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Programa
sobre el Hombre
y la Biosfera



MEETING OF THE WORLD NETWORK OF ISLAND AND COASTAL AREA BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN MENORCA (SPAIN)



Gathered in Menorca on 13th-15th of February 2012, representatives of the biosphere reserves of Jeju Island, Menorca, Shinan Dadohae, St Kitts & Nevis, Yakushima, Komandorskiye Islands, Nanji Islands, Siberut Islands, Palawan, Juan Fernandez Islands, Islands of the Gulf of California, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, La Palma, Madeira (Santana) and representatives of the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of Spain and the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO,

Consider that:

Island and coastal areas biosphere reserves are very diverse and heterogeneous in their natural and socio-economic reality, governance, and in their development status. However, they have common and specific problems that can be addressed in a common way.

Plans should be consolidated for a long-term independent monitoring and networking on biodiversity and socio-economic aspects of biosphere reserves and their evolution facing climate change. Before that, standardized indicators and protocols must be developed.

Islands and coastal areas, especially small islands in the Caribbean and the Asia-Pacific region are the most vulnerable areas to climate change. The main problems caused by climate change are poverty, natural disasters, depopulation, loss of traditional culture and the detrimental effect of invasive species, which alter the balance of the marine and terrestrial island ecosystems and cause irreversible loss of biodiversity.

The efficient management of waste, energy, water and food self-sufficiency are key to managing the island territories. In these issues we find the greatest challenges as well as opportunities of sharing experiences.

The enhancement of natural and cultural heritage of islands promotes local capacity to contribute to sustainable development. Success experiences have been exposed referring to ecotourism, valorisation of the historical heritage, starlight observation and the creation of identifying labels or certifications of local products to involve consumers and visitors in conservation issues.

Partnerships between various government bodies with the participation of private and social stakeholders have been exemplary for the effective coordination of the different authorities with responsibility on the biosphere reserves management.

Social participation in the planning and management processes is essential to ensure the sustainability of biosphere reserves. However, and to enhance social active and effective participation, it is necessary to make an effort to establish communication tools and strategies to improve information on the problems and their conservation measures.

The training of managers, social workers, tour guides, wards, producers and the local population is a key element in the management of biosphere reserves. Specific needs for training in areas such as good agricultural practices, good fishing practices, forestry, mitigation measures for climate change and adaptation measures to climate change have been identified.



The strategy of communication, awareness and education should emphasize on the younger generations, especially schoolchildren, since it is a sector that has lost many of the traditional knowledge and practices vital to the sustainability and because the sector will inherit the current management and influence the future.

Membership in the MAB Programme with the support of UNESCO generates credibility, pride and enthusiasm in local communities. Biosphere reserves have become a tool for dialogue and social cohesion to be a strength to influence the commitment of the private sector to promote sustainability.

Taking into account the above considerations, we adopt the following

CONCLUSIONS,

The globalization of environmental problems and the need to improve the effectiveness of their management, makes it even more necessary to address these problems in a network collaboration, cooperation and transfer of experiences between distant places.

After creating a World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves during the 21st International Coordination Council of the MAB Programme in Jeju in 2009, we decide today to establish two technical headquarters to lead this network. One office in Jeju focused on climate change issues and another office in Menorca focused on sustainable development issues, to work together at the global scale and to create the websites in order to coordinate the network.

This network is formed by the representatives of the biosphere reserves present at the meeting and will be open to all islands and coastal biosphere reserves that want to join it.

The first action to perform is to agree on a draft work plan between the two headquarters before July 2012 that will be presented formally at the next ICC of the MAB Programme in Paris in July 2012.

With all the information gathered in this meeting, a publication on successful experiences in islands and coastal biosphere reserves will be prepared with the collaborations of the participating biosphere reserves in this meeting.

During the next World Conservation Congress, to be held from 6 to 15 September 2012 in Jeju, there will be the formal presentation of this publication as well as a global project for the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves in order to seek the necessary extrabudgetary funds for the network activities.

In Maó, 15th February 2012