

Transcript of the Video

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The UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are designed to experiment and implement sustainable development approaches in territories, and thus take up fundamental challenges currently facing humanity, both the rapid loss of biodiversity and the challenge of climate change. They were set up under the auspices of a programme, MAB Man and Biosphere, launched in 1971.

The MAB is looking for solutions to manage our resources more rationally. The RBs are sites for experimentation. They contribute to the UN 2030 agenda, to the implementation of sustainable development goals, It is a question of experimenting in BR, then inspiring beyond that, on practices, uses and management methods that have proven their effectiveness.

The first biosphere reserves date back to 1976. At that time, the criteria governing them had not yet been defined. They were built up little by little and were formalized in 1995 at a conference held in Seville, Spain. From this conference emerged the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework for the Global Network, which are still the framework documents for the BRs today. The Seville Strategy defines the main objectives of the biosphere reserves and proposes recommendations to be implemented both at the international level, at the national level and at the level of each reserve, since in fact it is a question of acting at all levels of decision-making to guide policies and to put them in synergy. In the direction of sustainable development. The statutory framework of the World Network sets out the procedure and criteria for designating new biosphere reserves. This document explains what a biosphere reserve is and how it should function.

A biosphere reserve must fulfil 3 functions, 3 complementary, equally important and interconnected functions. The first concerns the conservation of natural diversity, of biodiversity while respecting cultural values, which means that biodiversity will not be conserved in the same way in Europe, Africa or Asia and that it will be adapted to the needs and cultures of the territory in which the biosphere reserve is set up. The second function of BRs is a sustainable development and land-use planning function. The 3rd function is called logistical support: this concerns research and scientific monitoring programmes to understand and monitor the territory, and education training raising awareness among inhabitants, stakeholders and visitors with a view to capacity building. which will help to achieve this delicate balance between conservation and sustainable development. 2 ideas to keep in mind: a balanced approach to conservation and development and the idea of better knowledge for better management.

Each biosphere reserve must be zoned with 3 types of zones. Core areas, areas protected under the law of the country in which one is located, where biodiversity is protected by legal means, in the long term. Buffer zones, to increase the effectiveness of core area conservation, around each core area: these are often public lands, areas where human activities are controlled in a reasonable manner. Around the core areas and their buffer zone is the transition/cooperation zone, where the towns and villages are located, where all human activities take place and where most of the development or support programme for human development will take place.

Each biosphere reserve must be large enough to be a real demonstrator of sustainable development approaches: the size will depend on the context: in the mountains, in a large homogeneous landscape or on an island, for example, the constraints and challenges will be very different in terms of development, biodiversity and management.

The Seville strategy and the statutory framework place particular emphasis on governance issues: each biosphere reserve must have an open governance system that will associate public interests, local communities and also private interests, both in the construction of the biosphere reserve project and in its implementation; in other words, there must be active local participation to establish and maintain a biosphere reserve because there must be a clear commitment to the project.

Each reserve must have a management policy or plan. That is to say, a document on which people have agreed and which concerns their territory for the years to come. This management policy must be supported by an authority and be endowed with human and financial resources so that it can be implemented.

Today there are 714 Biosphere Reserves in 129 countries. This large network shows that the biosphere reserve concept has the flexibility to adapt to a very large number of geographical, ecological, socio-economic and cultural situations. It has been set up in many regions of the world, and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves today constitutes a global cooperation mechanism and a large library of good practices and case studies in the field of sustainable development, and as such they can inspire the rest of society to face the current challenges we face.