

The secretariat of the MAB Programme and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe are proud to announce the organization of the 2017 MAB YOUTH FORUM - committed to sustainable Development, to be held in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, on 18-23 September 2017. Young people are the future of Biosphere reserves and must be given a voice in shaping their territory and defining their engagement in the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO. The MAB Secretariat considers, therefore, the need to offer, in collaboration with the Regional Bureau located in Venice, an opportunity for young people who care about the special territories in which they live in to become active in the MAB Programme and to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, in line with the Lima Action Plan. This initiative, announced for the first time during the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru, has been welcomed by a standing ovation!

2017 MAB YOUTH FORUM

Committed to
Sustainable
Development



A CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIMA ACTION PLAN 2016-2025

The Lima Action Plan, adopted in March 2016 at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, to implement the 2015-2025 Strategy of the MAB Programme, provides a sound basis on which to build initiatives such as the 2017 MAB Youth Forum.

We refer, in particular, to the desire to establish strong partnerships with universities and research institutions to support essential capacity-building processes, and the need to strengthen and support a participatory and inclusive network of all stakeholders within the MAB Programme and Biosphere Reserves, to ensure the better involvement of youth in governance.

The exchange of best practices and the promotion of Biosphere Reserves as tools for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be an important focus of the Forum since they should be models of sustainability across the board, from the good management of natural resources to the green economy, from sustainable tourism to education.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Regional
Bureau
for Science
and Culture
in Europe



Man and
the Biosphere
programme



Biosfera Delta Po
uomo e natura insieme



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

The Forum is conceived as an event that will provide young people with a unique opportunity to meet, debate and share their vision and commitment to sustainable development. It aims to become a place where strategies and action proposals can be discussed and implemented in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum is fully aligned with UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth. Young women and men are a priority group of the Organization's actions, engaging them not only as beneficiaries of actions, but also as fully-fledged actors and partners. Their civic involvement, participation in democratic life and social innovation are among the main fields of focus of UNESCO's work in the framework of the Strategy. Strengthening their participation in MAB networks and their involvement in the management of Biosphere Reserves aims to ensure they become agents of change and promoters of a more equitable and sustainable society.

The contribution of young people to the life of Biosphere Reserves

1

In many parts of the world, Biosphere Reserves are suffering from aging populations and the exodus of their young people to urban and industrialized areas. Youth who live and work in Biosphere Reserve territories, not only have material needs that must be met within the context of the Reserves, they also require a socio-cultural enabling environment, such as a space for expression and effective involvement in development and governance of the Reserves.

Research and studies into the sustainable development of Biosphere Reserves

2

It is not easy to choose what to study in order to give active contribution to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially working in a local reality like that of Biosphere Reserves. The Forum, at a stage developed in collaboration with the University of Padua and other Italian universities, intends to offer itself as a platform for discussion with the academia and research institutions. During this time, young people can express their needs and requests regarding their education and get inspired for the orientation of their studies and profession, and identify possible future research topics related to the MAB Programme.



Thematic areas

A large-scale, online consultation will shortly be implemented among youth stakeholders of the MAB, which will provide an opportunity to define their expectations and the issues to be debated during the Forum. At the moment, 3 thematic areas around which to develop the preparation and implementation of the Forum have been identified.

A sustainable future for the youth of Biosphere Reserves

3

Some youth have already embarked on an occupation, directly related to the conservation and management of the territory of Biosphere Reserves (management of protected areas, nature guide, administration and services, research, etc.) or with the sustainable exploitation of its resources (agriculture, fisheries, the "green" industry, tourism, etc.). The Forum aims to give voice to their concerns and encourage an exchange of best practices and business ideas, which could take the form of proposals for partnerships and transnational projects, to be submitted to potential donors.



MAB Youth ambassadors (ideally one per region of the world) will be designated at the end of the Forum and charged with the mission of:

- representing the MAB Youth community during the 2017 UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris;
- presenting the messages from the Forum to the MAB ICC in June 2018



MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

- Arrival and registration of participants;
- Plenary at the Adria City Theatre in the late afternoon; welcome address from UNESCO, the involved institutions and supporters;
- Concert and presentation of video clips of various Biosphere Reserves involved;
- Evening ceremony.

TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

The day will be devoted to thematic sessions which will be conducted in various locations in Padua and in the Po Delta, organized according to the issues identified through online consultations. Each thematic session will be facilitated by professional youth moderators, so to ensure a good contribution to the formulation of the final declaration and identification of future activities to be developed within the MAB Programme.

WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

During this day devoted to visit the territory of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, participants will have the opportunity to discover its environmental, historical, socio-cultural and productive peculiarities. The programme - still to be defined - could include:

- Visits to typical local (youth-led) enterprises;
- Meetings with representatives of associations, including youth-led, involved in the life of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve;
- Trips by various means in the Po Delta (protected areas, historical sites);
- Other activities to be identified.

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

Continuation of the thematic sessions in various locations.

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2017

Morning:

- In the Po Delta BR: Selected participants, moderators of the different sessions and organizers of the Forum will meet to draw up the final declaration and the conclusions of the Forum – All other participants will have time for meetings and exchange of ideas/ project proposals;
- At the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe located in Venice: High-Level Panel on “Youth and Sustainable Development” with representatives of UNESCO, other IGOs and Italian Authorities.

Afternoon:

- Plenary at the Adria City Theatre for the presentation and adoption of the final declaration and a possible plan of action;
- Appointment of 6 MAB Youth Ambassadors who will deliver these outcomes to the UNESCO Youth Forum and MAB ICC;
- Closing Ceremony;
- Viewing of the Video realized during the first MAB World Youth Forum.

Evening:

- Dinner and closing concert





Thanks to the economic support provided by UNESCO, the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo and the Regione del Veneto, the organizers of the Forum will be able to cover the travel costs for up to 100 participants, particularly those from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. In addition, the Organization will pay for the accommodation costs of a maximum of 250 participants.

Participants

The Forum is addressed to youth aged between 18 and 35, who live or work in Biosphere Reserves, or who study or conduct research in these areas. The participants will be nominated by their respective Biosphere Reserve managers/coordinators, and supported by their MAB National Committees.

The organizers will promote a gender parity in the Forum participation and, considering the 3 main thematic areas of the Forum, the following 3 main categories of participants should be also equally represented:

1. Youth active in the civil society (associations) of their territory;
2. Youth dedicating their studies/research to their territory;
3. Youth earning their livelihood within the Biosphere Reserve.

A good knowledge of English is required, since it will be the lingua franca of all activities of the Forum.

Application procedures

Participants will have to fill out the application form at :

www.MYForum2017.com

They must attach a motivation letter and a letter of recommendation/ support from their Biosphere Reserve.

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