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CANADA, MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES SIGN MOU ON BIOSPHERE PROGRAMS AND RESERVES

Canada's Ambassador for the Environment, the Honourable John Fraser, along with representatives from Mexico and the United States, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the development of model areas of sustainable development, on October 30, 1995, in Washington, D.C. The MOU is intended to promote the open exchange of data and ideas on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere activities and the 63 Biosphere Reserves in North America.

Ambassador Fraser signed the MOU as the honorary Canadian chair of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program. Representing the MAB Program for the United States was Mr. D. Dean Bibbes, Director, Policy on Land Tenure of the Department of the Interior and chair of the U.S. National Committee for MAB. Dr. Miguel Equihua signed on behalf of Dr. Gonzalo Halffter, chair of the National MAB Committee for Mexico.

"In signing this MOU," said Mr. Fraser, "Canada, the United States and Mexico are taking an important step, not only in responding to international recommendations for national action, such as those made by the World Resources Institute in their 1994/95 *Guide to the Global Environment*, but also in developing the kind of multilateral and national partnerships needed to implement the recently ratified Biodiversity Convention. This will ultimately make sustainable development a reality."

The MAB Program was established at the General Conference of UNESCO in 1970. It provided the first formal mechanism for coordinating domestic and international partnerships, linking business, scientific and government research with conservation interests and training and educational efforts. The Program strives, through scientific research, to find a balance between environmental protection and development.



Biosphere Reserves, the focus of Man and the Biosphere, are areas designated by UNESCO to help conserve ecosystems and species, to maintain biodiversity and to promote the sustainable management of land, water and biological resources to meet human needs, today and in the future. There are currently 324 Biosphere Reserves in 84 countries. Together the Reserves comprise one of the world's largest networks of protected areas. The 63 North American Reserves include areas of Arctic tundra, Pacific and tropical rain forests, and coastal lowland and mountain alpine areas.

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