



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Man and  
the Biosphere  
Programme

Excellences,  
Distinguished experts,  
Dear colleagues,

It gives me a great pleasure to say a few words at the closing ceremony of the RENISLA 2014 Forum. On behalf of UNESCO, its Sector of Natural Sciences, and the Man and the Biosphere Programme, I congratulate you all for the organization of this important forum at one of the most beautiful islands of Spain, the El Hierro Biosphere Reserve. I have wanted to be there for the Forum, but due to logistic problems it was not possible.

Allow me to note the title of the forum: '100% renewable energy: a possible future'. Your message was clear and powerful. Indeed, we all must excel our joint effort to bring down the carbon emissions and make best use of alternative and renewable energy resources. We must continue explore the future in this direction.

The choice to start such creative initiative in an island biosphere reserve and bring together new ideas, new techniques and new plans from researchers, engineers, local communities is truly the best. The islands are among those most affected by the climate change impacts. The energy supply to islands has been always a challenge. If we find new and combined ways to sustain our energy supply in island environment by renewable energy, as is being tested in El Hierro Biosphere Reserve with the new "Gorona del Viento" Wind-hydro Power Plant, with less emissions and environmental impacts, we should be able to diffuse such pilot experience to island communities around the world, and to much broader development areas as well, especially to the coastal zones.

In this connection, I am particularly pleased that some island biosphere reserves are already moving in the same direction. Examples include the biosphere reserves in other regions, such as Jeju Island, the Galapagos Islands, Grosses Walsertal, Pellworm, Altaisky and the Lakshadweep Islands. New initiatives at World Heritage sites such as Edinburgh and Aldabra Atoll are also taking place.

I can only add that UNESCO and its MAB Programme is fully committed to further promote your effort and encourage you all to use UNESCO Sites (Biosphere Reserves – 631 sites in 119 countries and World Heritage Sites – now over 1000) as field observatories on the sustainable use of renewable energy sources, to mitigate climate

change and to enhance and apply the climate change knowledge base for building green societies. This was targeted by 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, and is fully in line with the goals of 2014-2024 the International decade of Sustainable Energy for All declared by the UN General Assembly.

I wish you all the success in your continued endeavour.

**Han Qunli**

Secretary

Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

UNESCO