The Advisory Committee appreciated the efforts made by the authorities to involve the stakeholders through consultations and the support of the five municipalities as well as the interactions between the different authorities of the three proposed zones through the establishment of a Partnership council and a consultative council. It noted with satisfaction that one of the purpose of the biosphere reserve is to provide and stimulate opportunities for development of environmentally friendly livelihoods and nature-based tourism.

176. The Advisory Committee noted that part of the core areas is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone, nevertheless, the Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function of the core areas concerned is not threatened since the adjacent territories are included in the NATURA 2000 network.

177. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension and renaming be **approved**.

178. The Advisory Committee encouraged further negotiations with local communities that have not yet replied officially to become part of the biosphere reserve.

179. **Chervenata Stena Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this nomination for this site established in 1977. The proposed area of 65409 ha is located in the south Bulgarian mountain. It contains landscapes of mid-

mountainous deciduous as well as coniferous forests, as well as high mountain meadows. These forest landscapes and mountainous rocks are emblematic and gives the name of the proposed site: the red wall. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the support of the local communities, local NGOs, business and the series of meetings that were held in the municipality of Asenovgrad which constitutes the transition area in the proposed nomination. The total number of inhabitants is 60,680.

180. Main activities include organic agriculture, stock breeding, ecological tourism. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction that several activities in the proposed biosphere reserve include sustainable development of the Asenovgrad municipality, the improvement of the quality of environmental education, including training and the stimulation of scientific research. A consultative (managing) body would be put in place involving all stakeholders.

181. The Advisory Committee appreciates the efforts made through the Operational Program Environment 2007–2013, as well as the efforts made to use the biosphere reserves territory for local socio-economic development, notably through the establishment of small family-run guesthouses and the promotion of local organic production. These operations benefit from the nearby presence of the Bachkovo Monastery, the second largest of Bulgaria.

182. The Advisory Committee noted that part of the core area is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone. However, the authorities provided rationale for the absence of formal buffer zone, as the adjacent area belongs to the municipality that has not yet agreed to be part of the biosphere reserve. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee noted that the conservation function of the core area is not threatened since the adjacent territories are included in the NATURA 2000 network.

183. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved**.

184. The Advisory Committee further encouraged the authorities to further negotiate with the local community that has not yet agreed to be part of the proposal.

185. **Srebarna Biosphere Reserve (Bulgaria) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal located in the north east part of the country, including the former Srebarna Biosphere Reserve. It noted that the proposed total area is 52005 ha with a total population of 61 365 inhabitants.

186. The proposed area has high biodiversity value (including Dalmatian pelican) and has been listed as a World Heritage Site, Ramsar site and also Natura 2000 site. It also noted the long term importance of the lake, the most studied in terms of hydrology and biodiversity in Bulgaria. The existing biosphere reserve has been extended to include the Silistra municipality, which contains many historical sites and host numerous cultural events and traditional festivals. Traditional activities include agriculture, organic farming, small scale husbandry, fishing, bee keeping, woodcarving. It noted that the management of the proposed biosphere reserve will be done by a partnership council and that the mayor will establish a consultative council. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the planning of activities such as the development of local institution, centres of information to share good practices,

entrepreneurship activities as well as the involvement of local communities in monitoring and scientific activities to stimulate the sustainable development of the region.

187. The Advisory Committee took note that part of the core area is not fully surrounded by a buffer zone and thanked the authorities for the clarification. It therefore considered that the adjacent community of Srebarna plays an active role in ensuring the buffer zone function as the village is legally bound by the management plan of Srebarna Managed Reserve adopted with an order no. RD-565/13 October 2016 of the Minister of Environment and Water.

188. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved**.

189. **Manu Biosphere Reserve (Peru) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Manu Biosphere Reserve, submitted by the Peruvian authorities. The biosphere reserve, designated in 1977, is located between the Cusco and the Madre de Dios regions.

190. The biosphere reserve is one of the few protected natural areas in the world that harbours such a large diversity of ecosystems, from high grasslands to tropical rainforests to cloud forests. Its core zone protects the entire sub-basin of the Manu River. Due to the diversity of ecosystems, its importance has also increased the interest of the State and the international scientific community. It is one of the most biologically diverse places of Peru, since it contains almost all the ecosystems, flora and fauna of the Peruvian Amazon; 10% of the world's bird species; 5% of their mammals. In 1987, UNESCO inscribed it in the list of World Natural Heritage, because of its enormous value for the conservation of biological diversity.

191. The area has cultural and natural tourist attractions, which are developed under the planning and management instruments approved by the local authorities and the regional tourism management within the framework of the development plans.

192. Native agricultural products that are used in a traditional way by native communities without the use of agrochemicals are being commercialized at local and regional level.

193. The Peruvian authorities propose to extend the Manu Biosphere Reserve from 1,881,200 ha to 2,438,956.04 in order to update and enlarge its buffer zone to 269,385.05 ha and the transition area to 453,275.77 ha.

194. The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension proposal and recommended it to be **approved**. The advisory committee encouraged the inclusion of the local communities and other stakeholders in the management system and action plan.

195. **Masurian Lakes Biosphere Reserve - Extension and renaming of former Lake Luknajno Biosphere Reserve (Poland).** The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as regards the extension and renaming submission of Lake Łuknajno Biosphere Reserve, designated in 1976 in northern Poland. The site is located within the

geographical region of Masuria. The proposal was approved in 2016 pending the continuation of the process for establishing the transition area in the southern part of the lake through mutual social agreement between local authorities, and the receipt and approval of an updated zonation map.

196. The Advisory Committee welcomed the additional information provided as regards the zonation map and the transition area for the extension and renaming, especially as regards the clarification on the zonation in the southern part of the lake.

197. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension and renaming be **approved**. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the authorities to establish the stakeholders based biosphere reserve coordination board and finalize the biosphere reserve management plan by September 2018 and inform the Secretariat on the finalization.

198. **Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve (Spain) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed this proposal for an extension of the Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve, submitted by the Spanish authorities. The biosphere reserve, designated in 1983, is situated in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere in the Gulf of Cadiz, located in the southwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula. The physical and natural characteristics of this area determine both its biodiversity and the life forms of its inhabitants.

199. The proposal to increase the Marismas del Odiel Biosphere Reserve from 7,158 ha to 18,875.29 ha (core: 1,051 ha; buffer: 5,699 ha; transition: 12,126 ha (5,697 ha terrestrial and 6,429 ha marine area), would enlarge the surface area by 11,717.29 ha and achieve an adequate transition zone that solves the deficiency that could have a smaller area. Two municipalities (Aljaraque and Punta Umbria) are located in the area, both of which have maintained a close territorial, economic, historical and cultural relationship with the river and its marshes.

200. The Advisory Committee welcomed this extension proposal and recommended to be **approved**.

201. **Lake Manyara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the well-prepared application for extension of the area located in the East African Rift Valley, which was designated in 1981. With a total area of 346,741 ha (64,443 ha core, 79,345 ha buffer, 203,018 ha transition) and a population of 257,147, it includes the Lake Manyara National Park, Burunge Wildlife Conservation Area, and has a history of community-based conservation and social dynamism with the presence of the Maasai pastoralists since the 18th century. The area is one of Africa's fastest growing tourist destinations. It is home to 59 floral species and 46 faunal species including the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) and the common genet (*Geneta geneta*), with 42 of the animal species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened species.

202. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for the initiative taken to prepare a framework for a general management plan for the entire area and for the provision of gender-disaggregated data on the communities. The Advisory Committee noted the

increasing population resulting in changing land uses in the area that could compromise the pastoral lands of the Maasai people.

203. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria and recommended that the extension be **approved**.

204. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer zone to protect the entire core without comprising the access rights of local communities, to send the general framework for the preparation of the management plan to the MAB Secretariat by 30 September 2018 and to develop an integrated management plan for the entire area as soon as it is finalized.

205. **Serengeti-Ngorongoro Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the request for extension of this area designated in 1981 and congratulated the authorities for the high level of stakeholder consultations in the preparation of the request. The area covers 4,397,314 ha (1,988,506 ha core area, 883,218 ha, 1,525,595 ha transition) and includes the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in the north of Tanzania. It is also home to the indigenous Maasai people with a fast-growing tourist industry.

206. The ecosystem supports about 1.5 million wildebeest, 900,000 Thomson gazelle and 300,000 zebra as the dominant herds. Other herbivores include 7,000 elands, 27,000 topis, 18,000 heartbeests, 70,000 buffalos, 4,000 giraffes, 15,000 warthogs, 3,000 waterbucks, 500 Hippopotamus, 200 black rhino, 10 species of antelopes and 10 species of primates. The large herbivores support 5 major predators individuals including 4,000 lions, 1,000 leopards, 225 cheetahs, 3,500 spotted hyenas and 100 wild dogs.

207. The Advisory Committee observed collaboration among various stakeholders in the management of the area and the diversity of approaches used including the formation of village environmental management committees. The Advisory Committee noted the increasing incidence of encroachment and poaching and the fact that some sections of the core were not protected by a buffer.

208. The Advisory Committee concluded that the site meets the criteria and recommended its extension to be **approved**.

209. The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to extend the buffer to protect the entire core without comprising the access rights of local communities and to develop an integrated management plan for the entire biosphere reserve.

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

210. **Uzunbudzhak Biosphere Reserve - Extension (Bulgaria)**. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposal for this site established in 1977 and following the examination of its first periodic review by the MAB Council. The proposed total area is 78,425 ha, with 3,699

people and the landscape is among the most representative for Europe, with temperate forests with evergreen laurel undergrowth. It includes the Strandja national park, very rich in biodiversity and karst caves. It includes the municipalities of Malko Turnovo and several villages. It noted with high appreciation the vision for the biosphere reserve, including to become a unified territory with economic sustainable development, the building of an environmental education centre as well as a friendly environment for partnership and cooperation.

211. It also noted with appreciation the involvement of the local communities including the local council's decision to support the nomination form. It noted the plan to establish a council of partners including all main institutions responsible for the three zones to be based in Malko Turnovo. It also welcomed the implementation of the project entitled 'Collaboration for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Local Development in Strandja, which was conducted between 2009 and 2012, and aimed at demonstrating benefits for local people.

212. The Advisory Committee noted that some core areas are not fully surrounded by buffer zones. It welcomed the additional maps showing that the Natura 2000 network is providing the buffer function nearby the core areas but however requested the authorities to formally establish these buffer zones and that this is made visible in a revised zonation map.

213. The Advisory Committee recommended that the extension be **approved pending** receipt of the creation of formal buffer zones surrounding or adjacent to the core areas with support of the Council of partners, formal endorsements and to receive this information and corresponding updated zonation map by 15 May 2017.

214. **Meggido Biosphere Reserve (Israël) - Renaming of former Ramot Menashe Biosphere Reserve.** The Advisory Committee took note of the rationale for changing the name of Ramot Menashe to Meggido, based on the fact that the name of the biosphere reserve differs from the name of the administrative region to which some communities belong. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the objective of the name change would be to strengthen the identity of the communities living in the biosphere reserve and to increase their connection with its principles and their engagement to implement activities. It further acknowledged that "Megiddo" carries symbolic attributes and that this could strengthen the self-image of the biosphere reserve inhabitants.

215. The Advisory Committee recommended that the change of name be **approved pending** receipt of signed approval of all stakeholders involved in the biosphere reserve.

216. **East Usambara Biosphere Reserve (Tanzania) – Extension.** The Advisory Committee welcomed the submission for extension of this area following recommendations of the periodic review received in 2016 after the deadline of the Exit Strategy. This site, designated in 2000 is representative of mountain ecosystems includes patches of tropical forests and forms part of the Eastern Arc Mountains, one of 35 global biodiversity hotspots. The mountains constitute an important water source for neighbouring communities and Tanga city.

217. With a total area of 83,994 ha (30,468.70 ha core, ha 21,963. 68 buffer, 48,000 ha transition...) and a population of 184,253, the biosphere reserve includes the Amani and Nilo Nature Reserves and the recently gazetted Derema corridor. Endemic species include the Usambara eagle-owl (*Bubo vosseleri*), the Usambara akalat (*Sheppardia montana*), the Usambara weaver (*Ploceus nicolli*) and the iconic endemic African violet (*Saintpaulia ionantha*). The Amani botanical garden established in 1902 has over a thousand trees and shrubs from all over the world.

218. The Advisory Committee noted the ethno-botanical values of the area and the cultural relevance for worship to indigenous groups as well as the livelihood training for local communities to achieve a green economy.

219. The Advisory Committee commended the authorities for diversity of stakeholders such as NGOs, government and foreign institutions, involved in research and monitoring.

220. Based on existing information, the Advisory Committee recommended that the extension of the site be **approved pending** the submission of the following information to the MAB Secretariat by 15 May 2017:

- the available management plans of the core areas;
- information on the management of the enclave;
- copy of the management plan framework of the entire biosphere reserve;
- justification for the absence of buffer zones around some of the core areas.

Annex 4: New Criteria and Conditions for the Selection of Award Winners

Criteria and conditions for the selection of Award winners

The Awards basics

The MAB Young Scientists Awards targets young researchers carrying out interdisciplinary research in line with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. Priority is given to projects carried out in biosphere reserves.

Until 2025, implementation of the UNESCO MAB Programme is guided by the MAB Strategy and Lima Action Plan for UNESCO's MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (LAP), which contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MAB Young Scientists Award applicants are strongly encouraged to take into account the priorities of the LAP, and to identify in their applications how their research contributes to the research-related actions of the LAP and to the SDGs.

Objectives

The objectives of the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme are to:

- Encourage young scientists, in particular those from developing countries, to use MAB research, project sites and biosphere reserves in their research;
- Encourage young scientists who already use such sites to undertake comparative studies in other sites in or outside their own country;
- Promote and encourage the exchange of information and experience among a new generation of scientists;
- Strengthen communication of the LAP within the young scientists and strengthen its visibility;
- Involve young scientist in the implementation of the LAP;
- Enhance awareness among young scientists of the role of research in the implementation of the SDGs – in particular when conducted in biosphere reserves.

Criteria

The following criteria are used in the selection of MAB Young Scientists Awards:

- To be eligible, award applications must be made on the MAB Young Scientists Award application form (in English or French) and follow-up technical requirements stated there. The application must be endorsed by the applicant's MAB National Committee*, which may endorse only two applications per year from applicants who are not older than 35 years of age (at the closing date of the application);
- Applications must contain concise information on past and existing research in areas concerned in order to present linkages and avoid duplications and financing of projects already carried-out;
- Priority is given to interdisciplinary projects carried out in biosphere reserves designated under the Man and the Biosphere Programme or potential biosphere reserves and which contribute to the implementation of the LAP and the SDGs. In this regard, applicants shall identify in their applications if and how their research contributes to the research-related actions of the LAP and to the SDGs;
- Applicants from developed countries are eligible for Awards only in exceptional cases or if working in joint partnership with developing countries;
- Awards are set at a maximum of US\$5,000 each;
- Research supported by an Award should be completed within two years;
- Candidates must accept to submit reports of Award-funded research to the MAB Secretariat in Paris and to their MAB National Committees*, and agree to the possibility of UNESCO publishing the results of their research;
- International travel expenses are usually not covered under these Awards.

* For the countries in which a MAB National Committee does not exist or is not fully operational, the National Commission for UNESCO will ensure the selection of candidates according to the above criteria.