

**2019 MAB YOUTH FORUM DECLARATION**  
**"Committed to Biodiversity"**  
**Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve, China**  
**(Final draft)**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the MAB Youth, 176 representatives from 82 countries, gathered in Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve, Jilin Province, China, during 14-18 September 2019 at the 2nd MAB Youth Forum, are thankful to have had the chance to attend a highly interactive and participatory forum, co-organized by the UNESCO Beijing Office and the Changbai Mountain Protection and Development District Management Committee, in partnership, for the first time with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and with the support of the MAB China National Committee.

Changbaishan was the first Chinese Biosphere Reserve included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 1979 which, by hosting this forum, offered us an opportunity to appreciate its dynamism and strengths in contributing to the construction of the ecological civilization and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in China and globally.

We would like to thank the people of the Changbaishan 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 on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Post 2020 framework, as well as the future of youth in Biosphere Reserves. Despite the fact that we come from diverse backgrounds we are united on the objectives and actions on biodiversity, Biosphere Reserves, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and to the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

**A. As an integral part of the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves:**

We welcome the 2017 MAB Youth Forum Declaration and the IberoMAB Youth Forum declaration, and are aware of the progress that has been done in the inclusion of young people's voice in the MAB Programme and in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, following the organization of the 1st MAB Youth Forum (Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, September 2017), but are conscious that we must continue our hard work to ensure that the requests reflected in the previous declarations can come to reality. For this reason, we:

1. Express once again the importance to:

a) Ensure the participation of young people in the governance and management of biosphere reserves and MAB national committees, through the appointment of young representatives who can take part in decision-making processes at a local, national and international level (International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme, Regional Networks, etc.).

b) Provide training and capacity building activities to improving management abilities of Biosphere Reserves as tools for sustainable socio-economic development of the local population, and request to create 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.

c) Improve cooperation among youth, Biosphere Reserves, NGOs, private sector, and scientists at the local, national and international levels.

d) Create a platform for exchange among young people and Biosphere Reserves and exploring more possibilities of international networking of biosphere reserves to share best practices and build cooperation.

e) Increase the communication and visibility of the MAB Programme and develop accessible and comprehensible Biosphere Reserve materials.

As MAB Youth gathered at this forum, we would like to express:

- The importance of facilitating the access to financial support for the youth community.
- To have a fluent communication with the MAB Programme, to get support, technical advice, and most up-to-date information.

We the MAB Youth community, commit to a zero tolerance policy on all forms of harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender/gender identity, nationality, age or disability.

## **B. Committed to being actors of change in the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework:**

### **We recognize that:**

- Biosphere reserves play a key role in conserving biodiversity around the world and in achieving the objectives of the CBD.
- For the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be truly transformative, a fundamental shift of values in society is of critical importance, including addressing our unsustainable consumption and production habits and existing power inequalities.
- Nature conservation is not efficient without ensuring intergenerational equity, gender equality, respect for human rights and the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Children and youth are among the most vulnerable groups to the effects of environmental degradation and our voice needs to be heard in decision-making processes on the environment.
- Support for youth participation is still very limited, and that more substantial support is needed to ensure meaningful participation.
- In order to achieve the objectives of the CBD, which are closely linked to the objectives and vision of the MAB Programme, there is a need to acknowledge the linkages between nature and culture and conserve biodiversity and cultural diversity together.
- The theme of COP15 - "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth" is very closely aligned with the core values of the MAB Programme

## **We call for a Post-2020 framework that:**

- Is binding, realistic, science-based, and puts a strong emphasis on implementation, ensuring efficient implementation from the time of adoption.

Promotes enabling conditions including:

- biodiversity and heritage education, such as through the integration of biodiversity into school curricula at all levels, including informal education; including through the promotion of interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange
- resource mobilization, knowledge-sharing, and technology transfer especially from developed countries to developing countries, many of which contain genetic resources
- good and equitable governance and legal frameworks in place to implement at all levels
- capacity-building and support for revising and updating NBSAPs at all scales
- ensures fair and equitable benefit-sharing.
- is inclusive and participatory and in particular,
- empowers and engages indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth in all phases of the planning and decision making process
- raises local community awareness and capacity to participate
- appropriately recognizes and secures ICCAs - territories of life, as they are existing opportunities for CBD implementation
- acknowledges and protects the key role of indigenous and local knowledge in achieving the objectives of the convention
- recognizes the common but differentiated responsibilities of state and non-state actors, taking into account the different levels of impact and capacities of countries
- scales up communication efforts and prioritizes inclusive and timely communication through both traditional and new media channels, recognizing the role of new media for young people
- places a particular focus on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women and girls
- Takes effective measures to ensure mainstreaming across all departments of government, economy, and civil society

## **We as MAB Youth in the Post-2020 Framework**

- Will have a crucial role in the implementation of the Post-2020 Framework at the local levels
- As young people, we have the tools and means to raise awareness on the targets of the Post-2020 Framework and to support with implementation, capacity building, and non-formal education
- We want to be included in the consultation processes towards the COP15 and beyond at our local and national levels
- We welcome the partnership between the MAB Youth and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, and request UNESCO to facilitate the continuous collaboration, specifically with regard to enhance the role of MAB Youth in the CBD process

## **We, the MAB Youth Community commit:**

- To mobilize our networks to actively engage in the development and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- To raise awareness about the importance of the Post-2020 Framework and COP15
- To take concrete actions and to lead by example in support of COP15's goals and working constructively to ensure that COP15 will be a success.

## **C. Well aware of the strong links between Biodiversity and Climate Change:**

The MAB Youth Community gathered here is concerned about the following issues related to biodiversity loss and climate change.

- We recognize the absolute urgency to address both biodiversity loss and climate change issues of ultimate global importance, both within and outside of BRs.
- We are concerned about the lack of political will and corruption, particularly from decision makers within the BRs to implement concrete actions that address climate change.
- The lack of climate action, communication and networks among BRs and all stakeholders are of particular concern.
- The lack of understanding of the value of BRs to humans and other living organisms that we share the planet with.
- We recognize that accessible funding for climate action and biodiversity protection is a major challenge for youth in the MAB community to address these issues.
- We are worried about potential false solutions in impact mitigation measures such as carbon offsetting, biodiversity offsetting and geo-engineering, which present as a threat to climate action.
- We are concerned by the lack of multiple strategies such as concrete legislation, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Nature-based Solutions (NBS), use of technology and the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) in response to the Climate Crisis.

As MAB Youth Community, we demand

- Scientists, the private sector, governments, NGOs and the communities to address climate change and its impacts on Biosphere Reserves.
- UNESCO to take the MAB Youth into consideration in all the MAB Program activities related to climate change and beyond
- MAB Programme to increase efforts to effectively engage marginalised communities especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including women, indigenous people, youth and elderly.
- MAB Programme to promote incentives for MAB Youth developing good practices in response to the Climate Crisis

And we further commit to

- Create a MAB Youth networking platform to foster collaborations and dialogue on biodiversity conservation and climate change related issues.

- Participate in the decision making processes at the local, national and international levels
- Promote the potential of biosphere reserves playing a key role in climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

#### **D. Furthermore:**

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we ask the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC) to:

- Refine certain terminologies of the MAB Programme to the 21st century. The name 'Man' and the Biosphere Programme and the term Biosphere 'Reserve' should be adapted to avoid negativity and gender discrimination.

As MAB Youth Forum delegates, we commit ourselves to:

- *Diversify communication methods and promote BRs through the use of **creative, artistic and cultural** means to engage all audiences.*
- *Advocate within the MAB and UNESCO communities for an effective implementation and assessment of all existing and applicable non-harassment guidelines and policies.*