



Press Release

다시, 대한민국!
새로운 국민의 나라

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South Korea was re-elected as vice-chair of UNESCO's International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

- South Korea is expected to gain greater international recognition for its efforts to preserve biodiversity-

Sejong, June 15 - The Ministry of Environment (ME, Minister Han Wha-jin) announced that South Korea was re-elected as vice-chair country of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme at the 34th session of the MAB International Co-ordinating Council held on June 13 in Paris, France. The UNESCO MAB board of directors elected a new chair and vice-chairs. In 2016, South Korea was elected as vice-chair at the 28th UNESCO MAB-ICC and served for two years. The country won the honor again after four years. Nigeria was re-elected as chair, and five nations, including South Korea, Portugal, Ukraine, El Salvador, and Morocco, were elected as vice-chairs.

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) International Coordinating Council is the topmost decision-making body in charge of nominating new biosphere reserves and developing and reviewing the management plans. South Korea will be acting as a vice-chair country for the next two years. In October 2003, South Korea was elected as a member country of the MAB Programme for the first time at the UNESCO's general assembly. The country served as vice-chair in 2008 and 2016 and as chair in 2010.

The MAB Programme was established at the UNESCO general assembly in 1971 to designate and maintain biosphere reserves, one of the three areas (biosphere reserves, world heritage sites, and global geo-parks) internationally protected by UNESCO. UNESCO designates biosphere reserves

to achieve a sustainable society where biodiversity is well-preserved and wisely used. Seven hundred twenty-seven biosphere reserves are designated in 131 countries. In South Korea, nine regions are designated as biosphere reserves, including Seoraksan Mountain and Jeju Island.

In 1995, South Korea led to establishing the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), a group comprised of seven member states, including China and North Korea. South Korea has also contributed to developing a successful international cooperative network by strengthening cooperation between different biosphere areas domestically and internationally and providing capacity-building programs for managers.

Kim Jong-ryul, co-chairman of the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea and Director-General of Nature Conservation Bureau of the Ministry of Environment, said, "It is expected that serving as a vice-chair of the MAB programme would improve South Korea's status in the international community. We will continue cooperating with member countries of UNESCO and play a pivotal role in strengthening the country's capabilities in preserving international biosphere areas."