

STATEMENT
to Participants of the 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves: Biosphere Futures, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development

BEING CONVINCED that by conserving ecosystems and biological diversity biosphere reserves create basic conditions for sustainable socio-economic development of nearby areas;

UNDERLINING the importance of biosphere reserves for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation as well as to ensure that the system of Russia's biosphere reserves will develop in compliance to the internationally recognized concept of the UNESCO MAB Program;

CONSIDERING change in terminology regarding "MAB Program" and "biosphere reserves" as well as the integrative character of zonation functions being proposed at the Madrid World Congress,

1. We claim that:

- (a) Supposed conceptual changes will create a new paradigm, which will differ in principal from the current concept of biosphere reserves.
- (b) In Russia, biosphere reserves have been mainly established on the basis of strict nature reserves (zapovedniks). Therefore, **the Russian biosphere reserve is, first of all, a protected nature area**, and the internationally recognized term "reserve" reflects this key circumstance.
- (c) In Russia, core areas of biosphere reserves represent or shall represent in future natural or minimally disturbed ecosystems, centers of endemism, genetic resources, unique natural features and are respectively of exceptional scientific and conservation significance; **within core areas the function of conservation has a priority**.
- (d) Under conditions of Russia **income generation is not the function of biosphere reserve's core areas**, although in some circumstances this is permitted from eco-tourism.

2. We urge the Congress participants:

Considering the above principal peculiarities of Russia's (as well as some other countries) biosphere reserves, to provide reasonable flexibility in basic documents of the Madrid Congress, thus permitting Russian biosphere reserves to remain integrated in the updated concept.

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