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for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,
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Комиссия Российской Федерации
по делам ЮНЕСКО



A sub-regional workshop "Biosphere reserve concept in the framework of national legislations: challenges, best practices and steps forward of cluster countries of the UNESCO Moscow Office, the Baltic States and Ukraine"

24-26 September 2010

**Biosphere Reserve "Smolensk Lakeland"
Russian Federation**



FINAL REPORT

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

The biosphere reserve concept was developed initially in 1974 and was substantially revised in 1995 with the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) which both governed the establishment of biosphere reserves.

In 2008, the 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves (BRs) and the 20th Session of the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC) marked a new phase in the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme by adopting the Madrid Action Plan (MAP). MAP builds on the Seville Strategy and aims to capitalize on the strategic advantages of the Seville instruments and raise biosphere reserves to be the principal internationally-designated areas dedicated to sustainable development in the 21st century.

The Madrid Action Plan identified emerging challenges and the role of biosphere reserves. Accelerated loss of biological and cultural diversity and its consequences impacting on the ecosystem services and accelerated climate change are together with rapid urbanization the major challenges having emerged during last decade(s). Biosphere reserves as biodiversity laboratories and learning and demonstration sites of sustainable development strategically assist to cope with these key challenges.

In attempting to orient MAB and WNBR activities during 2008–2013 in the face of new challenges in an ever-changing world, the MAP defines four (4) main action areas, with 31 targets and 65 actions that are critical to achieving the vision and mission of the MAB Programme. Targeted actions help its implementation at the appropriate level, may it be local, national or international.

Biosphere reserves are the principal means for achieving the objectives of the MAB Programme and the visible instrument through which UNESCO as a whole could demonstrate its commitment to sustainability through policy-relevant site-based research, capacity enhancement and demonstration. In order to respond to new and emerging environmental and economic challenges at all scales, the management of the programme and the co-ordination of the work of the WNBR must be revised in light of vast experience of the implementation of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework. Necessary adaptations in the operation and outreach dimensions of WNBR need to be introduced in order to ensure that biosphere reserves effectively serve as learning sites for sustainable development at global, regional, national and local levels.

On several occasions, the question of giving biosphere reserves legal recognition in national law has been the subject of discussion within the Man and the Biosphere Programme and at its regional meetings. This question was specifically reopened recently by the European network (EuroMAB) and African network (AfriMAB). Finally, the Madrid Action Plan, adopted in February 2008, made a specific recommendation in this direction. The MAP within its action area of “Cooperation, Management and Communication” *i.a.* recommends that “Biosphere Reserves receive a reinforced legal recognition and that States are encouraged to include biosphere reserves in their legislation” (Target 11, action 11.1).

The question was also raised in 2007 at a EuroMAB meeting that took place in Antalya (Turkey), about zoning and difficulties that its application could encounter. For some participants, the absence of a specific legal category for biosphere reserves certainly

constituted one of these difficulties, especially for the establishment of a transition area, and could even represent an impediment to the establishment of biosphere reserves in general. The MAB Secretariat was requested, therefore, to study the question thoroughly; to evaluate existing legislation, including those that establish biosphere reserves as a category; to analyse their content; to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of this solution, and finally, to propose a model law that could be used by states wishing to elaborate such legislations.

In a response, the study “Legal interpretation of the biosphere reserve concept in the framework of national legislation” was carried out by Marie Bonnin and Mireille Jardin in order to provide elements for this discussion. It was made possible thanks to the support of the French National MAB Committee. The results of this study were introduced at 21st and further discussed at 22nd Sessions of the ICC MAB. At that last Session the MAB Secretariat in reacting to the observations, suggestions and comments of delegates stressed that the essence of a biosphere reserve is not merely protection or conservation but the building of a mutually beneficial relationship between conservation and development using research, monitoring, capacity building and participatory management approaches as tools to build conservation-development linkages. Furthermore the Secretariat highlighted the increasing interest of sub-national authorities at provincial and local levels to look at biosphere reserves as areas for experimentation with conservation-development linkages or sustainable development options. The Secretariat committed to collating and communicating information on the question of national legislation for biosphere reserves on the basis of country-specific examples and experience on a regular basis.

In this regard, the UNESCO Moscow Office in cooperation with the UNESCO MAB Secretariat supported a conducting of the workshop having been co-organized by the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and Russian MAB Committee.

The workshop is considered as an important contribution to implement actions agreed by EUROMAB action plan at a sub-regional level. It is also in a concert with key findings and outcomes of the International Workshop “Developing the Biosphere Reserves Network in the SEE and Caucasus Regions (Antalya, Turkey, February 2010) organized by the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO and the Turkish National MAB Committee, with the support of the UNESCO-BRESCE and the UNESCO Moscow Office. The workshop is built on the EuroMAB experiences developed and aimed to explore topics of common interest that could be investigated further within the frame of a new coordinated experimental programme related to BRs in the region.

Moreover, the workshop and its outcomes will be an important contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity. It will set-up a background to interventions related to the upcoming 40th Anniversary of MAB Programme. In addition, it may be considered as a platform for on-the ground process towards Rio +20.

ULTIMATE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS:

The workshop strengthened a long-term process and provided a sub-regional forum to share experience and propose potential steps towards recognition of biosphere reserves as the principal internationally-designated areas of sustainable development in the 21st century with a special focus on reinforcing a legal status of biosphere reserves of the participating countries.

In particular, it was focused on biosphere reserve concept in the framework of national legislations and current challenges, best practices and steps forward in the countries concerned.

Objectives:

- Share experiences and effective approaches to sustainable development and best practices within the area of cooperation, management and communication at different levels.
- Propose and agree on recommendations (arising from workshop's participants) and their implementation strategy to facilitate relevant actions in countries concerned to :
 - improve the recognition and the functioning of BRs;
 - provide BRs with a specific statute to facilitate the establishment of a dedicated authority and the creation of a framework of mutual cooperation among various stakeholders; *and*
 - harmonize regional and sub-regional levels, legislative texts and regulations dealing with the management of BRs.

The intervention will have following long-term impacts:

- catalyze establishment and strengthen management of biosphere reserves to address current emerging challenges like accelerated climate change with consequences for societies and ecosystems; accelerated loss of biological and cultural diversity with unexpected consequences that impact the ability of ecosystems to continue to provide services critical for human wellbeing; and rapid urbanization as a driver of environmental change.
- enhance capacity of countries concerned to establish and manage their biosphere reserves according to innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable development *through:*
 - strengthened cluster, sub-regional and regional cooperation at all levels;
 - developed skills and knowledge, learnt and exchanged new practices and experiences in order to enhance biosphere reserve management in the countries concerned and to address current emerging challenges.

WORKSHOP PROCESS:

Participants:

- Secretaries-General (or their delegated representatives) of the UNESCO National Commissions for UNESCO of cluster countries of the UNESCO Moscow Office (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation) and representatives of Latvia and Lithuania.
- Experts / biosphere reserve managers / representatives of MaB National Committees of cluster countries of the UNESCO Moscow Office (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation) and representatives of Latvia and Lithuania.
- Representatives of relevant ministries in charge of protected areas management including BRs.

The meeting was attended by around 30 persons from 7 countries. All the countries within the UNESCO Moscow Office cluster have been presented. Representatives from Estonia and Ukraine could not attend due to justified reasons. However, all the participants expressed a high interest to strengthen cooperation with Estonia and Ukraine within the MAB programme.

Workshop sessions:

The workshop sessions were focused on following issues:

- establishment of BRs (including transboundary BRs);
- role of BRs and addressing three functions of BRs;
- biodiversity protection, ecosystem services and sustainable development activities;
- public awareness, networking, experience exchange and cooperation.

However, all topics were presented and consequently discussed in order to address the workshop's overarching theme "Biosphere reserves concept in the framework of national legislations".

All the participants were actively involved in all parts of workshop sessions. Four (4) keynote speeches introduced each session and sixteen (16) presentations provided a valuable background for intensive discussions. In addition, all presented topics contributed to sharing of lessons learnt and best practices and set-up a framework for joint recommendations and follow-up actions.

All the participants were actively involved in the workshop sessions and/or discussions. The workshop proceeded in four (4) sessions:

SESSION 1: Overview on the MAB Programme and the BR concept (incl. issues of periodic review processes, dialogue with and involvement of stakeholders, moving from pre-Seville to post-Seville sites; etc.).

SESSION 2: Implementation of the Madrid Action Plan and follow-up on the EUROMAB outcomes (overall experience, lessons learnt and best practices; case studies of participating countries; key themes and issues in the region/sub-regions incl. communication at different levels and of all types and associated capacity-building needs).

SESSION 3: Legal interpretation of the biosphere reserve concept in the framework of national legislations (results of the UNESCO study; state of the art, challenges and best practices in cluster countries of the UNESCO Moscow Office, Latvia and Lithuania).

SESSION 4: Reinforcement of the recognition and the functioning of BRs within national legislations of countries concerned (outlining a draft framework; preparation of respective recommendations to governmental structures; elaboration of a proposal a proposal to UNESCO MAB Secretariat for follow-up).

Sessions 1-3 provided important backgrounds, presented good practices and shared key lessons learnt while session 4 which was focused on analysing and synthesizing of recommendations and drafting follow-up actions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The participants were welcomed by *the Secretary General of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, Mr. Grigory Ordzhonikidze. The Programme Specialist for Science of the UNESCO Moscow Office, Ms. Marie Prchalova*, delivered welcoming addresses on behalf of *the Director of the UNESCO Moscow Office, Mr. Dendev Badarch*. As well the workshop participants were greeted by the representatives of local administration and representatives of the Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve. *The Deputy Chairman of the Russian MAB Committee, Mr. Valery Neronov*, was elected as a moderator for the first session.

The seminar started from *Mr. Neronov's* presentation generally describing the concept of biosphere reserves (BR) and the role of MAB Committees.

The Director of Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve, Mr. Andrey Vlasov, described the cooperation of the biosphere reserve with the Nuclear Power Plant. This connection resulted in the joint ecosystem research and monitoring (or financing of the research). He also mentioned

the development of cooperation with Ukraine. In addition he outlined some severe problems of the BR (land ownership, poaching, old equipment, complicated social conditions, etc.).

The Deputy Chairman of the Lithuanian Committee for the UNESCO MAB Programme, Mr. Leonardas Kairiukstis, gave an insight to the history of development of the MAB Programme in Lithuania.

The Director of the North Vidzeme BR, Mr. Velerijs Seilis, gave presentation about the only BR in Latvia. He shared with the participants the idea of inscribing the North Vidzeme BR in the Global Network of Geoparks. He expressed his gratitude to the UNESCO Moscow Office and Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO for their efforts in strengthening regional cooperation. He pointed out that unfortunately cooperation in the Baltic States was rather discrete and connections with focal points were not established. He proposed to develop a conception of a cluster BR (transboundary BR) in the Baltic States.

The Director of the Smolensk Lakeland BR, Mr. Alexander Kochergin, described how the Smolensk Lakeland BR functioned. He mentioned about some social undertakes (e.g. microcredits in early 1990-s). At the moment the BR management team thinks about the development of renewable energy, i.e. bioenergy generated from wood and wood residues. One boiler was already installed. Mr. Kochergin also outlined the same problems as Mr. Vlasov did, namely the land ownership and a gap in the legislation, allowing to transfer agricultural lands to lands suitable for construction.

The second session started from the presentation of *the Head of Biodiversity Department, Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Tatarstan, Mr. Mikhail Gorshkov, who talked about the Great Volzhsko-Kamsky BR, which consisted of 4 clusters. He pointed out that in the Volzhsko-Kamsky BR they try to establish cooperation with Muslim and Orthodox organizations, as both religious groups have their sacred sites on the territory of the BR. This idea was supported by Mr. Neronov, who stressed the necessity of such cooperation and expressed his hope to organize an cross-religious environmental meeting e.g. in Kalmykia.*

The Head of the Department of Special Defended Areas, Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Aram Aghasyan, reported on the current activities of the Ministry of Nature Protection on designating the first BR in Armenia, with a core zone in Shikhakhovsky nature reserve. As it is planned the BR should be established by the end of 2010.

The Head of Department of special protected nature areas, biodiversity and biological security, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Vitalie Grimalschi described Moldovan legislative base related to protected nature areas. In the presentation he covered a process of establishment of a transboundary BR (Moldova - Romania), mentioning that bilateral agreements were signed, but there was no further action. He pointed out a great role of politic decisions in the process of establishing BRs in Moldova.

The Secretary General of the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO, Ms. Elena Krasovskaya, and the Vice-Chairperson of the Belarus MAB National Committee, Ms. Natallia Rybianets, gave vast presentations about the newly adopted amendment to the law on the protection of the environment in the Republic of Belarus. It was admitted by all the participants, that the law is a good example of successful cooperation with the governmental structures. Ms. Rybianets covered a topic of transboundary cooperation of Belarus with the neighboring countries in terms of establishing a transboundary BR.

Mr. Urkhan Alakbarov covered the Azerbaijani MAB Committee activities in the field of ecological education and their steps towards creating an environmentally-oriented civilization. The participants agreed that the educational component is one of the most crucial for the ecologization of the society.

The working session 3 started from the presentation of *Ms. Prchalova* about the UNESCO study on biosphere reserve concept in the framework of national legislations and the UNESCO law model. It was proposed by the participants to facilitate the translation of the model law into Russian, this would allow to back-up communication with governmental authorities with an example of a legal document.

Mr. Neronov supported the proposal of *Ms. Krasovskaya* to organize a set of trainings for governmental officials and decision-makers on BRs and their legal status.

The Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ms. Gunay Afandiyeva, gave a presentation about the current situation of the protected nature areas in Azerbaijan. She informed participants of the workshop about the governmental activities in the sphere of ecology, laws adopted by the President and the endeavors for creation of the first in Azerbaijan biosphere reserve on the basis of the Zagatala nature reserve. She proposed to initiate a joint regional project on publishing BR-related materials.

Mr. Aram Aghasyan gave in-depth presentation on the BR related legislative base of Armenia and their endeavors to improve it and establish a first biosphere reserve in the country. He pointed out that in many former Soviet Union countries there were biosphere reserves, however they were composed just of the strictly protected nature reserve and didn't respond to description of "a biosphere reserve" given in the Seville Strategy (pre-Seville BRs). The only thing they had in common was the name "biosphere reserve", but not the concept.

The Deputy Director of the Science Department, Astrakhansky Biosphere Reserve, Mr. Alexander Gorbunov, described the input of the Astrakhansky Biosphere Reserve to the conservation of the Volga Delta and presented the plan for the development of the conservation activities. In addition, *Mr. Gorbunov* urged for a unification of terminology (as currently in the Russian language the situation with the use of terminology is unclear, which influences on task understanding and consequent programme implementation for biosphere reserves. Likewise simultaneously different terms might be used: biosphere reserve/ biosphere territory, core zone/ /core territory/ protected territory, transition zone/ zone of cooperation and etc.).

The Director of Kerzhensky Biosphere Reserve, Ms. Elena Korshunova, gave a presentation about Biosphere Reserve "Nizhegorodskoe Zavolzhie", which has Kerzhensky BR as a core zone. She told about utilization of GIS technologies and fire-control measures.

After the session the participants of the seminar had a field trip to the lakes of the BR Smolensk Lakeland, they followed the recently developed ecological path and visited II World War sites, which are also places of historical interest in the Smolensk Lakeland BR.

The last day was dedicated to concluding the results of the workshop. After a presentation, made by *the Chairperson of the non-profit partnership "Biosphere Reserves of Eurasia", Mr. Mikhail Brynskikh*, who gave a good example of cooperation between Prioksko-Terrasny BR and local administration and invited participants to join the non-profit partnership, the participants started to discuss the recommendations for the workshop resolution.

The first draft of the summed-up results was presented by *Ms. Prchalova* and *Mr. Neronov*. Additional recommendations were submitted by participants in written.

In summary:

The participants discussed the specificity of their national legislation in terms of biosphere reserves and other protected nature areas. It was admitted by the participants that the biggest progress in this field was achieved by the Republic of Belarus with the adoption of the law "On amendments to the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On the protection of the environment" №

127-3 of 5 May 2010, where the procedure of a biosphere reserve establishment, involved governmental authorities and their responsibilities are clearly defined.

The UNESCO model law was presented at the workshop. It was developed by the French MAB Committee as a part of the UNESCO sponsored analysis of national legislation and legal status of biosphere reserves in different countries. The law model should be used as an example for development of a biosphere reserve related national legislation.

The representatives of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia informed that by the end of 2010 all necessary documents should receive final approval and the first biosphere reserve in Armenia would be established, having the Shikakhokhsky nature reserve as a core zone.

The representatives of the National MAB Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan told about their achievements in environmental education and awareness rising, which helps both sustainable development of the country on the whole, and designation of biosphere reserves in particular. Besides Azerbaijan, the process of establishment of the first biosphere reserves continues in Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova, which have all the prerequisites for succeeding: Lithuania has more than 35 years of MAB experience and the Republic of Moldova has a solid legislative base in the field of environmental protection.

The management experience of Latvian biosphere reserve was thoroughly presented. The Director of the reserve informed about his idea to make North Vidzeme not just the first biosphere reserve in Latvia, but the first geopark as well, with its inclusion in the UNESCO Global Network of Geoparks.

Russian participants made presentations about general issues of biosphere reserve management in Russia, where 39 biosphere reserves are established. In addition to it, they stressed the necessity of designation of transboundary biosphere territories and informed that in this regard the establishment of transboundary reserves is considered e.g. with Belarus in Eastern Polesie, with Ukraine in Nerusso-Desnyanksoe Polesie, with Mongolia in Uvs Nuur Basin.

As a result of discussion on papers and presentations contributed by the participants, the following recommendations were adopted:

- 1. In order to provide biosphere reserves with a specific legal statute, to request respective local and national authorities of the countries concerned to take following immediate measures:**
 - a) Ensure the adoption of new legislative acts supporting conservation of nature sites of the international importance (World Heritage sites, Ramsar sites, biosphere reserves, important bird and/or plant areas);
 - b) Adjust national regional legislations on especially protected nature areas as a result allowing biosphere reserves to perform their duties at a full capacity;
 - c) Pay a special attention to customize terminology related to biosphere reserves and its respective zones in a process of national legislative acts' formulation;
 - d) Continue to fulfill commitments of the international conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention to Combat Decertification and World Heritage Convention and bring related plans and legislative acts into conformance with those conventions;

- e) Develop and adopt various legislative and normative acts, which should be in conformity with requirements of International Conventions (like CBD) and Statutory Framework of the World Biosphere Reserve Network;
- f) Request the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation to consider in the short term the establishment of a biosphere reserve, which later on might become a transboundary biosphere reserve, in the Kaliningrad region;
- g) Support an initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan to establish the biosphere reserve on the basis of Zakatalskiy nature reserve in Azerbaijan;
- h) Support an initiative of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia to establish the biosphere reserve on the basis of Shikakhokhskiy nature reserve in Armenia;
- i) Recommend during the revision of the law “on protected nature areas” of the Republic of Armenia to consider the status of biosphere reserves in the national legislation;
- j) Strengthen biodiversity protection and conservation by a law on biological security, which should protect biodiversity from genetically modified organisms, if such a law is not enacted yet.

2. Recognizing a necessity to improve the functioning of biosphere reserves, to focus on priority interventions at local, national and/or sub-regional levels as follows:

- a) Enlarge the network of biosphere reserves, transboundary biosphere reserves in the first place, and ensure the functioning of previously established ones at their full capacity;
- b) Develop and approve a forest conservation programme of especially protected nature areas within BRs;
- c) Develop carrying capacity strategies and revenue mechanisms (with a special regard to tourism) for biosphere reserves and/or for especially protected nature areas considered to be a part of BRs;
- d) Develop national plans to enhance a protection of demonstration sites of biological and landscape diversity;
- e) Ensure long-term conservation of populations of rare and the most valuable animal species within especially protected nature areas and beyond their boundaries by establishing ecological corridors between especially protected nature areas and key species habitats;
- f) Support and develop integrated monitoring programmes in biosphere reserves and include monitoring programmes into programmes for transition zones establishment and development in order to assess an ecological status and biological diversity in territories of a different anthropogenic impact;
- g) Recommend the UNESCO in the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) to provide a support and strengthen networking between biosphere reserves and UNESCO associated schools for: a) development of a value system by the young generation, b) possibilities of comprehensive learning and sustainable environmental management;
- h) Introduce good practices of the Azerbaijani project on “an inclusion of information about biosphere reserves, sustainable development and ecological civilization in the curricula

of secondary and high education in all professional fields” in areas of planned or existing biosphere reserves;

- i) Support an establishment of monitoring programme in the Republic of Moldova for invasive species being vectors of diseases resulting in enormous economic damage and social injury;
- j) Prepare an updated version of monograph analyzing a climate change impact on ecosystems of Russian biosphere reserves in the past 10 years including an evaluation of past and current prognosis and recommendations to improve ecological monitoring of climate change consequences;
- k) Request MAB National Committees to take relevant actions to reinforce a cooperation with IHP National Committees and revitalize working relations with IUCN at local and national levels.

3. Considering an importance of transboundary cooperation in strengthening the role of biosphere reserves as learning sites for sub-regional/regional development, to act as listed:

- a) Accelerate a process to conclude of intergovernmental agreements on establishment of a transboundary biosphere reserve (BR “Nerusso-Desnyanskoe Polessie” in Russia and Starogutsky BR in Ukraine), develop and approve the unified management plans, designate national coordinators responsible for transboundary cooperation in each of the biosphere reserves and submit the respective proposal on BR designation to UNESCO;
- b) Strengthen an involvement of regional and local authorities, representatives of border and customs protection services and ministries of defense in an implementation of transboundary cooperation plans, considering an inclusion of chapters of biological and landscape diversity protection into current intergovernmental agreements on economical and other fields of cooperation;
- c) Establish a joint scientific and training centre (e.g. within Smolensk Lakeland Biosphere Reserve) in accordance with international standards for scientific research and monitoring of belt territories;
- d) Enlarge and approve ecological networks of adjacent territories of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia and signed a trilateral agreement on establishment of ecological corridors for migratory species and touristic circular routs on those territories with regard to an evaluation of implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy in 2015;
- e) Ensure regular animals recording and monitoring of changes in ecosystems of transboundary especially protected areas and exchange respective data in order to agree on joint solutions to mitigate adverse natural and anthropogenic impacts;
- f) With regard to the International Year of Biodiversity, to propose to the Governments of the participating countries to proclaim adjacent/transboundary areas as “biodiversity conservation areas ” and ensure protection of wild animals during their transboundary migration;
- g) Intensify processes to acquire a support for an establishment of transboundary biosphere reserves from respective ministries and other governmental entities of the neighbouring countries;
- h) Seek an opportunity to establish a cluster biosphere reserve in the Baltic States and enhance cooperation between biosphere reserves already established in this region;

- i) Request the new governmental authorities of Kaliningrad region to strengthen cooperation with the Baltic States to create a unified regional system of protected nature complexes and develop monitoring systems to reinforce biosphere reserve network within the MAB programme.

4. With regard to enhance a regional cooperation within the EuroMAB Network to:

- a) Request National MAB Committees of the UNESCO Moscow Office's cluster countries and Baltic States, included in the EuroMAB Network, to prepare for an upcoming meeting of this Network (Sweden, June 2011) recommendations for an adopting the project which outlines immediate measures for an implementation of the Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;
- b) Taking into account that transboundary protected areas play an important role in biological and landscape diversity conservation in different world regions and in strengthening a cooperation between neighboring countries, request National Commissions for UNESCO of the UNESCO Moscow Office cluster countries and Baltic States, as well as other UNESCO member states, to pay a special attention on an elaboration and adoption by the UNESCO an international convention on transboundary protected territories in order *to*: i) increase their national legislative status, *and* ii) provide a technical assistance to legislative and governing bodies of the interested countries;
- c) Seek the UNESCO support to develop a pilot project (at national or sub-regional scale) to enhance an understanding of "ecosystem services";
- d) Share experience and best practices through the UNESCO web-platform regarding administrative and financial issues and management of BRs under conditions of limited governmental financing;
- e) Ask the UNESCO assistance in seeking an opportunity to develop and submit a joint proposal of the Governments of Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Lithuania to the Global Environment Facility on an establishment of the unified belt of wetlands of the international importance (with the key BR within its territory) from the Azov Sea to the Baltic Sea;
- f) Request the UNESCO MAB Secretariat to discuss with GEF Secretariat a potential sub-regional project proposal on introducing biosphere reserve concept and implementing the Madrid Action Plan in Russian and CIS BRs (especially protected nature areas).

5. Reconfirming the EuroMAB 2009 finding that communication is a key strategic area to raise awareness on BRs, following actions with a special focus on capacity-building are proposed to the UNESCO:

- a) assist in organizing of trainings (courses, workshops, etc.) on BR concept and in particular, on legal issues related to BR establishment and management for different target groups – i.e. decision-makers, parliamentarians, local authorities, journalists, etc.;
- b) develop new tools of a communication within BR, and between BR administration, decision-makers, local communities;
- c) support translations of key UNESCO documents, including "model law" as proposed in UNESCO study into Russian language;
- d) seek a support to develop Atlas on BRs of the UNESCO Moscow Office cluster countries, CIS and the Baltic States;

- e) elaborate and publish brochures, books and booklets about biosphere reserves;
- f) develop a joint project focused on BR concept awareness enhancement – i.e. publishing brochures/booklets for different target groups.

CONCLUSIONS:

The workshop participants unanimously agreed that there is a strong need of legislative acts, defining the status of biosphere reserves. Besides legislation the networking and cooperation should be developed both on international and regional levels, because quite often biosphere reserves face the same challenges.

The UNESCO Moscow Office would like to thank the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and the Russian MAB Committee for their support and assistance in a preparation and a successful implementation of the workshop. Furthermore, an acknowledgement is given to the non-commercial partnership “Eurasian Biosphere Reserves” for a significant help in a course of the workshop process.

The organizers are very thankful to all participants for their high quality prepared contributions, experience sharing, new ideas and concrete recommendations, active and enthusiastic approach and efforts to cooperate further.

Special thanks shall be given to Secretaries General of National Commissions of cluster countries within the UNESCO Moscow Office for their facilitating role and providing information on BRs in a country context.

Finally, last but not least, the UNESCO Moscow Office would like to thank the management and the staff of the Biosphere Reserve “Smolensk Lakeland” for the excellent organization and warm hospitality.

Workshop results and undertaken follow-up actions will be presented at the EuroMAB meeting, held in Sweden in June 2011.