

### III. INTRODUCTION

#### **OPENING OF THE MEETING BY MR GEORG GRABHERR, CHAIR OF THE AUSTRIAN MAB NATIONAL COMMITTEE.**

He opened the meeting and gave a brief history of the involvement of Austria in the MAB Programme. One highlight in the 1970s was the Obergurgl project on mountain development scenarios. Four biosphere reserves were designated in 1977, corresponding essentially to research sites in line with the criteria of that time. (Gossenköllersee, Gurgler Kamm, Lobau and Neusiedlersee). The renewed concept of the Biosphere Reserve of the Seville Strategy had recently become fashionable in Austria; two biosphere reserves (Grosses Walsertal and the Wienerwald) had been established in consequence and there were plans for another five biosphere reserves within the country driven by the local initiatives. This created new challenges for the Austrian MAB Committee.

The background and the objectives of the meeting were presented by **MS JANE ROBERTSON** of the UNESCO-MAB Secretariat in Paris. She gave a brief recapitulation of the MAB programme in order to remind all participants of the context in which the EuroMAB meeting was being held. She recalled that the origins of the MAB Programme went back to before the UN Conference on the Human Environment. The MAB Programme was in fact launched by UNESCO in 1970 as the first governmental efforts to lay the scientific basis for improving people's relationships with nature. Some 140 countries participated in the Programme through MAB National Committees or focal points. The International Coordinating Council (ICC) consisting of 34 countries set out the MAB research and training agenda, which was then incorporated into the overall two-year UNESCO programme and budget. The ICC met every two years and elected its Bureau (Chair plus five Vice-Chairs, covering all regions of the world). In Europe, the Vice-Chairs are currently Austria and the Russian Federation. The next ICC session will take place in 2006.

MAB's research agenda focussed on the ecological, social and economic dimensions of the loss of biodiversity and how to reduce this loss, as well as on promoting environmental sustainability. MAB's work in capacity building and training included the regional Post-Graduate School for future cadres on Integrated Tropical Forest Management in Africa; the allocation of MAB Young Scientists Awards (ten per year), the Michel Batisse Prize on Biosphere Reserves (new as from 2006); and training workshops on the prevention and management of conflicts on natural resource use in biosphere reserves.

Ms Robertson recalled that one of the "inventions" of MAB is the "Biosphere Reserve" with the idea that countries designate sites for MAB work. The term "Biosphere Reserve" was coined at the time as part of the "branding process" of the MAB Programme to gain international recognition. The name itself was, however, a misnomer, since the "Reserve" term was not meant to imply restrictions or setting aside areas away from human activities. In fact, it was the opposite! Today, biosphere reserves are defined by MAB as "areas of terrestrial and coastal-marine ecosystems which are internationally recognized for promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between people and nature". Biosphere reserves have multiple functions and the zonation system adaptable to different ecological and socio-economic contexts. Experience has shown that while the general functions and zonation pattern for biosphere reserves are fixed, the concept is highly adaptable to local ecological and administrative conditions and to coping with changes. Highly innovative governance arrangements are being made to coordinate all the stakeholders. In general, this means that there is increasingly a Biosphere Reserve "coordinator" rather than a "manager" or "director".

The first biosphere reserves were designated under the MAB Programme in 1976. In March 1995, the International Conference on Biosphere Reserves held in Seville, Spain, gave rise to the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves and the Statutory Framework

for the World Network, both of which were subsequently adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 1995.

The Statutory Framework set out the rules for governing the functioning of the World Network, giving a formal definition, a set of functions and criteria, the designation procedure and the periodic review of biosphere reserves designated over ten years ago, with a view to bringing them up to the revised standards and criteria. It also defined the role of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, itself consisting of 12 experts designated by the UNESCO Director-General, to advise on technical and scientific matters of biosphere reserves. Ms Robertson noted that three current members of this Advisory Committee were present at the EuroMAB meeting: Mr Zbigniew Niewiadomski, Ms Doris Pokorny and Mr Robb Turner.

The Seville Strategy set out goals and objectives for biosphere reserves at the site level, the national level and the regional and international levels. It emphasised how biosphere reserves could be used as tools for implementing the follow-up to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, and now the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2013).

Ms Robertson informed the meeting that, as requested by the MAB ICC, the Secretariat had initiated efforts to make biosphere reserves better known and understood to different target audiences. In 2005, a brochure on "Biosphere reserves: benefits and opportunities" aimed at decision makers had been produced. English and French versions were available: the Secretariat could also provide blank versions for translation and publication in local languages. A Handbook on Biosphere Reserves giving technical guidance on how to implement the provisions of the Statutory Framework was in its first draft, and planned for publication in 2006. It was also envisaged to publish in 2006 a map of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, using the recently GIS-generated map.

Collectively, all biosphere reserves formed a World Network linked by sharing of experience, ideas, and

personnel. As of June 2005, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves consisted of 482 biosphere reserves designated in 102 countries. From the operational point of view, the World Network functions through regional groupings such as AfriMAB, the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network, and IberoMAB (for which a meeting was being held that same week in Xalapa, Mexico, in association with the Conference on World Heritage, Ramsar Wetland and Biosphere Reserve designation).

The EuroMAB network is the largest of the regional networks, with 243 biosphere reserves in 32 countries, including five transboundary biosphere reserves. New biosphere reserves added in **2004** were:

- Pribuzhskoye Polesie, Belarus
- Georgian Bay Littoral, Canada
- Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig Holstein, Germany (extension)
- Selva Pisana, Italy
- Kenozersky, Valdaisky, Russian Federation
- The Karst, Slovenia
- Babia Unit of the Gran Cantabrica Biosphere Reserve, Spain

and in **2005**:

- Wienerwald, Austria
- Bialowieza, Poland (extension)
- Sarali Land between the Rivers Unit and the Raifa Forest Unit of the Great Volzhsko-Kamsky Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation
- Area de Allariz, Gran Canaria, Sierra de Rinçon, Spain
- Los Valles de Omaña y Luna Unit, Alto Bernesga Unit, Los Argüellos Unit of the Gran Cantabrica Biosphere Reserve, Spain
- Kristianstad Vattenrike, Sweden
- Camili, Turkey (new country!)

EuroMAB meetings began in 1986 in Ceske Budejovice in the then Czechoslovakia. In 1994, the French MAB Committee organised a forum in the Cevennes Biosphere Reserve to bring together the Biosphere Reserve managers and coordinators of the EuroMAB region to share information and day

to day experience. Due to the success of this forum, meetings of Biosphere Reserve coordinators were subsequently held in the Tatra Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia) in 1996 and in the Finnish Biosphere Reserves in 1998. The EuroMAB meetings in Cambridge (UK) in 2000 and in Rome (Italy) in 2002 tried to combine the participation of the MAB national Committees and the Biosphere Reserve coordinators to ensure good linkages between the two communities. However, the EuroMAB Biosphere Reserve network was very big and growing and there was a perceived need for more meetings which successfully reflected the needs and interests of all the Biosphere Reserve coordinators.

The format of a EuroMAB meeting in 2005, its objectives and the themes for discussion were identified at the informal EuroMAB meeting held at the occasion of the MAB International Coordinating Council in October 2004. Austria, a newly elected member of the Bureau of the MAB ICC, kindly offered to organise this meeting. The choice of Austria was also favoured by the recent heightened political and scientific interest in biosphere reserves due to the process leading to the establishment of the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve in June 2005. It was decided that the EuroMAB Austria 2005 meeting would be specially designed for a maximum of biosphere reserve coordinators, allowing them to meet, refresh and build friendships, exchange experience and ideas on how to implement the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. The expected outcome was therefore to improve the functioning of the EuroMAB network in general. It was considered that cooperation could take place through thematic groups on topics such as mountain research, transboundary biosphere reserves, South-East Europe, coastal and marine biosphere reserves. The means for cooperation could include joint research projects, twinning and mentorship (i.e. an "experienced" biosphere reserve team advising a "new" biosphere reserve team), exchanges of school groups. Ms Robertson suggested that the different workshop groups concentrate on identifying the common ideas and cooperative efforts rather

than formulating a "wish list" of recommendations. The ideas from the meeting would be forwarded to the MAB ICC at its 19th session in October 2006 and taken into account when considering the next EuroMAB meeting which Turkey had offered to host in 2007.

Finally Ms Robertson drew attention that, in addition to herself, the UNESCO Secretariat staff available to help with the various workshops were Ms Philippe Pypaert of the UNESCO Venice Office (covering in particular South East European countries), Ms Marie Prcholova of the UNESCO Moscow Office (which covers the Russian Federation, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia), plus Mr Georgio Andrian, consultant at the Venice Office.

**INTRODUCTION BY ROBB TURNER**, SAMAB, USA, Member of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. Mr Turner gave a brief history of the involvement of the USA in the MAB Programme, calling attention to the withdrawal of the USA from UNESCO some 20 years ago and their rejoining in 2003. During this period, the 47 biosphere reserves designated in the USA had come under criticism from certain anti-United Nations groups who considered that their designation was a plot of "global governance" taking over private ownership and planning their management and activities from the outside. With this situation, it was necessary to analyse and communicate successful cases of biosphere reserves in other parts of the world. Mr Turner himself had run into a difficult position and had been asked to step down as coordinator of the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve, which had been perhaps too successful for some of the critics.

**INTRODUCTION BY DORIS POKORNY**, Rhön Biosphere Reserve, Germany, Member of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. I have been asked to introduce myself to you at today's EuroMAB-Meeting. My name is Doris Pokorny, I am of German nation-

ality and was trained at university as a landscape ecologist and landscape planner.

Since 1991 I have worked with the Rhön Biosphere Reserve, of which I am since 2002 the deputy head of the Bavarian administration unit. Among other things my main task is the role of a research coordinator. I also deal with international cooperation and am involved in public relations and the organisation of all kinds of events concerning the biosphere reserve.

Since 1989 I have been involved in the MAB programme, when I worked in a high mountain ecosystem research project (MAB-6) in the German Alps, in Berchtesgaden.

I've been involved in biosphere reserves since 1991, when the Rhön got its designation as a trilateral Biosphere Reserve, ranging beyond the jurisdictions of three federal states. On the national level I have been a member of a work group on BRs since 1991 where all 14 biosphere reserves are represented.

On various levels I have since then been involved in setting up criteria, goals and objectives internationally, nationally and on the site level (e.g. in workshops contribution during the Seville conference and Seville +5, the elaboration of national guidelines and criteria for Germany, the contribution to the elaboration of the Rhön Biosphere Reserve management framework and the periodic review ten years later).

I strongly believe in the Biosphere Reserve idea as the most innovative concept in terms of a modern approach of linking conservation with development. It is both smart and intriguing. Biosphere reserves do not only have a technical dimension as a new "category" but rather carry a very powerful philosophy as "special places for people and nature". For those to whom the concept is new, it does take some time to fully understand the notion of it.

The Biosphere Reserve concept has a tremendous potential and it is due to its flexibility that it can be

regarded as a universal approach, almost like a universal tool-box: but everybody has got to use it him/herself. There is no blueprint. However, biosphere reserves can learn and benefit from each other and share their experience.

Since 2002 I have had the honour of being appointed as a member of the UNESCO Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. Twelve experts from all regions of the world with a different professional and cultural background and different nationality have an expert view on this universal, worldwide concept.

The Advisory Committee has to me an important role of advising the ICC in terms of

- ensuring the quality of the label Biosphere Reserve,
- guiding areas, which wish to get the Biosphere Reserve designation, and
- supporting those already designated by recommendations to help them move on successfully.

As far as my main job as a Biosphere Reserve coordinator does allow, I am and will be pleased to help all those who need assistance and advice as to

- the periodic review process,
- old biosphere reserves needing to adapt to new concepts,
- areas considering applying for the title of biosphere reserve.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me: [doris.pokorny@brrhoenbayern.de](mailto:doris.pokorny@brrhoenbayern.de)

EuroMAB to me is like a big family, a lot of people know each other already, and new members are coming in and are most welcome.

Together we want to

- discuss strategies,
- share and exchange experience and information in a way which cannot be done via telecommunication alone,
- find project partners,
- or just meet new friends.

EuroMAB meetings to me are also to some extent like a big family meeting. Everybody knows that each family needs a person in the centre who cares for everybody and tries to make everybody feel comfortable and "happy".

For the EuroMAB family this certainly is Jane Robertson from the MAB Secretariat at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, who together with the whole Secretariat team perfectly helps to facilitate the EuroMAB work. So we certainly do owe her a big THANK YOU for this.

I wish you and us all a good and fruitful meeting.  
Thank you.

### **INTRODUCTION, BY ZBIGNIEW NIEWIADOMSKI**

East Carpathians TBR – Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine, Member of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. He recalled that this trilateral Biosphere Reserve, the first of its kind, was now divided by the EU border, offering new challenges. As an economist, Mr Niewiadomski was interested in the financial challenges of linking nature protection and sustainable development, such that "conservation without money would not just be a conversation". He considered that the Biosphere Reserve concept had much to offer, especially in Europe where there was no more room for new protected areas. He noted that the Biosphere Reserve concept was, however, little known and little understood, and that it was high time to do something to increase visibility and support for biosphere reserves.

Information on the meeting of the Bureau of the MAB International Coordinating Council was given by **VALERY M. NERONOV**, Russian MAB Committee, Member of the Bureau of the MAB International Coordinating Council. This meeting had taken place at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27-29 June 2005 (the full report is available on [http://www.unesco.org/mab/mabic/bureau/2005June/eng/E\\_report.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/mab/mabic/bureau/2005June/eng/E_report.pdf)).

At the 18th session of the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC) (October 25-29, 2004) the following members have been elected into its Bureau: Mr Gonzalo Halffter Salas (Mexico) - Chairperson, and 5 Vice-Chairpersons: Mr Gunter Kock (Austria), Mr Daniel Amlalo (Ghana), Mr Chung Il Choi (Republic of Korea), Mr Valery Neronov (Russian Federation), Mr Nouri Soussi (Tunisia). During June 27-29, 2005 there was the second meeting of the Bureau which was opened by Mr Andras Szollosi-Nagy, Deputy Assistant Director-General of the Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO and Director of the Division of Water Sciences. He welcomed the members of the Bureau and Observer Delegates from 31 countries present at the meeting and reminded participants that during the last meeting of the Executive Board of UNESCO the principal priority of the Natural Sciences Sector for the biennium 2006-2007 "water and associated ecosystems" was reaffirmed. After the 18th session of ICC MAB a very important decision was taken (1 December 2004) that the activities and staff related to Observation from Space and Capacity Building in Earth Sciences, including the International Geosciences Programme (IGCP) joined the Division of Ecological Sciences, and the resulting new unit is now referred to as the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, under the direction of Mr Natarajan Ishwaran, Secretary of the MAB programme. Among priorities Mr Andras Szollosi-Nagy underlined the cooperation between the MAB and IHP programmes, particularly under the ecohydrology main line of action. He recalled that during the 18th session of the ICC MAB the MAB Secretariat was requested to explore possibilities to strengthen MAB and IHP cooperation in improving the management of freshwater ecosystems within urban territories.

After adoption of the Agenda of the Bureau meeting two reports have been presented - by the Chairperson of ICC MAB and by the Secretary of MAB programme. Mr Gonzalo Halffter has informed the Bureau members that the 9th meeting of IberoMAB network is to be held in Xalapa, Mexico in October 2005. In the framework of this meeting an interna-

tional Conference on "Conserving Internationally Designated Areas: Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage and Ramsar Sites in Iberoamerica" will be convened. Mr N. Ishwaran reported on the main activities of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and the MAB Programme since last ICC MAB Bureau meeting in October 2004. Among them he underlined the importance the International Biodiversity Conference organized by the Government of France under the auspices of UNESCO, at UNESCO Headquarters, in January 2005, which was attended by more than 1,500 participants. Three workshops were organized by the Secretariat. Another important meeting was held at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo from 29 May to 2 June 2005. It was devoted to "Conserving Cultural and Biological Diversity: The Role of Sacred Natural Sites and Cultural Landscapes".

Mr Ishwaran recalled that the year 2006 had been proclaimed the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification" by the United Nations General Assembly. An international conference entitled "The Future of Drylands" will be held in Tunis in June 2006 and will provide opportunities to take stock of 50 years of dryland research and to identify gaps in scientific knowledge for future orientations in the MAB Programme for dryland ecosystems.

As regards new initiatives, the Secretary recalled that biosphere reserves would be used as laboratories and learning sites for the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). As requested by the ICC, the Secretariat sent out a Circular Letter early this year to all MAB National Committees and Focal Points, which encouraged MAB National Committees to: a) explore how their biosphere reserves could be integrated into the national and regional plans and strategies for the DESD and b) propose ideas for actions at the international level which could be coordinated by the Secretariat. Another opportunity to raise the role of biosphere reserves in environment conservation will be to use them in cooperation with the Ecological and Environmental Economics Programme at the

Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) as pilot sites for testing approaches to use emerging carbon financing mechanisms for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

A considerable part of the Bureau's work was devoted to an examination of new biosphere reserve proposals. The Bureau examined 24 such proposals, of which one is the nomination of a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in Africa, plus requests for extension of an existing biosphere reserve and a change in zonation of a biosphere reserve, respectively. The Bureau expressed its appreciation to the members of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, which held its meeting also in Paris just prior to the Bureau's meeting, for their excellent work in preparing recommendations for each of these dossiers. After approval of 23 new biosphere reserves, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves now consisted of 482 sites in 102 countries. Among newly approved biosphere reserves there are several that belong to EuroMAB Network. They are the following: Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve, Austria (my congratulations to Austrian authorities with such nice nomination!); the Great Volzhsko-Kamsky Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation; Gran Canaria Biosphere Reserve, Sierra del Rincon Biosphere Reserve, Spain; Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve, Sweden; Camili Biosphere Reserve, Turkey. The Bureau examined the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the periodic review reports for ten biosphere reserves, received by the Secretariat for 2005. Among them from EuroMAB Network there were Belovezhskaya Puscha Biosphere Reserve, Belarus; West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, Estonia approved by the Bureau; one more (Astrakhansky Biosphere Reserve, Russian Federation) was sent back for improvement.

The Bureau paid special attention to recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves concerning the improvement of mechanisms of the periodic review which should significantly increase the quality and functionality of indi-

vidual biosphere reserves and WNRB as a whole. The MAB Bureau considered that the response of biosphere reserves to changes over time constituted in itself a rich research theme for the MAB Programme, which was unique in the scientific community. In this perspective, a pilot MAB project could be initiated soliciting volunteer countries and/or research institutions and extra-budgetary funding.

Very relevant to improving biosphere reserve functions are the matters of national biosphere reserves origin labeling schemes for commercial purposes. After discussion of the reports on this topic the Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a scoping paper to take the issue forward; such a paper could focus on issues, such as experiences of existing national Biosphere Reserve labeling and certification schemes, case studies on introductions of the Biosphere Reserve origin label in a limited number of sites, administrative and financial requirements, legal considerations, and impacts of labelling schemes on the development of quality economies in and around biosphere reserves.

Mr Ishwaran, Secretary of MAB and Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO, introduced the item referring to "Ecological Sciences, MAB and Biosphere Reserves: Proposals for Work Plan 2005-2010". As regards the programme and budget for the period 2006-2007 (33 C/5) which would be considered by the General Conference at its 33rd session in October 2005, Mr Ishwaran stated that there was a budget cut of about 30% compared to the current biennium of 2004-2005 in conformity with budget reductions imposed on programme costs throughout UNESCO, except on those programmes directly linked to principal priorities of UNESCO Sectors. In the case of the Natural Sciences Sector, the principal priority was "water and associated ecosystems" with the Division of Water Sciences taking the lead for its implementation. The Bureau members expressed concern about these budgetary constraints and expressed the wish that no further decreases would occur. The MAB Bureau invited the MAB National

Committees to work closely with the UNESCO National Commissions and other relevant Government Ministries and departments that would constitute Member State delegations to the 172nd Session of the Executive Board and the 33rd session of the General Conference (October 2005) to ensure that the Delegations fully recognize and support the work of Ecological Sciences, MAB and Biosphere Reserves; including considering the opportunity for using biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) that was launched in 2005 under UNESCO's leadership.

Following the recommendations of MAB-ICC at its 18th session, the Secretariat collected information on ongoing and planned future training activities, networks and centers involving biosphere reserves and to make this information available on the MABNet. The Bureau welcomed the diversity of approaches developed in and by biosphere reserves to meet the training needs of various stakeholder groups, and for capturing the opportunities that biosphere reserves provide for training and research for societies at large. In particular, it noted with satisfaction the diversity of UNESCO Chairs, such as the UNESCO Chair on "Sustainable Development and Environmental Education" at the University of the Basque Country, linked to the Urdabai Biosphere Reserve; the establishment of UNESCO-Cousteau Ecotechnie Chair at the Institute of Ecology and Geobotany, Yunnan University (China). The Bureau encouraged the Secretariat to further collect information and to make it available on the MABNet before the next MAB-ICC.

The Secretariat introduced the document on the work of the MAB Urban Group on the Biosphere Reserve concept, biodiversity and water mostly based at results of the relevant workshop in the framework of the International Conference on "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" (UNESCO Headquarters, 24-28 January 2005). Some other meetings have also been held and all these events had called for increased networking among cities

and urban areas on urban ecology, biodiversity and Biosphere Reserve issues; it was suggested that this topic should be taken up at the international workshop "Urban Nature 2006 – Local Governance and Biodiversity Conservation", scheduled for 23-24 February 2006, just prior to the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) World Congress 2006 in Cape Town, to which the MAB Urban Group had been invited to contribute. Other future activities of the MAB Urban Group included the finalization, before the end of its present mandate in September 2006, of the on-going work on drafting criteria for the assessment of Biosphere Reserve proposals with significant urban components, and the elaboration of a draft five-year work programme on possible future urban ecology activities for the consideration of the Bureau.

Following MAB-ICC's decision at its 18th session, the Secretariat had sent out a circular letter to all MAB National Committees and Focal Points, in March 2005, encouraging them to: a) explore how their biosphere reserves could be integrated into the national and regional plans and strategies for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and b) propose ideas for actions at the international level which could be coordinated by the Secretariat. Unfortunately, at the time of the Bureau meeting, there had been a very low response rate. The Bureau recognized that there was a need to create a 'culture for DESD' closely linked to biosphere reserves, which could be built upon by: a) reiterating to MAB National Committees the importance and the intersectoral nature of the DESD, allowing linkages between Ministries for Education, Culture, Environment...; b) encouraging existing structures such as the UNESCO Associated Schools, the UNESCO Chairs to use MAB publications and information material to promote and implement the DESD. In turn, MAB materials such as the desertification kit should be adapted to highlight DESD dimensions; c) UNESCO providing seed funding for two types of meetings: informal meetings at different sites using community representatives and especially young people from biosphere reserves to

talk about their experience related to sustainable development in their local languages; and more formal national meetings for protected area personnel in general. In this regard the Bureau supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that its present and former members be mobilized as necessary as speakers and activity leaders.

During the Bureau meeting the selection of the winner of the 2005 Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation was made. After reviewing the nominations, the Bureau decided to award the 2005 Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation jointly to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Australia) and to Dr Ernesto C. Enkerlin-Hoeflich (Mexico). The Prize ceremony would be organized in Budapest in conjunction with the World Science Forum on 10 November 2005, during which a series of different UNESCO Science Prizes would be awarded, including the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation.

Also the Bureau selected the recipients for the 2006 MAB Young Scientist Awards. In total 78 applications have been reviewed and ten winners have been nominated. Among them, unfortunately, only one belongs to the EuroMAB region: Ms Nadezhda ARYLOVA (Russian Federation) for a project on "Implementation of the ecosystem approach for conservation and restoration of the Saiga antelope population around Chernye Zemli Biosphere Reserve". Besides the Bureau reviewed views and suggestions for the strengthening of the MAB Award scheme and stressed that some more comments from the UNESCO Field Offices and MAB National Committees will be necessary to further strengthen the Award scheme but decided not to make any particular changes to the MAB Young Scientists Award Scheme at the present time.

The Bureau worked together with the Secretariat to set up a scheme in memory of Dr Michel Batisse. After discussions it agreed on the following scheme: Title of the Scheme: Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management;



Award amount: US\$ 6,000 plus international travel and allowances in Paris, France, to present the award winning case study to the MAB-ICC session; Periodicity of Awards: Every two years at the time of the MAB-ICC;

Responsibility for Technical Review of Proposals Received and Recommending the Award Winner for Consideration and Approval by the MAB Bureau: International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves;

Language for Submission of Case Studies: English and French;

Process for Submitting Applications: Each country can submit one case study on Biosphere Reserve management, not exceeding a maximum of 30 pages (20 pages recommended) and appropriately illustrated with scientific data, figures and tables, photographs and other supporting documentation. Case studies must be submitted by 1 January of each year during which a MAB-ICC session is due to be convened. All case studies submitted must be submitted through, and have the endorsement of the respective MAB National Committees, and/or the UNESCO National Commissions of the country concerned.

The relevant circular letter about these matters was already sent to all MAB committees.

As it was mentioned above the Remote Sensing Unit was transferred to the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences. At the Bureau meeting they presented the work performed in setting up the Geographic Information System (GIS) for preparing an interactive map of the World Network Biosphere Reserves, updated and corrected with all biosphere reserves designated until 2004. The GIS will be used, in a first step, to design the Biosphere Reserve map for 2005. The second step will consist in making the GIS available on the Internet as a tool to interact with the MAB community in order to share information from various sources on a single interface. Accordingly the Bureau invited the Secretariat to launch a pilot project, including about six countries and their sites, to test ways and means of preparing a complete data set for biosphere reserves. Such data sets

should include the establishment of baselines that could be used for tracking changes in the status of biosphere reserves and thereby contribute towards the improvement of the effectiveness of the periodic review process. The Bureau would review the progress made in the design and launch of such pilot project at its next meeting. In the meantime, the Bureau recommended preparing a circular letter to MAB National Committees to inform them about the pilot project and to ask them to cooperate in providing relevant information for improving the database of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. In this connection I believe EuroMAB country-members should use this opportunity and submit proposals to the MAB Secretariat for relevant pilot studies.

In concluding I should mention also the success of the 33rd session of UNESCO General Conference (October 3-21, 2005) at which many delegations underlined the importance of the further development of the MAB Program and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves for achieving the 2015 targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2010 target of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss. So, we have to strengthen our collective efforts within EuroMAB region to make our Biosphere Reserves the best models for implementing these tasks and other ones put by ICC MAB Bureau and I am sure this meeting will make great contribution to this process.

The “Perth Declaration” on Global Change Affecting Mountain Biosphere Reserves was presented by the host country – Austria by **GEORG GRABHERR**, Chair MAB Austria. This was based on a meeting “Supporting Science in Biosphere Reserves – The EU-UNESCO Cooperation: The Glochamore Programme and the RP<sup>2</sup> (Real Projects in Real Reserves) Initiative”, an International Open Science Conference on ‘Global Change in Mountain Regions’, which had taken place in Perth, Scotland (United Kingdom), from 2 to 6 October 2005

### THE ‘PERTH DECLARATION’

We, the participants of the International Open Science Conference on ‘Global Change in Mountain Regions’, and in particular representatives of National Committees of UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, managers of Mountain Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, members of the scientific community working on global change issues, and representatives of international organizations, assembled in Perth, Scotland (United Kingdom) from 2 to 6 October 2005:



**RECOGNIZING** the need for further efforts to restore and preserve sustainable conditions for human well-being and nature in a changing world according to multi-lateral directives, agreements and frameworks relevant to sustainable mountain development such as Chapter 13 of Agenda 21, the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation and in particular Paragraph 42, the Mountain Partnership, the work programme on Mountain Biodiversity and Article 8 (j) on Traditional

Knowledge, Innovations and Practices of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Chapter 27 of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and other relevant international instruments;

**EXPRESSING** our gratitude to the European Commission (FP6) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for having provided funds from 2003 to 2005 for the ‘Global Change and Mountain Regions (GLOCHAMORE)’ project for a series of five international workshops and the Open Science Conference in Perth to detect signals and to address consequences of global change in mountain regions, and especially in Mountain Biosphere Reserves;

**RECALLING** that the five international workshops addressed pertinent global change themes as follows:

- Global Change Research in Mountain Biosphere Reserves (Entlebuch, Switzerland, 10 to 13 November 2003);
- Global Environmental and Social Monitoring (Vienna, Austria, 9 to 11 May 2004);
- Projecting Global Change Impacts in Mountain Biosphere Reserves (L’Aquila, Italy, 29 November to 2 December 2004);
- Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management in Mountain Regions (Granada, Spain, 14 to 17 March 2005);
- Process Studies Along Altitudinal Gradients to Serve Conservation and Sustainable Development (Samedan, Switzerland, 27 to 30 July 2005);

**FURTHER RECALLING** the volumes of proceedings emanating from four workshops mentioned above, which are collections of papers presented by and for the global change scientific community and Mountain Biosphere Reserve managers, thus providing a valuable source of reference for GLOCHAMORE.

**APPRECIATING** that the workshops have benefited from the substantial and organizational support of the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI), the Department of Conservation Biology, Vegetation and Landscape Ecology of the University of Vienna (CVL), the individual local organizers and the consortium members of the European Commission funded project 'Global Change and Mountain Regions (GLOCHAMORE)';

**FURTHER APPRECIATING** that the Open Science Conference on 'Global Change in Mountain Regions' has benefited from the substantial and organizational support of the Centre for Mountain Studies at Perth College (CMS), and the GLOCHAMORE consortium members including MRI;

**RECOGNIZING** that global change, and in particular global warming, has and will have serious impacts on policies, the biophysical environment, and the socio-economic conditions and livelihoods of people, particularly in fragile mountain environments, but also in the adjacent lowland areas;

**BEING CONCERNED** that global change affects inter alia species composition and diversity, habitats and the occurrences of rare and endangered species as well as invasive species in high altitude mountain areas, thus jeopardizing the conservation value of mountain protected areas and the function and services of their wider environments;

**FURTHER BEING CONCERNED** that global change will modify the storage, release and distribution regimes of snow, ice and waters in mountain regions, thus jeopardizing lower altitude settlements through glacial lake outbursts, rockfalls or debris flows, and affecting freshwater supplies for the lowlands;

**ACCEPTING** that global change occurs at rates unprecedented in recorded human history for which highland dwellers must develop adaptation strategies in various economic sectors including agriculture, forestry, pastoralism, tourism and recreation so

as to ensure equitable livelihoods for lowland and highland communities;

**EMPHASIZING** that global change processes can best be understood through inter-disciplinary and integrated studies involving natural and social scientists as well as input from protected area managers who often have long-term experience, institutional mandates and functions;

**NOTING** that many Mountain Biosphere Reserves within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves have been designated as 'living laboratories' for their conservation value, scientific infrastructure and role in promoting sustainable development for local people, develop long-term time series and data sets on species, land cover and land uses, and maintain records of human impacts on mountain environments needed to study global change impacts;

**COMMITTING** to the eleven research principles that have been developed by the Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries (KFPE), namely to (1) decide on the objectives together, (2) build up mutual trust, (3) share information, (4) develop networks, (5) share responsibility, (6) monitor and evaluate the collaboration, (7) disseminate the results, (8) apply the results, (9) share profits equitably, (10) increase research capacity, and (11) build on achievements;

**CALL UPON** national and international entities and authorities, protected area and site managers, and the scientific community working on global change impacts in particular in mountain areas, to consider and implement, where appropriate, the results of the GLOCHAMORE international workshops and the Open Science Conference;

**EXPRESS** our commitment to continue work initiated during the GLOCHAMORE Project, in particular as the impact of global change on mountain regions can only be assessed with scientific rigour over an extended period of time;

**DECLARE** that we, the representatives and managers of Mountain Biosphere Reserves in association with the respective National Committees of the UNESCO Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), wish to continue collaboration with the scientific community and other relevant stakeholders on global change issues related, but not exclusively restricted, to the following Mountain Biosphere Reserves, several of which have also been designated as World Heritage Sites, and have constituted a global research network during the current GLOCHAMORE Project Phase:

Australia: Kosciuszko Biosphere Reserve;  
 Austria: Gossenköllesee Biosphere Reserve and Gurgler Kamm Biosphere Reserve;  
 Canada: Waterton Biosphere Reserve;  
 Chile: Araucarias Biosphere Reserve;  
 China: Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve;  
 Colombia: Cinturón Andino Biosphere Reserve;  
 Germany: Berchtesgaden Biosphere Reserve;  
 India: Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve;  
 Kenya: Mount Kenya Biosphere Reserve;  
 Kyrgyzstan: Issyk Kul Biosphere Reserve;  
 Mongolia: Uvs Nuur Basin Biosphere Reserve;  
 Morocco: Oasis du Sud Marocain Biosphere Reserve;  
 Peru: Huascarán Biosphere Reserve;  
 Russian Federation: Katunskiy Biosphere Reserve; Sikhote Alinskiy Biosphere Reserve and Teberda Biosphere Reserve;  
 South Africa: Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve;  
 Spain: Sierra Nevada Biosphere Reserve;  
 Sweden: Lake Torne Biosphere Reserve;  
 Switzerland: Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve and Swiss National Park and Biosphere Reserve;  
 United States of America: Denali Biosphere Reserve; Glacier Biosphere Reserve and Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve;

**FURTHER DECLARE** that we, the global change scientists, will link available knowledge systems and conduct research in the above-mentioned Mountain Biosphere Reserves, focusing on monitoring, process studies and modeling, thus providing scientific advice to Mountain Biosphere Reserve managers

that will help to enhance the overall management of these sites in the light of global change processes on topics related, but not limited to species composition and diversity, glaciers, regional climate, land use and land cover, freshwater, hazards, grazing, tourism, conflict mitigation and governance, and applying scientific methods, such as the 'Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments' (GLORIA), the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS), the Mountain Invasion Research Network (MIREN); and Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring (BRIM) and other relevant socio-economic methodologies;

Invite relevant national and international funding agencies, the private sector, as well as regional and international intergovernmental organizations such as the European Commission and UNESCO, to provide funding for continued collaboration between the scientific community and Mountain Biosphere Reserve managers so as to provide scientifically sound information on the effects and mitigation of global change impacts on mountain environments and the sustainable management of mountain and adjacent lowland communities.

In the discussion following this presentation, Mr Engelbert Ruoss invited the MAB Secretariat to consider revising the Biosphere Reserve nomination form to reflect less the biodiversity conservation dimensions and more the social and economic aspects of Biosphere Reserve functioning. Ms Jane Robertson noted that in preparing the Biosphere Reserve Handbook (due for 2006), attention had been drawn to the relative mismatch between the Statutory Framework, the "legal text" which gave emphasis to Biosphere reserves as a form of special protected area, and the Seville Strategy, the "action plan" which was more philosophical, emphasizing the social and economic dimensions of Biosphere reserves. A revision of the Biosphere Reserve nomination form could be envisaged to give a more balanced appreciation of the functions of candidate Biosphere reserves.