

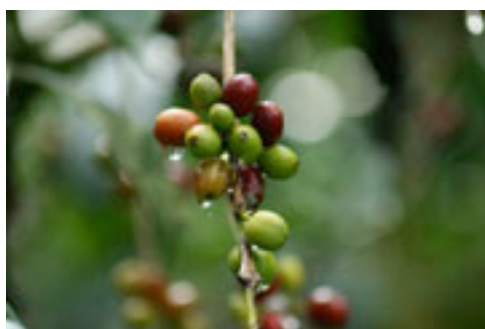


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# UN NEWS CENTRE



## Biosphere reserves in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe join UN list



The rare Coffee Arabica originated in Kafa, an Ethiopian highland region

2 June 2010 – For the first time, biosphere reserves in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe are joining the United Nations network that was created in an attempt to halt the loss of biodiversity and promote sustainable development.

The more than 500 sites in 109 countries are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), designated “to serve as places to test different approaches to integrated management of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine resources and biodiversity,” according to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), which oversees the network through its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme.

Kafa, an Ethiopian highland region which contains 50 per cent of the country’s remaining Afromontane evergreen forest ecosystems and origin of the rare Coffee Arabica, was added to the network, as was Yaya, in the country’s southwest.

It is considered one of the world’s 34 vital yet threatened areas for biodiversity conservation and known for undisturbed natural forests and semi-forest systems which produce coffee, spices, honey and wood, while providing important ecosystem services such as watershed production in the Nile.

Also joining the network is the Zambezi valley in Zimbabwe, which contains riverine and terrestrial ecosystems unique to the subcontinent, including the Mana Pools National Park, already a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A dozen other sites were added in Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Slovenia and Sweden, while five sites were extended in Chile, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany and Switzerland.

The decisions were made at the five-day meeting of the International Coordinating Council of MAB currently under way at UNESCO's Paris headquarters.

The body had planned to review 25 new proposals and applications for extension, but Sweden and the United Kingdom withdrew their proposals for the inclusion of Lake Trone and Tavnish, respectively, because they had not met the required criteria.

This year's meeting coincides with the International Year of Biodiversity designated by the General Assembly to promote the protection of the planet's species and habitats.

Biodiversity will be discussed in a special thematic session at the annual high-level debate in September in New York.

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