



United Nations
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Cultural Organization



Man and
the Biosphere
Programme

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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

Thirty-first session

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room II (Fontenoy Building)

17 – 21 June 2019

ITEM 15 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: MAB Youth Activities and MAB Youth Forum 2019

1. Within the overall framework of the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021), aimed to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programmes affecting them, the organization of the 2017 MAB Youth Forum has marked a turning point in MAB's engagement with youth. The 1st MAB Youth Forum was organized to offer an opportunity for young people who care about the special territories in which they live in to become active in the MAB Programme and to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, in line with the Lima Action Plan. On this occasion, participants agreed on a shared vision for the future of youth in biosphere reserves and stated it in their final declaration, which is provided in Annex 1.
2. The 1st MAB Youth Forum has set many youth related activities in motion:
 - a. The first regional forum - the IberoMAB Youth Forum – was held at the Bosques de Paz TBR (Ecuador and Peru) in December 2018, with 89 participants who elaborated the final declaration given in Annex 2;
 - b. Workshops on, and organized by, MAB Youth have been held during the 2019 EuroMAB Conference in Dublin (final outcomes given in Annex 3 and 4);
 - c. A first project targeting MAB Youth, funded by the Flemish government of Belgium, will be launched in 2019, aiming to improve the socio-economic development of young people living in BRs in the LAC Region;
 - d. From 6 to 9 September 2019, the Rhön BR will host the first German MAB Youth Forum in which around 80 participants are expected to take part;
 - e. Several countries will organize a national MAB Youth Forum in the near future, and various national or local MAB Youth Associations have already been created.
3. In September 2019, the Changbaishan BR (North of China) will host the second global MAB Youth Forum, during which strong emphasis will be put on biodiversity conservation (see the first announcement in Annex 5). This Forum will be followed by activities targeting MAB Youth Leaders in view of their involvement in the debates of CBD COP 15 and further commitment to actions related to the post-2020 Agenda.
4. The MAB Council is invited to discuss and share its youth related experiences, lessons learnt and good practices, and to provide its guidance and recommendations regarding the strengthening of youth participation in the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Members of the Council are also invited to consider the possibility to support the participation of young delegates of their respective country in the above mentioned activities, in particular in the second global MAB Youth Forum and follow-up activities leading to the CBD COP 15 and, beyond, to the post 2020 Agenda.



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2017 MAB
YOUTH
FORUM



UNESCO MAB Youth Forum

Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy,

18-22 September 2017

Final Declaration

Preamble

We, the MAB Youth, 282 representatives from 142 Biosphere Reserves in 85 countries, gathered in Po Delta Biosphere Reserve during 18-23 September 2017 at the first MAB Youth Forum; Thankful to had the chance to attend a highly interactive and participatory forum, with over 50 workshop in 8 locations within the Po Delta BR.

We would like to thank the people of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, organizers, sponsors participants, hosts, and volunteers for their hospitality and commitment to making us feel at home. This forum has been an amazing opportunity to share and collaborate with our peers to form a collective vision for the future of youth in Biosphere Reserves. Despite the fact that we come from diverse backgrounds we are united on the objectives and actions for the Biosphere Reserve, World Network of Biosphere Reserves and to the MAB programme.

Declaration

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we ask all Biosphere Reserves to commit to creating attractive and long-term employment opportunities linked to the values of Biosphere Reserves (in particular conservation of Biodiversity and habitat restoration), involving local enterprises and cooperating with local stakeholders. In particular, we suggest:

- To create hubs and incubators to support sustainable business ideas in each Biosphere Reserve;
- To create an open database to share information concerning employment opportunities connected with Biosphere Reserve values;
- Develop training programmes in order to develop youth skills and employability in Biosphere Reserves.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we ask all Biosphere Reserves to commit to spreading scientific and traditional knowledge connected to the values of Biosphere Reserves, to raise awareness; sense of belonging and guarantee its transfer to future generations.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we commit ourselves and ask BRs to implement these actions:

- To organize periodical events on cultural, ecological, economic topics involving local stakeholders and communities;
- To organize summer camps, workshops and conferences for training young people to be ambassadors of their Biosphere Reserve.

We ask all Biosphere Reserves to develop relationships with educational institutions, at all levels and within and out with Biosphere Reserve borders. In particular:

- To develop specific curriculum and programmes, in schools and universities dealing with Biosphere Reserve characteristics, values and tools;
- To develop cooperation between research institutions and local economic organizations in order to improve applied research and internships.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates We recommend that the Network of Biosphere Reserves improve the exchange of information, ideas, knowledge and good practices among Biosphere Reserves, especially through tools that stimulate the involvement of young people. In particular, we suggest:

- The organization of periodic, regional youth forums;
- To develop and maintain a digital open access Biosphere Reserve platform (e.g. APP webinar meetings and on-line courses).
- To create Thematic Networks: such as, Biosphere Reserve School and youth clubs programmes, working to build a network among schools and within communities dealing with BR themes.

We ask to promote youth exchange and cooperation in realizing concrete projects, which are connected with Biosphere Reserves and Biosphere Reserve networks. Such as volunteering programmes in Biosphere Reserves and exchange visits between countries.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we commit ourselves to create hosting projects for young people in Biosphere Reserves such as Airbnb and couch surfing.



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We call for the facilitation of access to regional and inter-regional funding to support young people's long-term projects. Through:

- Establishing a "funding expert" or a "funding advisory board" to find funding and raise resources;
- Promoting the construction of a MAB crowdfunding platform;
- Verifying the possibility to create a Biosphere Reserve carbon certificate to sell to enterprises.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we ask the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC) to improve communication, at all MAB levels, in order to be effective with young people:

- Promote a MAB survey in all BRs in order to get data on youth involvement;
- Incorporate youth perspective in MAB communication guidelines and toolkits by revising existing and future documents;
- Create an annual MAB Youth Award for the best project;
- Create specific summary of official MAB documents in "youth friendly language".

We ask the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC) to spread globally the knowledge and awareness of the vision, mission and activities of the MAB programme. We propose to:

- Engage public figures as ambassadors to represent the MAB programme values;
- Organize a periodic MAB expo.

We, as MAB Youth Forum delegates commit ourselves to develop and promote interactive tools for sharing information about the MAB programme at all levels (for examples; social media, story-telling, comics).

We recommend the involvement of youth in MAB governance, by selecting "youth representatives" at all levels, especially in crucial moments of the decision process.

We ask the ICC to include youth as observer members and encourage countries to include mandatory youth in national delegations, national MAB Committees, and in Biosphere Reserve governance.

Finally, we commit ourselves to report back to our BR and young people of our territory what the MAB Youth Forum participant 2017 have learned, and we ask UNESCO to establish a platform and a mechanism to monitor the MAB Youth Forum 2017 Action Plan and submit a periodic report.



DECLARATION OF THE FIRST IBEROMAB YOUTH FORUM

We, the young people of the IberoMAB Network, 89 representatives of 43 Biosphere Reserves in 23 countries,

Meeting in the Bosques de Paz Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador and Peru) from 5 to 8 December 2018 in the First IberoMAB Youth Forum, with the desire to enable the IberoMAB youth to engage in horizontal, inclusive and transparent governance related to social, political, economic, educational, cultural and environmental issues, where our participation will help mitigate the problems and needs faced by the youth of biosphere reserves, in cooperation with the entities concerned,

Expressing our gratitude to UNESCO through its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, the MAB national focal points and the governments of Ecuador and Peru, the Mancomunidad Bosque Seco, the Bosque Seco (Ecuador) and Noroeste Amotapes-Manglares Biosphere Reserves (Peru), which make up the Bosques de Paz Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the Paltas canton, to the National University of Loja through the Zapotepamba Binational Technical Training Center and the organizing team for their hospitality and commitment,

Acknowledging with special thanks the Government of Flanders of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Abertis Foundation, the Government of Spain through the Autonomous Authority for National Parks (OAPN) and the Spanish Cooperation in Ecuador, Itaipu Binational, the San Francisco University of Quito, Galapagos Conservation Trust and all those who through their financial support made this event possible,

Recognizing that this forum has provided an excellent opportunity to share and collaborate with the youth of IberoMAB biosphere reserves, and allowed us to form a collective vision for the future,

Understanding that although we come from different origins, we agree on the objectives and actions of the biosphere reserves, the IberoMAB Network and the MAB Programme,

Propose the following actions oriented within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Lima Action Plan for the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2016-2025), the Santa Marta Agreements of the XVIII Meeting of the IberoMAB Network (Colombia, May 2018) and the final Declaration of the UNESCO MAB Youth Forum (Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, September 2017) and adopt the present Declaration:

1. Create the Ibero-American and Caribbean Biosphere Reserves Youth Network.
2. Establish multidisciplinary work teams under the three functions of the biosphere reserves (conservation, development and logistic support) that are balanced in terms of interculturality and gender.
3. Support the creation of proposals and action plans at the national level that strengthen the development of an effective agenda in the biosphere reserves.
4. Select a in a democratic manner and with parity criteria a youth representative from each biosphere reserve and one representative by country, to participate directly in the governance bodies of the biosphere reserves and the IberoMaB Network.
5. Request the official presentation of our network in UNESCO mechanisms.
6. Create a virtual platform for IberoMAB youth to include information on projects, financing, education opportunities, exchanges and research to address the challenges facing youth.
7. Follow up and support through joint participation the work of the IberoMAB youth network by UNESCO.
8. Generate communication material to disseminate the importance and work of the IberoMAB Biosphere Reserves.
9. Promote the use of virtual platforms and social media as empowerment mechanisms to transmit information about biosphere reserves and the contributions of youth.
10. Promote the exchange of knowledge among young people through biennial participatory meetings and virtual seminars at all levels.
11. Contribute and promote traditional ecological knowledge and good practices in biosphere reserves.
12. Be part of initiatives that promote the development of the Biosphere Reserve brand in the different countries that make up IberoMAB.
13. Influence institutions in the generation of employment opportunities and entrepreneurship for the youth of the IberoMAB biosphere reserves, which are in accordance with the values of the MAB Programme and the Sustainable Development Goals.
14. Support actions and initiatives that condemn crimes against the environment and the integrity of those who defend it; so as to ensure the protection of natural resources.

8 December 2018, Catacocha, Ecuador

Empowering youth & the Mab Youth Forum

Progressing the objectives of the MAB Youth Forum, and strengthening opportunities for Youth empowerment through involvement in the governance & management of biospheres

3rd April 2019



EuroMAB Conference DUBLIN 2019

World network of biosphere reserves

Local Actions for Global Challenges

MaB YOUTH FORUM 2017

- An unique event for youth and an opportunity to establish contacts, exchange experiences and elaborate proposals for the future.

- **EMPOWERING YOUTH**

Young people should not be kept isolated from the MAB Programme and the governance of the Biosphere Reserves, only attending events or participating in activities specifically targeting MAB Youth.

They must be given a real opportunity to be considered more consistently in the governance and in the activities of the MAB Programme and of their Biosphere Reserves.



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Practical actions identified

- Designate delegates at all levels of MaB Programme
- Train them, let them see how the MAB governance works so they can get involved in meetings and decision-making process, at all levels
- Create a platform to connect youth leaders from all over the world and allow them to build projects together



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Big ideas identified

- Use a language accessible to youth
- Improve the link between schools and Biosphere Reserves
- Providing them financial support and give them confidence
- Involve them in the production of guidelines and management plans



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Next steps

- Organisation and preparation of a **second MAB Youth Forum**
 - > selection of representatives from Biosphere Reserves within the EuroMAB network
 - > preparation of the workshops content, involving the MaB Youth Network
- Outputs of this 2nd MYF will be used in the negotiations of the COP15 of the CBD



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Local Actions for Global Challenges

Best practices in engaging young people

Case studies to inspire each other

4th April 2019



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MaB YOUTH FORUM 2017

- An unique event for youth and an opportunity to establish contacts, exchange experiences and elaborate proposals for the future.
- **ENGAGING YOUTH**
 - **Raise awareness, sense of belonging and guarantee its transfer to future generations through the organisation of periodical events involving local communities and stakeholders**
- **Organisation of summer camps, workshops and conferences to train people to be ambassadors of their BRs.**
- **Importance of an effective communication**



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Case studies presented

- Youth Association MY Delta, Po Delta BR
- Youth Association Co'MaB, France
- MaB Youth Camp in Monviso BR
- Junior Rangers Programme in Swabian Alb BR
- Outdoor Smartphone Games to Foster Understanding of Biodiversity, Germany
- Young Environmentalist Awards & Youth Summit Event, EcoUnesco Dublin



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Practical actions identified

- Develop a network among regional/national BRs mentors to facilitate youth engagement
- Organise meetings to connect similar objectives between BRs
- Develop more activities related to nature at every school grade
- Equip pupils and students with MAB-related kits to allow them discover their environment / familiarise them to the MAB values



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Big ideas identified

- Listening to youth expectations before implementing activities targeting them
- Creating emotional « ah-ah » moments to connect young people with nature
- Incorporating youth perspective in MaB communication guidelines and toolkit



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