

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

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

Thirtieth Session

**Palembang, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia**

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**ITEM 9 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA:           THE MAB YOUTH FORUM AND THE  
WAY FORWARD**

1. The 2017 MAB Youth Forum was a part of UNESCO's efforts to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programmes affecting them, and lead action to promote peace and sustainable development in their countries and communities.
2. 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. Participants also agreed on a shared vision for the future of youth in biosphere reserves and stated it in their final declaration, which is provided in the Annex 1.
3. This document provides the MAB Council with a report summarizing the main outcomes of the first MAB Youth Forum together with the results of various analysis performed by the organizers of the Forum, which altogether form a basis for discussions and sound decisions concerning the future of youth engagement in the MAB Programme and its WNBR.
4. The MAB Council is invited to review the attached report and the various analytical documents it refers to, discuss these inputs, and conceive recommendations for the strengthening of youth engagement in the MAB Programme. The Council could also consider offers for the organization of the next MAB Youth Forum.

## Report on the MAB Youth Forum and the Way Forward

1.1 The present report provides the MAB Council with a summary of the main outcomes of the first **MAB Youth Forum** held in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, from 17-23 September 2017, together with the results of various analysis performed by the organizers of the Forum, which altogether provide a basis for discussions and sound decisions concerning the future of youth engagement in the MAB Programme and its WNBR. It is ideally accompanied by a PPT presentation, and detailed reports which can be accessed at the following links:

- Method of work and main outcomes of the MAB Youth Forum: [Main Outcomes](#)
- Social Media Report: [Social Media Report](#)
- Report on the pre-event online survey: [Pre-event Survey](#)
- Report on the post-event online survey: [Post-event Survey](#)

## 2. The participants in the Forum

2.1. 278 youth delegates aged 18-35 from over 138 Biosphere Reserves in 84 countries agreed on a shared vision for the future of youth in biosphere reserves at the close of a week of debates at the 2017 MAB Youth Forum in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy. These delegates either live or work in a Biosphere Reserve, areas that are committed to developing solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. "Despite the fact that we come from diverse backgrounds, we are united on these objectives and actions", states their final declaration.

2.2. The participants have been carefully selected and invited upon evaluation of a personal motivation letter and consideration of a support letter from their respective Biosphere Reserve / MAB National Committee / National Commission for UNESCO. This was done with the aim of selecting participants who were already actively engaged with UNESCO and the MAB Programme in their respective living/working context, and could therefore commit themselves to follow up concretely on the outcomes of the Forum.

2.3. While a total of 113 participants had been selected to benefit from UNESCO's support for their travel and accommodation, 21 of them, mainly from Africa, had last-minute problems with the issuance of their visa to travel to Italy and thus could not attend the MAB Youth Forum. This reduced the number of represented countries by 10 units, and limited the number of African participants in the Forum. In total, 64 MAB Youth who had been selected and invited to attend the Forum did not attend. This was a result of various factors, including the above troubles with visa issuance, the lack of financial resources principally to cover travel (accommodation was very cheap and meals were all covered by the organization), and other personal reasons. In any case, the total number of attendees was close to the expected target of 300 participants, and considering the UNESCO team, the volunteers, the facilitation and communication teams, the Forum has moved the following total number of persons:

Category	N°
Sponsored participants (travel and accommodation)	92
Half-sponsored participants (only accommodation)	30
Self-supported participants	156
UNESCO Team	6

Volunteers (Po Delta BR)	33
Facilitation Team	12
Communication Team	11
Journalists	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>366</b>

2.4. The majority of participants came from the region of Europe and North America, with a total of 187 participants. The Arab States region was represented by 10 participants, the Africa region by 30, the Asia Pacific region 26, and the Latin America and the Caribbean region 22. It should be noted, however, that the Forum was organized in Italy, Europe, and that it attracted a high number of young Italians (76) and Europeans who could afford to travel and attend at their own expenses. Looking at the number of countries and Biosphere Reserves represented however, the distribution appears to be in much a better balance, as they were, in proportion, perfectly in line with the number of countries and Biosphere Reserves as they were distributed per region in the WNBR in 2017.

Region	MYF2017		WNBR	
	N° of BRs	%	N° of BRs	%
Africa	17	12,3	75	11,2
Arab States	8	5,8	31	4,6
Asia and the Pacific	19	13,8	147	22,0
Europe & North America	74	53,6	287	42,9
Latin America and the Caribbean	20	14,5	129	19,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>		<b>669</b>	

Table 1: Distribution of BRs among regions – Comparison between the WNBR and the MYF2017.

Region	MYF2017		WNBR	
	N° of Countries	%	N° of Countries	%
Africa	15	17,9	28	23,3
Arab States	6	7,1	11	9,2
Asia and the Pacific	17	20,2	24	20,0
Europe & North America	34	40,5	36	30,0
Latin America and the Caribbean	12	14,3	21	17,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>		<b>120</b>	

Table 2: Distribution of MAB countries among regions – Comparison between the WNBR and the MYF2017.

### The MAB Youth Forum was therefore highly representative of the diversity and richness of the MAB WNBR.

2.4. For organizational purposes, the participants were also categorized based on their main role in their respective Biosphere Reserve, with 59 participants from the “*livelihood*” category (young people earning their livelihood living/working in the BR), 107 from the “*study/research*” category (young people working mainly as researchers and dedicating their studies to MAB – Biosphere Reserves related issues) and 88 participants from the “*civil society*” category (young people active in NGOs and the civil society in their territory). These distinctions were noted in the course of selection of participants in order to avoid one particular category becoming overrepresented and dominating the debates during the Forum. It is a matter of fact that young scientists and activists are usually more acquainted with

meeting procedures and presentations, while young farmers/workers coming from a small village, if feeling isolated, could have had difficulties to intervene in the debates.

2.5. The fact that English was chosen as the working language of the Forum (to assure interpretation would have been just impossible or very expensive) limited somewhat the attendance of representatives from the “*livelihood*” category (we were informed multiple times that good candidates from this category just did not know English). In the practice of many countries, the MAB programme remains first and foremost a scientific programme, and sponsorship opportunities we had for participants were thus used to assure a more balanced representation of each group. This in turn guaranteed that the discussions during the forum were not exclusively of scientific nature but could cover issues related to development, governance processes, green economy, etc. From a gender balance perspective, the Forum overall attracted more females (61%) than males (39%), a proportion confirmed for all regions except Africa (33% females, 67% males).

### 3. The organization of the Forum

3.1. The forum was organized by UNESCO’s Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe based in Venice, and the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, in close coordination with the MAB Secretariat and under the auspices of the Italian Ministries of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea; of Foreign Affairs; of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism; and of Education, Universities and Research. It counted upon the support of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo, the Veneto and Emilia-Romagna Regional Governments and the PiùInForma association.

3.2. In terms of financial resources mobilized, the following can be reported:

- Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo (Italy)	270,000 €
- Veneto Regional Government (Italy)	40,000 €
- Italian Contribution to the Venice Office (Italy)	25,000 €
- PiùInForma Association – Estimated in-kind (Italy)	20,000 €

In-kind contributions should also be accounted from the two Regional Governments of Emilia-Romagna and Veneto, the two Regional Parks Authorities belonging to the Po Delta Biosphere Reserves and the Municipalities that have hosted workshops and excursions during the Forum and put at the Forum’s disposal free-of-charge staff and fully equipped locations for our activities.

3.3. From a Human Resources perspective, it should be stressed that organizing the Forum without sub-contracting professionals for logistic arrangements (due to the will to maximize available funds for the sponsoring of participants) was possible only because the Venice Office was reinforced with the arrival of trainees (2 from China and 4 from South Korea) who were supported by their respective governments and due to the involvement of highly-motivated interns from Italy and Costa Rica. Finally, such a complex event could not have been possible without the enthusiastic involvement of young volunteers from the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, who have been very positively impacted by the Forum and have expressed their will to be more consistently involved in the life of their Biosphere Reserve in the future.

### 4. The method of work of the Forum

4.1. The forum was conceived as an event that would provide young people with a unique opportunity to meet, debate and share their vision and commitment to sustainable development within the framework of the MAB Programme. In this sense, it represented a

clear and valuable contribution to UNESCO's operational strategy on youth, of which one aim, amongst others, is to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programmes affecting them and are leading actions to promote peace and sustainable development in their countries and communities. The primary objective of the Forum was to build sustainable relationships with young change-makers that are leading or co-shaping impactful initiatives in a UNESCO field of competence.

4.2. In order to discuss issues that really matter to young people, the Forum was built in a highly participatory manner around themes chosen directly by the participants as a result of the **pre-event online consultations and surveys** (full report accessible [Here](#)). Through these instruments, the participants had already been active in voicing that they want more space in governance, more space and cooperation in research and more occupational opportunities. During the Forum, young participants openly discussed with one another to ensure that the final declaration should have a real impact on the programme and their lives in the Biosphere Reserves. The whole process is described in detail in the report accessible [Here](#).

4.3. Another factor in the success of this first-ever MAB Youth Forum was the strong involvement of the hosting Biosphere Reserve in its preparation and running. The locations for workshops and destinations for excursions were carefully selected in order to allow participants to have a direct experience of the most symbolic places of that territory, but also to let them touch by hand relevant experiences related to most of the topics under discussion during the forum: green economy and social innovation, nature conservation and sustainable use of resources, sustainable tourism development, etc. This has been a highly inspirational experience for most of the participants, as also confirmed by the results of the post-event online survey (accessible [Here](#)).

4.4. Thanks to its well-balanced rotation of plenary sessions, parallel working group sessions, excursions and free time left for interactions among participants, most participants enjoyed the Forum as a unique opportunity to connect, exchange, inspire each other and establish contacts which should last.

## 5. Visibility of the event

5.1. Thanks to the appointment of a communication team of 11 members, the MAB Youth Forum was very well covered from a media point of view (see the full report [Here](#)). The event has had a huge impact locally, nationally and internationally. The Forum was regularly reported on the following main websites:

- Main website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/home/>
- Website1: <http://www.unesco.org/new/myforum2017>
- Website2: <https://www.myforum2017.com>

5.2. News was dispatched on the following dates: 21/12/2016, 21/02/2017, 02/07/2017, 03/07/2017, 07/07/2017, 10/07/2017, 19/09/2017, and 27/09/2017, and the Forum was advertised on both the Venice Office webpage (Banner on Venice Office website with dedicated webpage) and MAB webpage (with link to the Official 2017 MAB Youth Forum website). The Forum announcement was disseminated in 5 languages: Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Italian, and the following 5 videos have already been made available through the web:

- [Flavia Schlegel on giving youth a voice in biosphere reserves](#)
- [Video message from the Director-General to the MAB YF](#)
- [2017 MAB Youth Forum - Overview](#)

- [2017 MAB Youth Forum - Declaration](#)
- [Interview with Barbara Degani](#)

5.3. Forty-eight (48) Journalists were accredited, representing local newspapers (4), magazines (7), broadcast TV (13), broadcast radio (4), and freelance (20). The MAB Youth Forum was reported several times on national TV channels (RAI 1 Unomattina, RAI 2 daily news and RAI 3 regional daily news), and Social Medias were also intensively mobilized:

- Facebook: [@myforum2017](#) / <https://www.facebook.com/myforum2017>
- Twitter: [@myforum2017](#) <https://twitter.com/myforum2017>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/myforum2017>

It is noteworthy that the participants in the Forum have created their own Facebook page in order to share their impressions of the Forum and further remain in contact for possible common projects and exchanges.

5.4. One MAB Youth participant attended the UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris on 24-25 October 2017, and 4 MAB Youth representatives attended the ECOSOC Youth Forum at the UN HQ's in New York on 30-31 January 2018, dedicated to "*The role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities*", in the framework of which they had the opportunity to share their experiences during a side-event on "**MAB Youth – Committed to Sustainable Development**" hosted by UNESCO's MAB Programme with the support of our New York Liaison Office.

## 6. The main outcomes

6.1. In their **Final Declaration** (see full text in Annex 1 to the present MAB-ICC document), the MAB Youth Forum delegates classed as top priority their concern about the urgent need to foster attractive and **long-term employment opportunities** linked to the intrinsic values of biosphere reserves, such as the conservation of biodiversity and habitat restoration. They suggested creating hubs and incubators, together with training programmes, to support business creation and employability, help retain youth in Biosphere Reserves and promote innovation. Finally, they called for the programme to think about possible mechanisms for financial support to projects involving MAB Youth (such as a MAB crowdfunding, carbon credits, etc.).

6.2. *In a piece of research conducted on 75 nomination dossiers received since 2013 (when the issue of engaging with youth was raised systematically), it clearly appears that a great majority of Biosphere Reserves, in all parts of the world, are faced with crucial issues such as the aging of their populations, the dramatic outflow of young people from rural/remote areas in their search for study and job opportunities, mainly in urban areas. It is therefore quite surprising that, faced with such a situation, most of the Biosphere Reserves continue to consider youth as their main target for educational efforts (83% of them globally), without apparently paying due attention to similar socio-economic concerns (40% globally), except in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, where these concerns seem to be more concretely tackled by BR's management.*

Region	Total BRs	Youth target of educational efforts		Youth actors in socio-cultural life		Youth actors of economic development		Youth involved in governance	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
AFRICA	11	9	81.8%	3	27.3%	9	81.8%	2	18.2%
ARAB STATES	3	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	24	23	95.8%	13	54.2%	5	20.8%	10	41.7%
EUROPE AND NA	28	20	71.4%	11	39.3%	8	28.6%	5	17.9%
LATIN AMERICA AND C	9	8	88.9%	6	66.7%	6	66.7%	2	22.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>82.7%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26.7%</b>

Table 3: Analysis of 75 nominations forms submitted and approved between 2013 and 2017, from a youth engagement perspective.

6.3. The Final Declaration calls then on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) to widely **disseminate scientific and indigenous knowledge and to support knowledge transmission to future generations**. Biosphere Reserve managers are encouraged to work with schools to develop related programmes and strengthen ties between research institutions and local stakeholders. This is well understandable, as about 50% of the participants in the Forum defined themselves as young researchers, and expressed their concern about the generational transmission of knowledge. They also confirmed their wish to be involved in research directly serving the purpose of supporting BR's management.

6.4. The young participants also made various **commitments to be actors of change** in their territories by organizing events with their local communities on diverse cultural, environmental and economic issues, and by training and encouraging more young people to be active in their biosphere reserves. They also offered to act as ambassadors of their biosphere reserves and develop tools to promote their values and good practices.

6.5. *From the report on the post-event survey already mentioned, it appears that most of them have already undertaken concrete follow-up actions in various directions. For 30% of them, this was focussed on educational, awareness raising and information actions, as a result of the confirmation that MAB Youth are no longer to be seen exclusively as the beneficiary of educational efforts undertaken within the framework of the Programme: they wish, and have the capacity to be, the protagonists of such efforts! A large majority of participants in the Forum have already undertaken to report to their MAB Youth fellows and authorities at the local level, and this can be seen as confirmation that the links to the entities who nominated/mandated them to participate are real and active. **Compared to many other UNESCO related Youth Forums, this demonstrates the very unique characteristic of the MAB Youth Forum, which mobilized participants closely connected to a network of territories. These participants were already probably active at that level and have been stimulated to even do more in the future!** The potential to move from talks and ideas to action is high and concrete.*

6.6. In the Final Declaration, MAB Youth delegates call for **improved exchange** of information, ideas, knowledge and good practice in the Biosphere Reserves, especially through tools that stimulate the involvement of young people. These would include periodic regional and global youth forums, the development and maintenance of a dedicated web-based platform, a more systematic involvement of youth in thematic networks and the promotion of youth exchanges and cooperation through volunteering or their involvement within concrete research and development projects.

6.7. *Proposed follow-up actions mentioned in the post-event survey report also include the organization and/or the participation in events, forums and exchanges among Biosphere Reserves and in their respective regions (24.7%). A great majority of them have expressed their wish to be involved soon in national or regional youth forums. MAB Youth have been stimulated during the MAB Youth Forum and have experienced the benefits arising from such a kind of gathering, and would like to contribute to expand its impact and to outreach youth around them. With this in view, some of them have also already contributed to the*

*establishment of formal MAB Youth associations/forums related mainly to their Biosphere Reserves (in Costa Rica, France, Italy, South Africa, Spain, etc.). They are all highly interested in taking part in MAB-ICC meetings, thematic and regional networks, and of course are ready to be involved in the organization of a next global MAB Youth Forum.*

6.8. MAB Youth delegates call on the MAB Programme to **improve communication**, at all levels, in order to be more effective with young people. They ask the MAB Secretariat to undertake a more systematic survey on youth involvement in the programme, and to adopt a more “youth-friendly language” in all their communication efforts, including official documents and guidelines. At the same time, they have committed themselves to contribute to these communication efforts with social media, storytelling, etc.

6.9. *As already mentioned, MAB Youth delegates have already been very active on social media during and after the Forum, and are still using these tools to stay in contact worldwide. An official MAB Youth Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/MABYouth>) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MABYouth>) have been launched and are still active. With regards to the latter, news and MAB youth stories have been regularly posted since October 2017. This MAB Youth Community wants to continue to exist and expand, presenting itself as one of the most powerful “business cards” of the MAB Programme. Their messages need to be channelled properly within the overall umbrella of the MAB Communication Strategy.*

6.10. They finally recommended the **involvement of youth in MAB governance**, by selecting “youth representatives” at all levels, especially in crucial moments of the decision-making process. This not only concerns their involvement in the governance of Biosphere Reserves, but also their inclusion as observer members in the MAB ICC. They also encouraged their Member States to consider the possibility of including mandatory youth representatives in their MAB National Committees and delegations to international meetings.

6.11. *This final request is fully in line with the concerns that they had voiced through the pre-event survey (a majority of respondents expressing that they were not satisfied with the level of youth involvement in their BR, stressing their poor involvement in projects supporting livelihood in the BR, and asking for more engagement in the governance and decision-making in their respective BRs), which is also confirmed by the analysis conducted on nomination forms since 2013 (see table 3): only a quarter of BRs established since then have concrete plans to involve youth representatives in their governance. Finally, a large majority of them would be interested in becoming a MAB Youth focal point in their country.*

## 7. Some conclusions and the way forward

7.1. Since the present biennium (2018-2019), all programmes of UNESCO have been requested to consider their possible contribution to the implementation of the Operational Strategy on Youth (2014 – 2021), which provides a framework for constructive partnerships to be developed with and between youth organizations and youth-related stakeholders. The Strategy puts forward three multidisciplinary and complementary axes of work, which incorporate the full range of UNESCO’s expertise in education, culture, natural, social and human sciences, and communication and information. The programme is as follows: 1) Policy formulation and review with the participation of youth. 2) Capacity development for the transition to adulthood. 3) Civic engagement and democratic participation and social innovation.

7.2. Thanks to the organization and holding of the first ever MAB Youth Forum in September 2017, and the decisions which could be made today for a proper follow-up within the programme’s structures, strategies and actions (including its WNBR), **the MAB Programme**

***holds a unique opportunity to strengthen its contribution to the Operational Strategy on Youth in all its axes, while boosting the contribution of MAB Youth to the implementation of the Lima Action Plan and to the achievement of the SDGs.*** The outcomes herein summarized, and the various surveys and analyses conducted before, during and after the Forum itself, provide a sound background to the MAB-ICC for its debates and further elaboration and implementation of recommendations and decision concerning its engagement with Youth.

7.3. Compared to many other UNESCO programmes, the MAB programme has a unique asset to achieve this: its WNBR. Through Biosphere Reserves, the MAB Programme has already shown its ability to reach young people in every part of the world, and also has the potential to engage with them in a long-term and more consistent perspective. Through the Biosphere Reserves they belong to, MAB Youth have reliable grounds to concretely follow-up and implement the action plan they have conceived together, to commit themselves to contribute to the achievement of the Lima Action Plan and, more widely, of the Agenda 2030.

7.4. That is why young people should absolutely 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. The Forum has revealed that the MAB Youth community exists and is already very active within the framework of the MAB Programme and in the Biosphere Reserves. During the Forum, the MAB Youth showed a very high level of energy and motivation, a great sense of commitment to the values of the MAB Programme and its WNBR, and an infinite will to contribute more to the Programme. The realisation of this will of course depend on decisions to be taken by the MAB ICC, as well as by each and every Biosphere Reserve in which young people want to be more involved.

7.5. The first-ever MAB Youth Forum has demonstrated its usefulness, coming at the right time and evidently adopting the right approach in order to fully achieve its objectives. It gave the participants a unique opportunity to improve their understanding of the MAB Programme, the Lima Action Plan and the functioning of Biosphere Reserves in general. It offered them a platform for meeting and learning from each other, sending them back to their respective Biosphere Reserves highly motivated and inspired to act. Reports from Biosphere Reserves and regional networks, such as IberoMAB and EABRN, testify that the MAB networks are already responding to their expectations and are making plans to engage with them in the most concrete ways. In all these occasions, MAB Youth raised their voice to ask for:

- More consistent consideration and involvement of youth in the governance of Biosphere Reserves (which could be monitored through nomination forms and periodic review reports);
- The establishment of MAB Youth focal points at the national level, which could form a network on which the MAB Secretariat could rely for a better circulation of information related to Youth. This could also help assure a more effective coordination of their presence in various instances and projects/actions of the programme, overcoming in particular the very limiting linguistic barriers that we have observed organizing the MAB Youth Forum;
- A strengthened involvement of MAB Youth representatives in thematic and regional networks (not exclusively young scientists), as well as in research and development projects (developing a roster of MAB young professionals?).

## ANNEX 1: Final Declaration

### UNESCO MAB Youth Forum Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, 18-22 September 2017

#### Final Declaration of the Forum

##### 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 also ask Biosphere Reserve 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 Biosphere Reserve 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 Couchsurfing.

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 Biosphere Reserves 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.

We 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 Biosphere Reserve and young people of our territory what the MAB Youth Forum participants 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.