

Transcript of the Video

Miguel Clusener Godt

Hello, ladies and gentlemen, Friends of the Biosphere Reserve, my name is Miguel Clusener-Godt, the director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and also the secretary of the Man and the Biosphere Program. So the Man and the Biosphere Program program started in 1971, so almost 50 years ago as a research program, but also as a program of integrating nature conservation and integrating sustainable development for human beings.

So those days, it was extremely full participating already.

What became quite normal after the Rio conference in 1992 and also after the most recent events, also taking into account, for example, the results of the Paris agreement and working on climate change issues from the IPBES platform, working on biodiversity conservation.

So the backbone, of course, of the program are the Biosphere Reserves. And you will see on the slides what I am talking about. I will show you two slides. This one is some figures. I will start also showing you on the right side up of the slide what is the biosphere reserve the core area surrounding buffer zone and surrounding transition area.

But today and I say today, it's 2020.

We are now having at the MAB International Co-ordinating Council, which every year designates new sites worldwide. So we had this year some 25 new sites designated. And our total figure now is seven hundred fourteen Biosphere Reserves in one hundred twenty-nine countries, including 21 transboundary biosphere reserves and two transcontinental Biosphere Reserves. So these are the raw figures, I would say, on the overall network. So as you can see, they are spread all over the world. And of course, it's quite important. And this program is not another program just for natural parks or nature conservation. We have a total of more than 200 million people.

In these biosphere reserves. So it's really a program for the people or people are part of nature and they are not opposed to nature, so they're incorporated in the nature protection, but also in the sustainable use of natural resources.

Speaking about the size of biosphere reserves worldwide, imagine we will we pushed them all together, this will give us around five percent of the world's total surface.

So all together is roughly some seven million square, seven million square kilometers . This would give us around the size of Australia. So when you hear the figures, 260 million people the size of Australia, five percent of the terrestrial surface of the world , you may have heard that the conventional biological diversity CBD recently declared that the Decade for Biodiversity Conservation 2020-2030 and suggested 30 percent of the terrestrial area protected , 10 percent strictly protected . So this is the target. I think it's a very good target and we are all called to participate in that. However, I must say that the program is , of course ,

participating in this for quite a long time now and that we have , as I already mentioned , five percent of the terrestrial size of the world protected and one point five percent strictly protected as national parks. So we are still far away from that target, and I think it's quite important . When you see also on the right down side of the slide, the distribution of this surface in different zones.

So you see a big transition area and slightly smaller buffer zone , even smaller core area . These , of course , the tendencies on the program , let's say , for the last 15 more or less before always , the core area was more dominating . So this give you just a roughly a rough overview , what we are talking about and concerning also. Some curious facts would come to the second slide and to give you an overview , for example , where these areas are distributed , for example , you see that the regional distribution of biosphere reserve is mostly in the Europe and North American area . However , you see the total size of the biosphere reserves , the area that covers most is , of course , Latin America .

You see the pilot on the right side, just to give you some curious facts also , because we will we will often ask, what is the minimum size ? What is the maximum size? Does this exist? So , first of all , I would say these biosphere reserves are represented in all ecosystems of the world . They are covering all parts , whether high mountains , savannas , islands , coastlines , peri urban areas . So they are all present. And when you see , for example , point number one , the biggest size , this is Brazil , more than one point seven square kilometers . This is , of course , the midatlantic biosphere reserves that goes over three thousand five hundred kilometers.

But some other curious figures , Costa Rica , more than 50 percent of the national territory is a Biosphere reserve . So a truly development plan for the country .

Now we are coming to Spain .

Spain has the biggest number of biosphere reserves: 52 . They are , of course , not so big , but they are spread all over the place as useful models for nature conservation and sustainable development . But also some of the emblematic figure on board , for example , the Mount Everest in China is in the along the borders of Qomolangma biosphere reserve, and I'm coming more to the part of protecting the entire population of the highly endangered Sumatran Orangutan . And we are just talking about more than 6000 individuals , which is not very big . And living all together in the Gunung Leuser Biosphere Reserve of Indonesia . What does it mean ? It means that if we don't have one day as far as we can , sure , we will not have these big ape species. And I think there we are touching already at the border of feasibility and the border of real need.

But also who are managing these reserves ? We hear a lot that national governments .

In Spain , for example , autonomous communities or mayors , but the Tsa Tue in Canada is the first Biosphere Reserve in the world managed by what they call first nation indigenous population . It's entirely managed by an indigenous group . And the last figure I just wanted to show you to give you an overview on the program is , of course , the poorest class diasporas in South Africa , which is the only place in the world where we have three recognized biodiversity hotspots coming together . So , again , something that is for nature protection , very important , but also existing in a highly populated area , because the whole cluster of biosphere reserves is really where a lot of people are living and where we , again , feel that we are really touching exactly the border between the people living in the area and the conservation of what could be done . Would like to give you some words why this is so important and why this has become even more important due to the covid-19 crisis .

Human population is going up . Nature . "Wild" nature , in inverted commas , is pushed . In his borders .

And we are coming to a close , we are coming very close , closer than ever been and zoonosis I mean , pandemic coming out of situation , jumping over viruses , parasites to human beings is a lot fact due to these condensing and misusing of natural spaces . So what we need and I think the Secretary-General of the U.N. mentioned it personally recently at the biodiversity meeting in New York . We need more of these areas with bigger areas . We should really go for the target . But for the sake just to be with the target , for the sake is , of course , that our entire planet managed in a sustainable way , that we get protected areas large enough to guarantee also for large most , for example , or for large animal populations , the required space to live well , also for us to produce what we need , agriculture , agroforestry , forest products . But we need also leisure we need also what in latin America is called 'buen vivir', good living for the world population . And I think this is the challenge . I hope this MAB program , and I'm proud to be the secretary of this MAB Program can make a substantial contribution . As you heard from the first slide that I showed you , we have right now one hundred and twenty nine countries on board . So globally speaking , still some 70 countries missing . I would hope they'll get them soon on board with a biosphere reserve proposal , at least one , so that we can really say we have the entire world community on board .

So it was just a brief introduction for you , for your project , for your seminar , for your work in protecting biodiversity , but also in assuring at the same time the integration with sustainable development .

So thank you very much for listening to me . Thank you very much for your interesting and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere program . And looking forward to all your contributions in the future for this interesting program . Thank you very much .