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### **Potential Biosphere Reserves of Gilgit-Baltistan**

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Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) hosts a sizeable chunk of the 3 important mountain ranges in Pakistan, the Karakoram, Hindukush and Himalayas. The current situation reveals that most of the leftover Biodiversity is contained in these mountain ranges, facing threats because of population pressures and unsustainable uses.

Even though demanded for many other uses, a big chunk of land in GB has been put under various categories of protected areas such as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Game Reserves. Moreover, certain sites of ecological importance are also being managed by community for trophy hunting where protection of natural resources is comparatively better than land without any protective cover. The concept of creating and managing Biosphere Reserves is a recent one, yet gone quite ahead during the recent past.

There are 3 sites that have been identified as potential Biosphere Reserves, one each in each of the mountain ranges found in GB. A case has already moved with the Ministry of Science and Technology to undertake needful studies and initiate the process for their designation under the UNESCO's M&B Programme. The M&B nomination committee has recently been suggested to initiate the designation process for all the 3 potential sites in GB.

Details of the potential sites, their maps, location and ecological treasures shall be presented in the conference.