

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND FOLLOW-UP

The meeting was a great success, generating an excellent spirit of cooperation amongst all. Some 111 participants (including the organising committee) from 29 countries attended.

Participants ranged from coordinators of well established Biosphere Reserves such as the Rhön, Vosges du Nord/Pfalzerwald TBR, to those from newly designated sites such as Camili (Turkey), and some candidate sites such as Prespa in the FYR of Macedonia. There were also representatives from countries with "old" Biosphere reserves in need of revision such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia and Ukraine.

The plenary meeting set the scene; the "ethnic evening" and the day long field trip to the Wienerwald BR allowed participants to mix and become better acquainted. The six thematic workshops were held twice, with different moderators, case studies and participants. These workshops gave rise to a wide range of ideas and issues for attention by the Biosphere Reserve coordinators, with many common denominators such as:

- the need for good leadership locally;
- the need for moral and if possible financial support from national authorities (a real problem in countries such as Austria, Canada, France and Russia where the Ministries concerned do not provide support). Germany and Sweden provide good support nationally, with biosphere reserves becoming more "fashionable" as a less constraining and financially "light" means of achieving conservation and sustainable development goals;
- the need for good communications with stake holders and decision makers (the new Biosphere Reserve brochure on benefits and oppor-

tunities was welcomed in this context, with many ideas for local language versions).

- the need for a EuroMAB web site to serve as a forum for coordinators and MAB Committees to post their offers for partnerships and cooperation. This came essentially from MAB Germany's offer to provide funding for "standing working groups" of BR coordinators, for example on coastal & marine biosphere reserves, transboundary biosphere reserves, etc.

Some of the major issues and action points resulting from the workshops as reported back to plenary were as follows:

- Measuring success in implementing the biosphere reserve concept: need for an indicator for "the quality of life" to compare within and outside biosphere reserves; revise the periodic review form to include this, plus also criterion of "green credentials"; explore idea of a special periodic review form for transboundary biosphere reserves; expand BRIM to have measures of success.
- Accommodating multiple designations (Ramsar, World Heritage, Plus Natura 2000 for EU countries): need for good knowledge of the implications of all designations, communications amongst all parties involved locally and nationally for better coordination; establish a hierarchy of tasks for all designations to make a priority list over time; need for national law on biosphere reserves in certain post-Soviet countries to give BR a status.
- Participation and public relations: candidate and new biosphere reserves to start with this as priority; biosphere reserves seen as a neutral forum for discussion and conflict resolution (hence validity of MAB training courses); biosphere reserves as instruments to integrate protected areas in broader context (cf. biosphere reserves as tool for the CBD Programme of Work on protected areas in relation to this); moral engagement of all stakeholders in biosphere reserves.
- Learning sites for the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2015): high

interest to develop biosphere reserves as “living classrooms” for DESD; need to create special MABNet web site for biosphere reserves and DESD as a forum to publicise information on DESD activities within biosphere reserves, offers for schools exchanges (France), twinning, etc.; note Vanja Debenec’s (Slovenia) good formula for biosphere reserves “learning to love, learning to live, learning to last”; great interest in the proposed TVE film series and associated technical note and teacher material.

- Financing and quality economies (including labelling produce): Interest to use the proposed logo of the task force on quality economies; need for information exchanges on funding mechanisms (including carbon trading possibilities); limitations of trust funds (interest rates are too low to cover administrative costs, often too dictated by donor interests).
- Turning “old” biosphere reserves into “new generation” ones (applying the periodic review process): need to define sustainability in environmental and human terms; need for zoning to be flexible and not mechanistic; need for publication of functional biosphere reserves; validity of certain “old” biosphere reserves as conservation and research biosphere reserves without the development function and idea of a special periodic review form for these; the Biosphere Reserve handbook to reflect all these ideas.

FOLLOW-UP

The EuroMAB 2005 Austria meeting was designed to enable the people working within biosphere reserves to get to know each other and thereafter to use the EuroMAB network for their own interchanges and cooperative initiatives.

As requested, the Secretariat will help such exchanges in two specific areas:

- Establishing a dedicated EuroMAB web site to serve as a forum for coordinators and MAB Committees to post their offers for partnerships and cooperation amongst different biosphere reserves. This will be coordinated with MAB Germany’s offer to provide funding for “stand-

ing working groups” of BR coordinators, for example on coastal & marine biosphere reserves, transboundary biosphere reserves, etc.

Biosphere Reserve coordinators and managers, MAB National Commissions and Focal Points are invited to contact the MAB Secretariat to provide documents for posting on this site (www.unesco.org/mab under “regional networks” and then “EuroMAB”).

- Establishing a special MABNet web site dedicated as a forum on biosphere reserves as learning sites for the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. This site can be used to publicise information on DESD activities within specific biosphere reserves, offers for schools exchanges, twinning, etc. between biosphere reserves, information on national and regional efforts on DESD which involve biosphere reserves, etc.

Biosphere Reserve coordinators and managers, MAB National Commissions and Focal Points are invited to contact the MAB Secretariat to provide documents for posting on this site (www.unesco.org/mab under “activities” and then “DESD”).

The EuroMAB 2007 meeting will be held in Turkey, giving an opportunity to compile and analyse the cooperation generated through the EuroMAB Biosphere Reserve network.