

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE INSTALLATION OF RABBI MICHAEL PONT AS THE NEW LEADER OF THE TEMPLE BETH AHM IN ABERDEEN, NJ

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to welcome the installation of Rabbi Michael Pont as the new leader of the Temple Beth Ahm in Aberdeen, New Jersey. Rabbi Pont has served his previous community with a great deal of capability and we are delighted to have him join our district.

Prior to joining the Aberdeen community, Rabbi Pont served on the Greensboro Jewish Federation Board of Trustees, Blumenthal Jewish Home Board, and Family Life Council Board. Rabbi Pont was also a participant of the March of the Living Seminar to Poland and Israel, Greensboro Jewish Federation Mission to Moldova, Greensboro Jewish Federation young Leadership Program.

Rabbi Pont served as the Assistant Rabbi at the Beth David Synagogue in Greensboro, NC. Among his many accomplishments, Rabbi Pont directed the religious school, oversaw programming for families and youth, led worship, and served as pastor.

Rabbi Pont has taught several educational courses to youth, young adults, and adults including classes on Jewish holidays, Jewish values, Shabbat, and kashrut. While in Greensboro, Rabbi Pont initiated educational and cultural programs for families of the entire Jewish community, and also initiated a community service project in which Jewish Family Services would assist new immigrants.

Rabbi Pont studied at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, CA and the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem, Israel for his Rabbinical Ordination. He received his Masters Degree in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, and his Bachelors Degree in Psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Rabbi Pont is currently a member of the Rabbinical Assembly and MERCAZ USA.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honored to welcome a man of Rabbi Michael Pont's experience and dedication to our community. Once again, I ask that you join me in congratulating Rabbi Michael Pont, and extend him good wishes and the best of luck in his new position.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES RECEIVES INFORMATION ON THE UNITED NATIONS' MAN AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAM

HON. RICHARD W. POMBO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 2004

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, the United Nations' Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) is managed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquartered in Paris, France. Although there are 47 United Nations' Biosphere Reserves in the United States that comprise a land area larger than Colorado, this program is not authorized by even a single U.S. law or international treaty. This lack of legal authority is even more remarkable when one considers that millions of acres of private property in the United States are contained within the boundaries of biosphere reserves.

To better understand the workings of this program, it was necessary for me to write to Dr. Nataran Ishwaran, Director of UNESCO's Division of Ecological Resources in Paris, France, who oversees the Man and Biosphere Program. I desired to learn more about the process for establishing and terminating biosphere reserves as well as the monitoring UNESCO requires for these designations.

Dr. Ishwaran's reply indicated "Member States wishing to remove the biosphere reserve in its country notifies the UNESCO Secretariat which in turn informs the Man and Biosphere International Coordinating Committee (ICC). . . . The ICC is an intergovernmental body made up of 34 countries, elected in a rotational system by the UNESCO General Conference."

I commend my colleagues to learn more about the United Nations' Biosphere Reserves by reading this letter by Dr. Ishwaran, Director of UNESCO's Division of Ecological Resources.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION,

August 24, 2004.

Mr. RICHARD W. POMBO,
Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. POMBO: I should like to acknowledge your letter of 3 August 2004 and to thank you for your kind words on my new appointment.

Our replies to your questions regarding biosphere reserves follow below. They are based on the "Statutory Framework" for biosphere reserves, a text negotiated by over 400 experts (including US experts) in 1995 and adopted by the UNESCO General Conference under 28 C/Resolution 2.4 in the same year. This Resolution is considered a "soft law" and is not an internationally binding treaty as is for example the World Heritage Convention. The Statutory Framework, and the accompanying "Seville Strategy" can be found on the MABnet under <http://www.unesco.org/mab/publications/document.htm>.

It is important to understand that before this Statutory Framework was adopted in 1995, nomination and designation of sites did not follow such a formal legal procedure, and that the criteria for biosphere reserves were much more oriented to either nature conservation or scientific research. As you can see from the definition and "vision" for biosphere reserves, the emphasis now is on the combination of three functions of conservation, scientific research and development. This evolution in the biosphere reserve criteria means that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which began in 1976, contains a legacy of "old" sites nominated by their MAB National Committees but which do not necessarily conform to the 1995 criteria. This is the case in the USA, where sites were designated from 1976 up till 1991.

(1) Designation procedure—(see Article 5 of the Statutory Framework): UNESCO Member States make nominations for the designation of new sites as biosphere reserves through their MAB National Committees. The nomination form (<http://www.unesco.org/mab/docs/brnomform.htm>) requires endorsement at the local and national levels. The nominations are sent to the UNESCO Secretariat, which submits them for technical evaluation by the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (a 12 person group of experts nominated by the UNESCO Director-General). The nominations are then decided upon in the light of the recommendations from this Advisory Committee by the MAB International Coordinating Council (ICC). The ICC is an intergovernmental body made up of 34 countries, elected in a rotational system by the UNESCO General Conference. In practice the ICC devolves the decision on new nominations to its Bureau (the Chair and the five Vice-Chairs) that meets about once a year. The UNESCO Secretariat then informs the Member State on the decision. As is stipulated under Article 2.3, individual biosphere reserves remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the States (countries) where they are situated.

(2) Monitoring—The Statutory Framework makes provision under Article 9 for a "periodic review" every ten years after designation. This is a self-evaluation, carried out by the "concerned authority" which in practice is usually the administrative body responsible for the biosphere reserve. The format for this periodic review report is voluntary, but countries generally use the form designed by the UNESCO Secretariat for this purpose (available on: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/publications/document.htm>). The periodic review reports follow the same process of technical evaluation and examination as for new nominations. The MAB Bureau makes a recommendation to the Member State concerned on each periodic review report: these recommendations are very often suggestions as to the types of measures which could be taken to improve the functioning of the site under question as a biosphere reserve.

(3) Terminating biosphere reserve designation—Technically, this can happen in two ways. As is said under Article 9.8, a Member State wishing to remove a biosphere reserve in its country notifies the UNESCO Secretariat which in turn informs the MAB ICC. A second procedure follows the periodic review

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