

Biosphere Reserves in World

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Context:

UNESCO recently added 11 new biosphere reserves worldwide, spanning countries like Colombia, Italy, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea.

Background:

These reserves, including two transboundary sites, aim to conserve biodiversity and cultural heritage amid global biodiversity and climate challenges.

Key Takeaways:

1. Biosphere Reserves are internationally designated areas recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
2. These reserves aim to balance economic development, cultural preservation, and nature conservation.

Criteria for Designation of Biosphere Reserve:

1. A site must contain a protected and minimally disturbed core area of value of nature conservation.
2. The core area must be a bio-geographical unit and should be large enough to sustain a viable population representing all trophic levels.
3. The involvement of local communities and use of their knowledge in biodiversity preservation.
4. Area's potential for preservation of traditional tribal or rural modes of living for harmonious use of the environment.

Three Main Zones:

1. **Core Areas:** These are the most protected regions within a biosphere reserve. They conserve endemic plants, animals, and important genetic reservoirs. Human interference is minimal here.
2. **Buffer Zone:** Surrounding the core zone, this area allows limited activities like tourism, fishing, and grazing. Research and education are encouraged.
3. **Transition Zone:** The outermost part where human activities and conservation coexist harmoniously. Settlements, croplands, and managed forests characterize this zone.