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Baie-Comeau, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

The Honourable Catherine McKenna  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

**Object : Canadian Association of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves**

Dear Minister McKenna,

On behalf of the United Nations for Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) 16 Biosphere Reserves in Canada, I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. The challenges of your assignment are significant. As you now attend the United Nations Summit on Climate Change, we would like to inform you that we are available as a UNESCO-designated, globally mandated, community-based action group, to assist in implementing the decisions arising from the Summit.

The Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association's mission is to be creating vibrant, healthy, sustainable communities across Canada while conserving Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and to do so by addressing the following objectives of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere program:

1. Support mitigation and adaptation to climate change and other aspects of global environmental change ;
2. Contribute to building resilient, healthy and equitable societies, economies, and thriving human settlements ;
3. Conserve biodiversity, restore and enhance ecosystem services, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources ; and
4. Foster sustainability science and education for sustainable development.

As UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, we are regional-scale sites mandated to facilitate both the mitigation of and the adaptation to climate change. We have conducted over 500 projects from coast-to-coast over the past decade in cooperation with local communities, First Nations, industry, universities and diverse agencies. Issues have been addressed from environmental, economic, social and cultural perspectives. We also are directly connected to the world network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves of 650 sites in 120 countries, which share common goals.

We are an integral part of our local communities. Through very diverse dialogue processes, wide-ranging partnerships are already established in our regions, as key assets for us to use when consulting our



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communities and stakeholders, creating strategies and action plans, and facilitating bottom-up action on climate change. Our network, which spans from urban to rural areas, and across Canada from coastal to prairies to mountain regions, is a unique laboratory to test the adequacy of policies and tools. Our network uses a well-designed and adapted approach to community consultation that takes the great diversity of Canada into consideration.

Once greenhouse gas emission reduction goals have been finalized at the federal and provincial levels of government following the Paris Summit, we would like to provide you and your staff with a briefing on the success of Canada's Biosphere Reserves, our collective climate change actions and priorities, and our recommendations for going forward.

Considering the level of priority given to your Ministry, with respect to climate change and related issues, which our organization share, we think that the time for renewed collaborative action between CBRA and the federal government is upon us.

May we extend our best wishes for a successful series of meetings in Paris.

Yours truly,

Jean-Philippe L. Messier  
Chair, Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association

CC:

- The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
- The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada and Chair of Environment, Climate Change and Energy Cabinet Committee
- Chair of the 16 Canadian Biosphere Reserves

