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New nature reserves to be added to UN list



Mata Atlântica Biosphere Reserve, Brazil

31 May 2010 – New nature reserves such as lakes and wetlands will be added to a United Nations network that was created in an attempt to halt the loss of biodiversity and promote sustainable development, during a meeting that began today at the headquarters of the UN agency tasked with preserving the world's heritage.

In total, 25 new proposals and applications for extension will be examined for addition to the list of biosphere reserves during the five-day **meeting** of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (**MAB**), a programme of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**).

The proposed additions to the MAB network come from 20 countries. The Council will also examine applications for the MAB Awards for young scientists, UNESCO said in a press release.

Every year since 1989, 10 young researchers have received awards worth up to \$5,000 each to support their examination of ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity. This year, two special awards, financed by the Austrian MAB committee, will also be given to young scientists within the context of the International Year of Biodiversity.

Those seeking the Michel Batisse Award, which is worth \$6,000 and is awarded every two years, will present their work to the Council showing how they were managing a nature reserve.

A touring exhibition of aerial photographs of the Rhône Delta in France taken by Jean E. Roché will be the subject of a presentation on Wednesday.

The MAB World Network numbers 553 sites in 107 countries. It includes sites as varied as Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia, the largest freshwater lake in Asia; the Mare aux Hippopotames (Hippopotamus Lake) in Burkina Faso; the Pantanal wetland region in Brazil and Fuerteventura Island in the Canaries Archipelago in Spain.

Biosphere reserves are sites that are proposed by local and national authorities, in cooperation with local communities, where new practices for reconciling human activities and nature are tested. In this way, biosphere reserves are laboratories for sustainable development, according to UNESCO.

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