Preface

Natural habitat and environment are under increasing pressures due to the growing number of human population and their multiple, often conflicting, needs. Mankind relies on ecosystems to provide them with food, source of living and general well-being. The interaction is made more significant particularly for communities living in developing countries, where the society is undergoing transition to a more industrialised living conditions. Such transition usually entails extraction of natural resources. As forestry and marine activities are important contributors of most of developing country’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product), their planning has to be performed in a coordinated manner to ensure a sustainable future.

Through academic, business, government stakeholder collaborations and community co-creation, the Biosphere Reserve (BR) will support the development, implementation and ongoing management of initiatives that promote the sustainable use of nature and natural resources. All stakeholders covering local government, community members, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sectors have their own important roles to play in the management of BR and ensuring that our natural resources are well conserved. One of the most important aspects of this conference is effective and culturally-sensitive relationship building with the wide-ranging stakeholders to engender trust between all parties and to reinforce uptake of the nature and natural resources management strategies developed under the auspices of Man and Biosphere Reserve.

The conference aims to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting the economic development and social welfare of communities in the Biosphere Reserve areas by creating a staged pathway towards increasing productivity through the appropriately designed and managed provision of reliable and sustainable nature and natural resources. The main objectives of the conference are:

- To gather multi-disciplinary experience relating to managing of sustainable nature and natural resources from academics and practitioners, local and global stakeholders,
- To identify existing global, regional, national, and local policies and financing mechanisms for decentralised, small scale, sustainable good practices of nature and natural resources management.

The conference adopts three main topics of discussions, which cover aspects of:

1. **Role of Science in the Management of Biodiversity.**

   Approaches to biodiversity conservation based on the notion that nature provides for humans have become increasingly popular in recent years, and notably so since the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Forest management must change radically to maintain biodiversity. 'Biodiversity' has many components, but only one has been measured unambiguously - species richness - although there is recently much emphasis on structural, process, and functional diversity. Valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services is widely recognized as a useful, though often controversial, approach to conservation and management.

   The role of science is very important in the management of biodiversity for the use and utilization of resources for all beings on this earth. The sub theme explores discussion on several crosscutting research themes and would recommends a number of actions to advance the science of management of biodiversity.

2. **Local Good Practices on Resources Utilisation Strategy.**

   In 2017, UNESCO MAB Programme published a book entitled “A new Roadmap for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves”, which covers MAB Strategy (2015-2025), Lima Action Plan (2016 – 2025) and Lima Declaration.
Presently, MAB has adopted a new MAB Strategy 2015-2025 together with an associated Lima Action Plan 2016-2025 to guide the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Strategy was endorsed by the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference as adopted by the 27th MAB ICC.

One mission for period of 2015 – 2025 of MAB ICC is to communicate the experience and lesson learned, facilitated the global diffusion and application of models for sustainable development in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). In practice, these could be done through creating a common understanding among stakeholders on the importance of safeguarding natural resources for the benefit of all human being, not to mention all living organisms and life supporting system. Key challenges for this has been reflected in the four strategic objectives and one among of those which is going to be the sub-theme of this panel session is the first objective stating on conserve biodiversity, restore and enhance ecosystem services, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources.

The major critical challenge is how we can maintain and conserve biodiversity so that it can support all people at the global scale through a range of ecosystem services. Thus, local practices in natural resource utilization in a sustainable manner can be expanded to a wider scale at national, regional or global level through sharing lesson learned and communicating experiences through any available exchange forum at all level. Active participation of a wide range of people from various ages, gender and various cultural back ground in supporting sustainable development goals would be of benefits in term of gaining more access to sustainable use of natural resources on earth.

Ecosystem and landscape approaches will be embodied into the natural resource utilization strategy and local good practice, notably in and around biosphere reserves provides best practices and lesson learned for all community around the world. This sub theme of discussion is indeed, in line with the Strategic Action Areas of point A and strategic lines of action under point A.1 stating that local practices and all relevant stakeholders should be taken into account during the process of biosphere reserve selection, designation, plan and implementation.

3. Appropriate Business Approach for Local Community Benefits.

The challenges for the local community development living around the biosphere reserve and forest area remain to be resolved, including fully explore potential area for productivity development, reduce economic vulnerability, accessible to industry and market, protect resources, and balance the ecosystem.

Government, private and people partnership play a key role to promote the growth of sustainable business approach to places a foundation to improved biodiversity management for the benefit of people, especially for those living inside and surrounding the forest, utilize forest resources and to resolve conflict to achieve sustainable biodiversity reserve management and poverty alleviation.

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