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Man and the Biosphere
Programme



5th WCBR
2025 HANGZHOU

the Fifth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (WCBR)

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

Hangzhou, China, 22 – 26 September 2025



ANNOTATED AGENDA

Morning session Opening Ceremony

10:00 – 10:20 Presided over by Mr Jie Liu, Governor of Zhejiang Province Zhejiang Province, People's Republic of China

Opening remarks

- **Mr Xuexiang Ding**, Vice-premier of the State Council, People's Republic of China
- **Ms Audrey Azoulay**, Director General, UNESCO

10:20 – 10:40 **Welcome statements**

- **Mr Jianguo Hou**, President, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- **Mr Hao Wang**, Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Zhejiang Provincial Committee, the People's Republic of China
- **Ms Latifa Yaakoubi**, Chair of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme (MAB-ICC)

10:40 – 10:45 **UNESCO conferred honorary recognition on the host city**

The UNESCO Director-General confers marks of honor on the leaders of Hangzhou and Lin'an District.

10:45 – 11:00 **Screening of the Congress Thematic Video (15 min)**

11:00 – 12:00 **Ministerial Session**

Moderated by ADG/SC. Remarks by minister-level participants

- **Ms Shina Ansari**, Deputy Vice President and President of the Department of Environment, the Islamic Republic of Iran
- **Ms Nilda Borges da Mata**, Minister of Environment, São Tomé and Príncipe
- **Mr Aram Meymaryan**, Deputy Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia
- **Mr Narend Singh**, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of the Republic of South Africa
- **Mr Baotong Dong**, Vice Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, People's Republic of China
- **Mr Guohong Liu**, Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, People's Republic of China
- **Mr Bruno Angelet**, Ambassador of Belgium to China and Mongolia
- **Ms Sara Aagesen Muñoz**, Third Vice-President and Minister for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Spain (video message)

To be confirmed

- **Mr Franz Tattenbach**, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica
- **Ms Mirela Kumbaro Furxhi**, Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania

Lunch break Side-events

Afternoon session

Session 1 – Consideration of draft MAB Strategy and Action Plan

Objective: Review the progress achieved under the MAB Strategy (2015–2025) and the Lima Action Plan (2016–2025) within the current global context, and present the new MAB Strategy and Action Plan

Moderated by Ms Latifa Yaakoubi and Mr Qunli Han

15:00 – 15:45 **Reflections on the past decade (2016–2025)**

Video on the decade of Lima Action Plan: achievement and outlook

Keynote report: Reflections on the past decade of MAB Programme by **Mr António Abreu**, Secretary of MAB Programme

Keynote report: The contribution of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to Global Biodiversity Conservation: Statues, Challenges and Opportunities, by **Mr Zhiyun Ouyang**, Chinese Academy of Sciences

15:45 – 16:10 **Presentation of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan (2026–2035)**

Drafting process, and the content of the final draft

- **Ms. Natalia Beltrán**, co-chair of the Drafting Group

Speakers

- **Mr Carlos Aldeco**, FAO Representative in China and DPRK
- **Mr Tim Badman**, Director, World Heritage, IUCN Centre for Conservation Action, IUCN
- **Prof Zhi Lü**, Co-Chair of the 2nd IPBES Global Assessment, Executive Director of Peking University Center for Nature and Society
- **Dr Carolina Adler**, Co-Chair Advisory Board for the UN-declared International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC Lead Author), Executive Director of Mountain Research Initiative
- **Mr Motohiro Hasegawa**, Senior Advisor, Japan International Cooperation Agency; Member of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation (TSC IAG), Convention on Biological Diversity
- **Ms Malene Nielsen**, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Denmark to UNESCO

17:00 – 17:55 **Comments and feedback**

Intervention from the floor

17:55 – 18:00

Wrap-up by the moderator

18:30 – 20:00 **Welcoming Reception**

08:00 – 9:50 Meetings of thematic networks

Morning session Session 2 – Biodiversity, Science and Education

Objective: This session will highlight the essential role of UNESCO's Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs, and research institutions in advancing knowledge exchange and education to promote science-based solutions for biodiversity conservation. It will explore how these entities contribute to Objective C of the new Strategic Action Plan, which emphasizes the development of research and the exchange of knowledge from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) to facilitate living in harmony with nature and inspire sustainable futures. The session will also address the role of UNESCO's Category 2 Centres and UNESCO Chairs and academia in general, in supporting biosphere reserves as living laboratories for interdisciplinary research, contributing to the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda, while driving transformative change beyond 2030.

Moderated by Prof. Fernanda Rollo, New University of Lisbon, Portugal

10:00 – 10:10 Session Introduction: Prof. Fernanda Rollo, New University of Lisbon, Portugal

10:10 – 10:15 VVideo message from UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Ms Stefania Giannini (3 minutes)

Panel discussion with the representatives of UNESCO Category 2 Centres, Chairs, research institutions

Keynote speech: International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development

- **Mr Shaofeng Hu**, Director of the Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building in the Natural Sciences Sector, International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable, UNESCO.

10:15 – 11:15 Panel discussion:

Presentations by the representatives of UNESCO Category 2 Centres, Chairs, and research institutions Speakers

- **Mr Huadong Guo**, Director of International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST), Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, China
- **Mr Baudouin Michel**, Director of the Regional Postgraduate School of Integrated Management and Planning of Tropical Forests and Territories (ERAIFT), Democratic Republic of the Congo
- **Mr Yulburm Lee**, Director-General, Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas (GCIDA), Jeju Island, Republic of Korea
- **Ms Sjöfn Vilhelmsdóttir**, Director, GRÓ Land Restoration Training Programme (GRÓ LRT); GRÓ Category 2 Centre Reykjavík, Iceland
- **Prof. Dr. Carsten Mann**, Academic Director, Biosphere Reserve Institute (BRI), Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development, Germany

11:15–11:30 Question and Comments

Intervention from the floor

11:30–11:40 Break and change of panel

11:40–12:30 Panel discussion: Insights from UNESCO Chairs and Leading Experts
Speakers

- **Prof Aida Mammadova**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Intergenerational Learning for Sustainable Development, Kanazawa University, Japan
- **Prof Helena Freitas**, Chairholder, UNESCO Chair in Biodiversity and Conservation for Sustainable Development, University of Coimbra, Portugal
- **Prof Tania Moreno-Ramos**, Executive Coordinator, UNESCO Chair on Biosphere Reserves and Natural World Heritage Sites, University for International Cooperation, Costa Rica.
- **Mr Siqi Liu**, Co-founder and BGI Chief Scientist in Protein Sciences, BGI Group, China

12:30–12:50 Question and Comments

Intervention from the floor

12:50–13:00 Wrap-up by the moderator

Lunch break Side-events

Afternoon session **Session 3 – Optimizing partnership and finance for biosphere reserves**

Objective: This session will underscore the critical role of innovative financing solutions and cross-sectoral collaboration in ensuring long-term sustainability, effective management, and resilience of biosphere reserves. Through a dynamic dialogue between financial institutions and the global biosphere reserve community, it will explore strategic approaches to mobilizing nature finance and fostering transformative partnerships. The discussion aims to advance Objective B of the new Strategic Action Plan, which highlights the need to strengthen the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) through the mobilization of both human and financial resources.

Moderated by Mr. Julien Pellaux

15:00 – 15:05

Session Introduction

- **Mr. Julien Pellaux**, Director, Division for Partnerships, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO

15:05 – 15:35

Panel discussion: Nature Finance Led by Multilateral and International Financing Institutions

Speakers

- **Mr Qingfeng Zhang**, Senior Director, Agriculture, Food, Nature and Rural Department Sector Office, Asian Development Bank
- **Mr Giovanni Ruta (TBC)**, Lead Environmental Economist, World Bank
- **Ms Jing Xin**, Representative, Kunming Biodiversity Fund
- **Ms Mbali Mashele**, Project Coordinator, UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa

15:35 – 15:55

Question and Comments

Following the panel discussion, the panelists are invited to remain on stage as the moderator opens the floor for comments and questions.

15:55 – 16:00

Change of panel

16:00 – 16:40

Panel discussion: Resource Mobilization through Bilateral and Government Cooperation

Speakers

- **Mr Nelson Castiaux**, First Secretary (economy), Embassy of Belgium in China
- **Mr Geert Verreet**, Advisor, Flanders Department of Work, Economy, Science, Innovation and Social Economy (WEWIS), Government of Flanders, Belgium
- **Mr Javier Pantoja Trigueros**, Director, National Parks Autonomous Agency (OAPN), Spain
- **TBC**, French Development Agency (AFD)
- **Ms June Marie Mow**, Executive Director, Providence Foundation; Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, Colombia

16:40 – 17:00

Question and Comments

Following the panel discussion, the panelists are invited to remain on stage as the moderator opens the floor for comments and questions.

17:00 – 17:05

Change of panel

17:05 – 17:30

Panel discussion: Innovative Contributions from the Private Sector and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

Speakers

- **Ms Elena Salgado**, President, Abertis Foundation, Spain
- **Mr Xiaoying Wang**, Director of Sustainable Development, Ant Group; Secretary-General, Ant Forest Foundation, China
- **Ms Jingru Song**, General Manager of the Nature Education Center, Chinese National Geography, China
- **Prof Dr Ir. Yohanes Purwanto DEA**, Chairman, Indonesian Ethnobiology Society Association, Chairman of MAB Indonesian Association, The National Research and Innovation Agency, BRIN, Indonesia

17:30 – 17:55

Question and Comments

Following the panel discussion, the panelists are invited to remain on stage as the moderator opens the floor for comments and questions.

17:55 – 18:00

Wrap-up by the moderator

Evening

Side-events

08:00 – 9:50 **Meetings of regional networks**

Self-organized by each regional network. No official interpretation

Morning session **Session 4 – Enhancing global, Regional and thematic networks**

Objective: This session aims to highlight the role of regional and thematic networks in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building among biosphere reserves. It will explore how these networks can align their efforts with shared priorities and act as platforms to collectively address complex biodiversity and sustainability challenges across different scales—local, national, regional, and global. This session will also highlight the key priorities, achievements, and challenges of regional and thematic MAB networks as they align with the new Strategic Action Plan.

Moderated by Dr Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa and Dr Miguel Clüsener-Godt

10:00 – 10:10 **Session Introduction:** Dr Noëline Raondry Rakotoarisoa

10:10 – 10:50 **Panel discussion: Presentations by the representatives of the Regional Networks**
Speakers

- **Mr Telesphore Ngoga**, Conservation Analyst, Rwanda Development Board, representative of AfriMAB
- **Ms Aseela Al Moalla**, Director of the Fujairah Environment Authority, United Arab Emirates, Chair of the ArabMAB
- **Mr Dato Cheok Lay Leng**, General Manager of Penang Hill Corporation, Malaysia, Representative of Asian Biosphere Reserve Network
- **Mr Jean-Philippe Messier**, director of the Manicouagan–Uapishka UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (RMBMU), Canada, representative of EuroMAB
- **Ms Rosario Barrera**, Specialist at the National Service of Natural Protected Areas (SERNANP), MAB-Peru technical focal point, Vice-President of the IberoMAB Network Board

10:50 – 11:20 **Question and Comments**
Intervention from the floor

11:20 – 11:30 **Break and change of panel**

11:30 – 11:40 **Panel discussion introduction:** Dr Miguel Clüsener-Godt

11:40 – 12:20 **Panel discussion: Presentations by the representatives of the Thematic Networks**
Speakers

- **Prof Xu Weihua**, Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China, Technical Secretariat of the World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserve
- **Ms Georgina Flamme**, director of the Abertis Foundation, Representative of Mediterranean Network of Biosphere Reserves, Spain
- **Mr Alex Cortada**, Environmental technician, Coordinator of the Menorca Secretariat of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves Ms Helena Freitas, Full Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Representative of the Network of Biosphere Reserves in the Portuguese Speaking Countries Community (CPLP-MAB)
- **Mr Clayton Lino**, Coordinator of International Cooperation for the Brazilian Biosphere Reserves Network and the Mata Atlântica Biosphere Reserve. Representative of the CaveMAB Network.

12:20 – 12:50 **Question and Comments**
Intervention from the floor (2–3 min interventions)

12:50 – 13:00 Wrap-up by the moderator

Lunch break Side-events

Afternoon session **Session 5 – Biosphere Reserve Dialogue**

Objective: With the aim of stimulating action at all levels of the MAB Programme, this panel highlights people, particularly those who have been historically marginalized in biosphere reserve governance, and their fundamental role as stewards, champions and leaders of conservation and sustainable development in their biosphere reserves and across the world. It also showcases some examples of good practice that provide insight and guidance for addressing exclusion from across the world. Specifically, discussion will focus on the unique rights, contributions and vulnerabilities of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), Youth and Women.

Moderator: Barsha Lekhi, UNESCO Indigenous Engagement Specialist, FU/KAT

15:00 – 15:05 **Welcome & Introduction to Session**

15:05 – 15:40 **Section Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Panel**

Moderator: Barsha Lekhi / Serena Heckler

UNESCO ADG Sciences – Ms Lidia Brito to present the UNESCO publication “Indigenous knowledge, Ancestral Places: Navigating Change in UNESCO Designated Sites”

Speakers

International Indigenous People’s Forum for World Heritage—The role of the IIPFWH for UNESCO site governance (video)

- **Case study from LAC:** Rosario Barrera Caceres, MAB Peru, Vice-President, IberoMAB Network—IberoMAB Action Framework for Indigenous and Afrodescendant Rights in LAC Biosphere Reserves
- **Case study from Asia:** Custodians of the Kanchenjunga—Building a biosphere reserve in Kanchenjunga Conservation Area with indigenous knowledge and science (Nepal) (Barsha Lekhi)
- **Case study from Africa:** Cybertracker for community-based monitoring in Okavango World Heritage Site, UNESCO Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) Programme (video)

15:40 – 16:00 **Question and Comments**

Intervention from the floor

16:00 – 16:05 **Break and change of panel**

MAB Youth Presentation and Panel

Moderator: Barsha Lekhi / Kelly Cerialo

Speakers

AfriMAB Youth Delegate

ArabMAB Youth Delegate

Asia Pacific Youth Delegate

EuroMAB Youth Delegate

IberoMAB Youth Delegate

16:05 – 16:55 **Question and Comments**

Intervention from the floor

16:40 – 16:55 **Break and change of panel**

16:55 – 17:00 **Women in Biosphere Reserves**

Moderator: Barsha Lekhi

17:00 – 17:35 **Speakers**

- **Ms. Kaline Rossi**, Amazon Project focal point working on the creation of the Women’s network of the Central Amazon Biosphere Reserve
- **Ms. Sheila Ashong**, Director, natural resources /coordinator, Mabghana environmental protection authority
- **Ms. Neha Midha**, UNESCO national officer New Delhi
- **Ms. Beni Rodríguez**, Manager of the Alto Bernesga Biosphere Reserve and Chair of the Network of Biosphere Reserve Managers in Spain

17:35 – 17:50 **Question and Comments**

Intervention from the floor

17:50 – 18:00 Session wrap up and summary on main outcomes

Evening Side-events

Day4

Thursday 25 September



08:00 – 9:50 Meetings of regional networks

Self-organized by each regional network. No official interpretation

Morning session Plenary Closing Session

10:00 – 12:00 Endorsement of the new Strategy and Action Plan and the Hangzhou Declaration

A brief recap of the Ministerial session (particularly on potential commitments and aspirations)

Moderators providing a recap of outcomes/recommendations from the Sessions 1-5

Presentation of the Hangzhou Declaration

Endorsement of the new MAB strategy and Hangzhou Declaration

12:00 – 13:00 Closing session

Closing remarks by:

Representative of the host country (CAS and Hangzhou city)

UNESCO General Conference President

Representative of UNESCO: ADG/SC

Secretary of the MAB Programme

25 September –26 September:

Two optional field visits (participants may choose one) for Congress attendees not participating in the MAB-ICC.