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SIERRA GORDA BIOSFERA RESERVE FORMS PART OF THE WORLDS'
NETWORK OF UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVES

- The Mexican Government takes pride on the UNESCO decision and commits itself to redouble efforts in favor of the conservation of the natural resources of the country: Ernesto Enkerlin.
- Sierra Gorda is one of the most important Biosphere Reserves in the country because of the variety of types of vegetation; it is also one of the best preserved wooded regions in Mexico.
- To be considered as a candidate in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the national government must support a proposal and the Reserves must fulfill three complementary functions: Conservation, Development and Logistic Support.

“The decision of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) to designate the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve as a member of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves makes the government feel proud and committed to redouble efforts in favor of the conservation of the most important natural resources in the country”, declared the General Director of the Natural Protected Areas National Commission, Ernesto Enkerlin Hoeflich.

Enkerlin stated that the fact that Sierra Gorda has been nominated the thirteenth in the country within the program, consolidates the federal government’s commitment to place a scheme to strengthen the Natural Protected Areas as spaces where sustainable development can evolve through schemes that conserve the natural diversity and encourage alternative development projects for the local communities.

All this in concordance with the present federal government policy to consider the issue of maintaining the natural resources as a matter of national priority and which the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, Victor Lichtinger, has pledged to give special importance.

To be accepted in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the candidates are nominated by the national governments and must fulfill three complementary functions: Conservation, to protect the genetic resources, the species, the ecosystems and landscapes; Development, in order to promote economic and civic development and logistic support to assist and encourage research, education, and permanent observation activities, related to local interest, national and international interest regarding conservation and sustainable development.

Also, Pati Ruiz Corzo, the Reserve's Director, pointed out that the UNESCO decision is of special interest as this Natural Protected Areas counts with an important number of inhabitants with whom a broad negotiation and communication process that permits the development of mechanisms that combine conservation actions, investigation and controlled use of the natural resources, promoting new regional development processes.

Ruiz Corzo also remarked the fact that because of the geographical position, Sierra Gorda is one of the Biosphere Reserves most important in the country because of the variety of types of vegetation; it is also one of the best preserved wooded areas in Mexico and one of the last remaining cloud forest sanctuaries in the northwest region of the country.

Sierra Gorda has an extension of 383,567 hectares and its decree was published in May 1997. Its consolidation has been possible in part to the support from the National Protected Areas Commission, consultative organism of the SEMARNAT where academic, social and business sectors are presided by Dr. Gonzalo Halftter.

Within the Reserve there have been 360 bird species registered, 130 mammal, 71 reptile and 23 amphibious. Also it is believed that around 30% of the butterfly species of the national territory are found there. Within the species in danger of extinction that live in the Reserve are the jaguar, Humboldt butterfly, black bear, green macaw and *Dentrortyx barbatus*.

There are about 1,710 species of vascular plants, of which 11 are endemic and some species in danger of extinction like *Echinocactus grandis*, *chapote*, *aguacatillo*, *magonia* and *guayame*.