

**Expert meeting 3. Coexistence 2: Coexistence between Human and Nature  
(Organizer: IUCN, Korea National Park Service, UNESCO MAB National Committee of the ROK)**

**Lead Expert:** Robert Mather (Head of Southeast Asia Group, IUCN) (“**RM**”)

**Moderator:** Do-soon Cho (Professor and co-chairperson, The Catholic University of Korea, UNESCO MAB National Committee of the RoK) (“**DC**”)

**Speakers:**

- Kelly Bricker (Professor and Chair, University of Utah, The International Ecotourism Society) (“**KB**”)
- Kim Chong-chun (Executive Director, Korea National Park Service) (“**KC**”)

**Panellists:**

- Bill Jackson (Independent Environmental Consultant) (“**BJ**”)
- Seong-il Kim (Professor, Seoul National University) (“**SK**”)
- Hans Thulstrup (Senior Science Programme Specialist, UNESCO) (“**HT**”)

The objectives of the session were:

1. Review major strategies for promoting human co-existence with nature
2. Discuss challenges in implementing these strategies
3. Provide key action points for WLD – what can WL do to ensure more people have access to quality experiences in nature and opportunities to learn about and better understand nature, in the pursuit of human co-existence with nature

With a particular focus on three sub-topics:

1. Nature-based tourism, recreation and outdoor pursuits
2. The role of Protected Areas in bringing people closer together
3. Urban green space and biodiversity.

Robert Mather opened the session. He stated that when looking at the relationship between humans and the rest of nature, all the great philosophers and the world’s major religions have provided us clear advice on how to conduct ourselves. We should value all life, appreciate that everything is interconnected, and live simply without consuming too much. But the reality is that we have increasingly overexploited and degraded nature. He explained that ecological footprint studies had shown that since the 70’s humanity as a whole has been living beyond the carrying capacity of the planet and rather than living on the “interest” that nature’s productivity provides us, instead we are eroding the natural capital of the Earth.

He referred to the fact that over 50% of earth’s population now lives in towns and cities and that in 30 years’ time that figure would be 80%. One important question we should ask ourselves is how can we, as urban people, reconnect with nature. We need to do it for the physical health benefits it provides, and for mental wellbeing. In addition it is important for us to spend time in nature so that we understand nature and our own impacts on nature, so that we will support the right action that needs to be taken for nature conservation and sustainability.

Parks are an important way to do this and Ecotourism activities are too, as they allow people to experience and learn about nature in a structured way.

Mr. Mather then introduced the first of the Keynote speakers, **Kelly Bricker** who would be speaking on Global trends in eco-tourism.

Prof Bricker began by providing a definition of ecotourism – tourism that is underpinned by sustainable development and where money goes directly back into conservation and developing the area. She explained that Ecotourism can be an economic driver for conserving nature and a provided of income for local people. Ecotourism at the global level could provide a useful for coexistence for human nature

She then went on to outline the five primary areas for ecotourism success.

- Economic justification for conservation.
- Ecotourism providing an impetus for private conservation efforts.
- Ecotourism providing a source of financing for biodiversity conservation.
- Ecotourism providing economic alternatives for local people to reduce over-exploitation on protected areas and wild lands and wildlife resources; and
- Ecotourism providing constituency building which promotes biodiversity conservation.

Prof. Bricker gave several examples of where ecotourism had worked well and concluded with six action points she felt would be essential the successful future of ecotourism worldwide.

1. There should be support for a clear framework on which to evaluate ecotourism, to analyse linkages between project level activities and conservation;
2. Implement, as Bonito, ongoing monitoring and evaluation as a regular part of all ecotourism projects;
3. Policies should be developed to support and incentivize private conservation areas, innovative strategies such as a lease for conservation,
4. Each country should adopt the global sustainable tourism destination criteria as a basis for igniting sustainable tourism in their destinations;
5. At an operational level, partnerships and cooperation should be encouraged and supported between tourism stakeholders especially public and private sectors to ensure the necessary conservation strategies to facilitate sustainable tourism management and future developments; and finally,
6. The need for the tourism industry to acknowledge its contribution to climate change and take action to mitigate greenhouse gases, especially those generated from transport, and accommodation activities.

The subject of National Parks and moving beyond human co-existence with nature was presented by Kim Chong-chun.

He began by outlining where the Republic of Korea was in their effort to co-exist with nature: Challenges facing the global effort; the eco-welfare framework; the eco-welfare of National Parks and the Republic of Korea's future virtuous circle.

As far as Challenges were concerned, the main problem they are facing at the moment is Climate change. Droughts and floods are affecting land and seascapes, the provision of food and timber for living. The SDGs have given us 19 focus areas and goals with the rationale of obtaining multiple services from ecosystems.

Mr Kim explained that there are four categories that matter: Production services, Regulations services, cultural services, Support services, but at present, we are putting tremendous pressure on biodiversity.

In order to reverse these negative trends, we need to make the right sustainable choices. At the very centre of our economies.

Mr Kim then went back to those four issues he had outlined to see what stage we are at in all of these:

- As far as challenges to biodiversity conservation and coexistence of man and human nature: we are not doing enough;
- We still need to come up with a framework based on ecosystem services and biodiversity;
- Eco-welfare for Nat parks need to be based on education; and
- The future virtuous circle would consist of the following: Scientific Knowledge, Public understanding, Policy actions. These factors are all interlinked and need to work together for a successful co-existence between humans and nature

He concluded that prosperity cannot be sustained if the ecosystem is not maintained. A sustainable society needs to achieve both of those.

There followed a Moderated Opening Panel building on keynote speeches. The three panellists began by giving the delegates the key message they had come away with from the first part of the session.

Mr. Thulstrup warned that people should be aware of the scale of the challenge when speaking about what we want to achieve. It is necessary to focus on communication. If people in different sectors don't talk to each other, nothing will be achieved.

Strong growing trends within – branding and labelling prods and services as being produced in a sustainable manner – Korea has done that well.

also risks people being disconnected and disengaged with the rest of the world. People don't care about impact of their behaviour or the relationship of well managed systems and our wellbeing. In general, we are not very active, eat too much, smoke and drink – we lead unhealthy lifestyles and we are heading to a health crisis across the world.

The Millennium assessment has shown us what healthy ecosystems bring us. Time spent in nature is necessary for our wellbeing. In most urban areas, disease increase linked to lifestyle is evident. Happy Parks Happy People is true.

It is important to work with health departments and to provide education. Dr Jackson urged people to be aware of the importance of evaluation of PPAs and to measure the behaviour of people and what they do.

Social responsibility is important too: it is important to involve locals of **all ages** in the management of parks.

The Panel then took questions from the audience.

**Q: Question to Dr. Kim. Increased human welfare may decrease ecosystem welfare or vice versa, is there any way which will increase both welfares at the same time? The KNPS is more concentrated on providing eco experiences to the public. How to mitigate on use of natural resources by the locals?**

Dr Kim replied by explaining that the message is that simple coexistence is not enough. We need to strengthen it for a sustainable future.

**Q: When tourism as a whole is growing, do the benefits of ecotourism outweigh the impacts of mass tourism as a whole?**

**Prof Bricker** admitted that this was a complex question.

Would we be better off without tourism? It needs to be part of a larger sustainable tourism. We have to transform the whole industry to even have ecotourism or we will destroy what we have. It cannot be done in isolation.

She explained that it is necessary to have guidelines and standards for how tourism is managed. Criteria are needed for clarity and guidance for sustainability.

As far as the benefits of ecotourism outweighing the impact of travelling as a whole, Prof Bricker feared that where there is no tourism, the impetus for conserving the nature would go. It is an area that required more research.

**Q: By concentrating people into urban areas, will that not help preserve the wild?**

Dr. Jackson's reply was "Maybe". However, he explained that this would only work if urban people also value nature. The problem being faced today is that if they are disconnected, and don't care, don't love, value, appreciate nature they won't pay for it. They have to learn to appreciate it.

**Q: Are parks sufficiently funded?**

Dr. Kim said that this question should really be thought of as a key message. He explained that the current level of funding is not enough for resource management. With progress in restoration, more time and resources are being used to the need for funds has increased.

Mr. Thulstrup felt that there is always the need for more funding for research. Urbanites might not be so familiar for nature, so not so much interest in research funding. That is a real problem. Appreciation of nature and understanding of nature so that people will want politicians to help the budget.

Prof. Bricker, said that she hoped that the US celebrating the centennial for National Parks services would lead to renewed commitment to parks service. For the US, Parks are a national pastime so it should not be threatened but sadly, it is. The Land and Water conservation fund is under threat and this is a direct line to state and federal lands to protect and maintain. There is renewed enthusiasm for science in Parks – dedicated director, people in place in current administration but she was concerned as to what would happen after next election. Every park needs more and consistent politics-free funding.

Finally, Prof. Bricker was keen to point out that the quality of funding is also important. . Some research on that issue has been made. Should funding come from donations by the people or pure tax money? But this is limited and that is our problem.

Dr Jackson explained that many countries say they are underfunded. From the provision of uniforms, fuel for vehicles and more. There is an excellent return on private investment but services that are of high importance are not valued because we are not good at communicating these benefits. To convince people, conservationists have to learn to speak the language of politicians and economists.

Mr. Mather closed the session by outlining the key messages that had come out of the session for the WLD the following day:

- Policies need to be developed to support innovative strategies such as a “conservation leases” and to incentivize private conservation areas;
- The more frequent use of “man and biosphere” designation should be encouraged because it provides a clear link between urban and natural areas.
- There should be a focus on the development of policies for education through experiential learning across all ages, genders, and groups that do not usually have access and opportunities to spend time in nature.