

## 1.36 The World Network of Biosphere Reserves

RECOGNIZING that the conservation of biological diversity is integral to the safeguarding of cultural values and that biocultural regions form sound basic units for conservation practices and for sustainable use of resources;

BELIEVING that the Biosphere Reserve concept is an innovative and practical model for the implementation of significant elements of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions concerned with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and of Agenda 21;

BELIEVING ALSO that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves should expand and that the Biosphere Reserve concept should be implemented more widely;

WELCOMING the efforts of governments and non-governmental organizations to apply the principles of Biosphere Reserves by designating other types of model areas and by devising mechanisms to integrate protected areas with the surrounding region in cooperation with the private sector and local people;

RECOGNIZING that training, education and the promotion of public awareness on biological diversity are essential to successful research and long-term monitoring, and that these contribute to productive community involvement in bioregional planning and sustainable use of resources;

RECOGNIZING that Resolution 2.4 of the November 1995 UNESCO General Conference endorsed a new vision of Biosphere Reserves through the Statutory Framework of the World Network and the Seville Strategy, which recommends specific actions at the international, national and individual reserve levels in order to facilitate an appropriate relationship between conservation and development;

RECOGNIZING that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, as implemented through the Seville Strategy, offers an excellent means by which to conserve biological diversity, to safeguard community cultural values and to explore and demonstrate inter-sectoral approaches to land-use planning and sustainable development at the level of biogeographical regions;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that many Biosphere Reserves already established throughout the world are not managed or funded in such a way that they can carry out, to the fullest extent, their basic mandate of serving as examples for the implementation of effective conservation practices and sustainable use of natural resources; that optimum use is not made of the potential and opportunities offered by the World Network of Biosphere Reserves for training, education, public involvement and incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge; and that many are not satisfactorily integrated with respective national and international scientific research communities so that they can be important contributions to increasing knowledge of biological diversity, global environmental change and long-term natural resources management;

SUPPORTING especially the emphasis on the involvement of local communities in the promotion of sustainable development, including education, conservation and research within the Biosphere Reserve concept;

RECOGNIZING that IUCN, through its members, Commissions and Secretariat, can contribute to the effective implementation of the Statutory Framework of the World Network and the Seville Strategy;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. COMMENDS UNESCO for its leadership and foresight in preparing the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves;
2. CALLS UPON all IUCN members, all Commissions and the Director General to encourage the expansion and strengthening of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves by cooperating with UNESCO-MAB (Man and the Biosphere), National MAB Committees and individual reserve managers in the implementation of the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves;
3. ENCOURAGES the appropriate IUCN Commissions to assist the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to exchange experience relating to the development of scientific data and bioregional approaches to ecosystem management:

4. INVITES the Director General, IUCN National Committees and appropriate members of IUCN to work with the MAB National Committees in each participating country to complete or update the management plan for each Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the Seville Strategy, and to work energetically with the MAB National Committees toward securing adequate funding for MAB activities and their integration with national and international conservation and scientific programmes;
5. ENCOURAGES the World Commission on Protected Areas and UNESCO-MAB to build stronger links in support of the implementation of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework;
6. RECOMMENDS funding bodies, including the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility, to take better advantage of the opportunity provided by Biosphere Reserves as a highly efficient and effective means for the implementation and evaluation of sustainable practices and the conservation of biological diversity at the local level as well as that of biogeographical regions.