

## Biodiversity and Climate Change

### I- Context

Biodiversity is as important as climate change and both must be treated with equal importance. **Climate change is a major factor in the erosion of biodiversity.** Changes in atmospheric temperature and precipitation, ocean acidification, sea-level rising, and the nature of some extreme events are affecting biodiversity and ecosystem services. In addition, climate change amplifies the effects of other factors such as habitat degradation, pollution, invasive species, overexploitation, population movements and migration. **On the other hand, biodiversity loss accelerates climate change processes,** with the ability of degraded ecosystems to assimilate and store CO<sub>2</sub> tending to decrease, reducing the available adaptation options.

The 7<sup>th</sup> IPBES Plenary held in UNESCO in April-May 2019 adopted the first Intergovernmental Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (negotiated approved by 132 countries), which clearly highlights these interactions (UNESCO is one of the four United Nations institutional partners together with UNEP, FAO and UNDP of IPBES). The consequences of global changes in climate, biodiversity and nature's contributions to people will be felt most acutely in lands that are home to large proportions of the world's indigenous populations and many of the world's poorest communities. UNESCO's commitment to biodiversity and climate change is a concern for its all sectors of programme.

**UNESCO's key message for the Summit: humanity has a global responsibility to address these two challenges and their interactions at the same time and with the same urgency.**

### II- Proposed activities during the Climate Summit

UNESCO can make a unique contribution to the articulation of local and indigenous cultures, sciences and knowledge on these issues during the Climate Summit in New York through:

- 1) **Sharing of solutions from site networks** such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Geoparks:
  - a) **AXA - UNESCO/MAB exhibition on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (location to be identified inside the UN building or on the fences)**

*Message: UNESCO connects citizens from the local to the global through its networks and demonstrates that it is possible in all ecosystems to reconcile human beings with life.*
  - b) **One-minute videos #ProudToShare on social networks and screens on climate change and biodiversity interactions and local actors' solutions on screens everywhere in the venue of the Summit.** The #ProudToShare campaign consist in 30 selected videos, released in 2018. They show how positive actions in biosphere reserves are contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda as a whole ([available online](#)).
  - c) **Panel of UN Ambassadors from Member States of Lake Chad project on the preservation of natural and cultural diversity and heritage of the Lake Chad region.** The BIOPALT project aims to strengthen the capacities of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Member States to safeguard and sustainably manage the water, biological and cultural resources of the Lake Chad Basin, in order to contribute to poverty reduction and promote peace. The Lake Chad basin is of vital importance both economically and ecologically. Located at the crossroads of Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, Niger and Nigeria, it supports more than 40 million people.

The panel would show case the BIOPALT project as an example of an innovative project of multidisciplinary cooperation mobilizing the Organization's expertise in the fields of Natural Sciences (Water and Ecological Sciences), Culture, Education and Social Sciences, which addresses several SDG's, particularly SDGs 6, 11 and 15. It will provide a platform for governments, UN agencies, civil society and academia for reflecting on the relevance to adopt a multisectoral and integrated approach to contribute solving the crisis in the Lake Chad area. It will also show how biosphere reserves are learning places for sustainable development.

**2) Panel with representatives of UNESCO sites, researchers from the IPBES World Report and young people as messengers of the necessary transformation (Theses Young people will just be back from the MAB Forum.**

UNESCO can count on MAB Youth Forum delegates committed 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. They have been carefully selected upon evaluation of a personal letter of motivation and considering a support letter from their respective Biosphere Reserve / MAB National Committee / National Commission for UNESCO. They are engaged with UNESCO and the MAB Programme in their respective living/working context. They belong to, the MAB Youth Forum delegates commit to concrete actions to develop and promote interactive tools for sharing information about the MAB programme at all levels. **They meet annually, namely in China in September 2019, just before the Climate Summit.**

**Message:** *Mobilizing young people as messengers between generations for a sustainable world within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves: invite representatives of young people who participated in the MAB Youth forum to be held in the Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve from 14 to 19 September 2019 to launch a message and involve youth from our networks in the post-2020 process on the New Human and Nature Pact until COP 15 in China in October 2020.*

### **III- Expected results**

UNESCO promotes solutions and practices from territories and sites classified by UNESCO and shares concrete stories of **in-depth transformation of lifestyles and societies through the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the site and country level.** This transformation requires a change in mentalities and the sharing of values and cultures, the transmission of knowledge and know-how: this is UNESCO's raison d'être.