



# Asia-Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council

VOLUME 7

"...marching forward in strengthening of ecotourism fraternity of Asia-Pacific Region..."

DATE: AUG/2019

PUBLISHED BY ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL ECOTOURISM COUNCIL (APREC) IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION (SLEF)

EMAIL – [sleco@sltnet.lk](mailto:sleco@sltnet.lk) / [info@aprec.asia](mailto:info@aprec.asia) | WEBSITE – [www.srilankaecotourism.org](http://www.srilankaecotourism.org) / [www.aprec.asia](http://www.aprec.asia) | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/aprec.asia)



Asia Pacific Region is a vast region, covering some 2.8 billion hectares of land area, or approximately 22 percent of the global land area with an approximate population that represents 60% of the world population and nearly 4.75 billion people and more than 55 countries.

Asia-Pacific Region is a treasure trove for the marine ecotourism sector with about 55,000 small and big islands located in and around the Pacific and Indian Oceans, creating hundreds of thousands of kilometers of beautiful coastal shores, beaches that attract travelers from all over the world. APREC is receiving many inquiries from the Ecotourism Organizations of Asia-Pacific Region requesting information about the organization and how to enroll as a Member of APREC.

## Profile of APREC

APREC is the oldest Regional Ecotourism Network founded by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), and its core members during the first ever Regional Ecotourism Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in May 2009.

## Mission of APREC

*'... to give a "voice to the Ecotourism fraternity of the Asia-Pacific region" that can be heard in the wider global forum of discussions'*

## Core Objectives of APREC

- To promote and strengthen the Community Based Ecotourism (CBE) Projects in the Asia-Pacific region and to increase the competitiveness of CBE products and services worldwide, inter-and intra-regional tourism markets.
- To bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges confronted by the ecotourism fraternity in the region and to explore in strengthening of their networks.
- To disseminate latest information on Sustainable and Ecotourism amongst the members of APREC and CBE organizations of Asia-Pacific region and to provide networking opportunities for stakeholders.
- Enabling the communities living in Asia-Pacific Region to fulfill their role as key custodians of natural resources and derive economic and social benefits from Ecotourism.
- To serve as an annual platform to bring together Ecotourism industry segments in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues and challenges and to strengthen marketing strategies.
- To showcase quality CBE products and services as best practice examples and to promote the Asia-Pacific region as an attractive Ecotourism destination on the world map.
- Promote cost-effective and donor supported National Sustainable Ecotourism Certification Programmes in the countries of Asia-Pacific Region which are adoptable to their socioeconomic and sociocultural background.
- To host training, research & awareness programmes, conferences, workshops, events in Ecotourism on regional basis and to offer financial assistance to APREC Members to take part at these events.

## APREC Steering Committee

We are in the process of expanding the **Steering Committee** of APREC. Those Ecotourism Associations based in the region could send their nominations to be appointed as Steering Committee Members.

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF APREC

APREC is a non-profit organization supported by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) and its donor networks. **Membership of APREC is FREE** for Ecotourism Organizations active in the region. Membership of APREC is also open to any individual/professional/student that admires, and loves the genuine ecotourism principles such as supporting the community in need through tourism, alleviation of poverty in the society, environmental and biodiversity conservation, preservation of cultural heritage etc.

*For more info, please contact SLEF /APREC by an email*

## Editor's Note

As reported in this Newsletter, during the past few weeks we have come across two different views expressed on Sri Lanka Tourism by Minister of Tourism, Hon. John Amararatunga and Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Mr. Kishu Gomes. As reported in an English Daily, the Minister is looking for more casinos and night clubs to boost the depleted tourism demand currently experienced in Sri Lanka in the aftermath of Easter Sunday. Also, he admitted that tourist arrivals have dropped contrary to other officials in his Ministry who speak of an increase. Though weird, he also feels that natural beauty of the country - the lush green tea gardens, the sandy beaches and historic sites are no longer of much use. Mr. Amararatunga wants to attract more younger Indian travelers by opening new casinos and night clubs.

We are of the view that the Minister is more interested in 'VOLUME' rather than 'VALUE' of the tourism product in Sri Lanka. This is despite the principles of Vision 2025 which focuses on transformation to a high value tourist destinations. For decades, since tourism was promoted, it came under search lights as one of the major foreign exchange earners in Sri Lanka and the National Tourism Organization (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority). Travel Agents, Hoteliers and many in the industry are of the view and have identified that Tourism is capable in effectively driving the country's socio-economic development. The Development Policy Framework of the Government of Sri Lanka aims at positioning Sri Lanka as a 'model tourist destination' benefiting from the country's natural advantages of having the highest bio diversity in Asia backed by a strong culture and heritage, 8 (eight) UNESCO World Heritage Sites, historical artifacts, exotic beaches, green environment and friendly people all of which are solid building blocks for tourism development. We are of the view that the Minister of Tourism is planning to compromise Sri Lanka's natural wealth by introducing more gambling, discos, night clubs, casinos etc, to attract 'any kind of tourist at any price'. This is a very unfortunate situation. We, the activists of Sri Lanka Ecotourism strongly believe that Sri Lanka Tourism will go in the wrong direction.

Considering the current downward trend in Sri Lanka Tourism, we think Sri Lanka needs to attract high-spending, up-market, nature-loving tourists to Sri Lanka, because, nature loving, high spending responsible tourists are undoubtedly an attractive option for the governments looking for ways of earning foreign exchange through tourism. Whatever said and done by our politicians, Sri Lanka still has to go a long way to achieve even the milestone of 'mid-income/developed country'. We still need the international donor support to develop our socio-economic fabric, particularly to develop the rural sector.

Hats off to Mr. Kishu Gomez, the Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau who rightly said "Tourism is the only way to overcome extreme poverty in Sri Lanka. There is extreme poverty in our country. People are dying of starvation in our country. As per my estimate, 40 percent of the population can't afford to have three decent meals a day and 20 percent of the population can't afford to have one proper decent meal a day".

Mr. Gomes is right! We agree with him without any reservation. Tourism should contribute to alleviate poverty in the society. Sri Lanka could attract up-market tourists such as Ecotourists who travel responsibly, in enjoying and appreciating our natural wonders, centuries old cultural heritage, crystal clear beaches, panoramic tea gardens, nature and wildlife, who believe money spent by them during their travel should stay in the destination. They also feel that they would be contributing to the social welfare of the rural community in Sri Lanka who are subjected to an abject poverty.

## Sri Lanka Press Communiqué

Issued by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), April 2019

### Brutal and Horrific Attacks on Easter Sunday Had Caused Damage to an Unthinkable Proportion.

Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation, the pioneer National Ecotourism Society in Sri Lanka, expresses its deepest condolences and sympathy for the families of the brotherly catholic, Buddhist, Hindu and all other religious denominations who have lost their near and dear ones in the brutal and horrific attacks on Easter Sunday.

This brutal attack has been universally condemned by all sections of Sri Lankan Society as well as the International Community. Those human beings could inflict such a carnage on fellow human beings defies belief. Sri Lanka and its people have been jolted out of the peaceful environment which they have been enjoying by the brutal acts of misguided individuals on a journey of their own.

As for the official statements issued by the Sri Lanka Government, 360 people have been killed including 48 foreign tourists and 600 people injured. Three churches located in Colombo, Negombo, Batticaloa and Kochchikade close to the Colombo International Airport, have been attacked by the suicide bombers. Besides, blasts also rocked the star class hotels such as Shangri-La, Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand in Colombo, killing and injuring many including the tourists.



According to the Minister of Finance, Sri Lanka, the collapse of the tourism industry is the biggest challenge. The Government of Sri Lanka expects to contain earning losses between US\$ 750 million this year and the industry is expected to recover within 1-2 years.

The industry expects only 30 percent in tourist arrivals this year. These calculations are based on the figures issued by the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

Because of these industry collapses, many tourism stakeholders have mainly affected the small and medium enterprises in sector.

As far as community and ecotourism is concerned, many rural communities who are engaged in home stay tourism business, operators of small scale eco-lodges and restaurants were mainly affected.

Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation in association with its international Net Works and local partners has devised a programme to assist these small-scale community-based tourism stakeholders.

SLEF believes the tourism industry in Sri Lanka is resilient to similar situations experienced during 30 years of civil war in Sri Lanka; hence the industry would bounce back soon.

### The Government of Sri Lanka joins hands with Ministry of Tourism and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) to help Tourism Industry.

Sri Lanka Tourism industry shuttered from the bomb blasts of Easter Sunday wants the government in one voice. Both the President and the prime Minister should assure to travelers it is safe to visit the country again.

The 'Business Times' interviewed Mr. Renton De Alwis, a veteran of the Sri Lanka Tourism and the former Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority voiced "It is so very unfortunate and I really believe that in a situation where the leadership is dishonest, corrupt and irresponsible and disunited and disjointed" said Mr. Renton De Alwis.

It is also interesting to read the following excerpts quoted from the 'Daily Mirror' Editorial on 8 May 2019. Quoted: "last week, Sri Lanka Tourism Chief Kishu Gomes vent his frustration when he saw that committee after committee was being appointed by the President and the Prime Minister having a mini contest to look into how Sri Lanka's Tourism industry could be revived from the fallout of the Easter Sunday Bombings by home grown jihadist groups" The tourism chief said 'this political drama could yield no result unless and until a single national level committee is appointed with wider stakeholder representation'. The Editorial highlighted "there's no better time for Sri Lankan political leaders, at least to temporarily overlook the bipartisan politics and come out as one voice to deal with the situation as tourism remains Sri Lanka's second largest foreign exchange earner and the industry employs thousands of Sri Lankans.

But the widening differences between the two leaders could hinder the chances for quick tourism industry revival and getting the country's security situation and economy back on track"

Tourism is an important factor as far as Sri Lanka's economy is concerned. Prior to 2009, the total arrival of tourists to the country was less than 500,000 and in the last year the numbers jumped up well over 2.3 million, a remarkable growth not seen in any other sector. Until the Easter Sunday Bombing, tourism was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest foreign exchange earner next to the remittances by Sri Lankan Work force abroad and the finished garments industry.

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) expressed confidence on a faster recovery of the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. Over 2MN tourist arrivals are expected this year following reduction in airport charges; Operational costs of airlines to come down by 20-25%. Many airlines would resume usual frequencies to Colombo. Sri Lanka Airlines urged to resume flights to Frankfurt and Paris.



READ MORE ON PAGE 6

## Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SME Tourism)

Government of Sri Lanka provided a one-year moratorium on the repayment of loan capital and interests accrued by the main stream tourism hotels.

However, it is important to note that SME tourism is responsible for supply chains and generating tourism income through the informal sector, but did not get equal benefits when compared to what mass tourism operators got.

SME tourism sector is one of the main driving forces of Sri Lanka Tourism that generate more than 40% of the total tourism income.

In Sri Lanka, SMEs are the key factor of operating sustainable and ecotourism that promote broad-based equitable tourism development and provides more opportunities in youth and gender empowerment in economic and social development.

SMEs also are supporting Sri Lanka Tourism to attract high end, up-market responsible tourists such as eco-tourists to Sri Lanka.

As mentioned earlier, the SMEs are going through a hard time under the current situation in Sri Lanka more than the formal mass tourism sector.

In developing the sustainable and ecotourism sector, the contribution from the SMEs are vital. These SMEs are the vehicles to bring the tourists to experience local culture, heritage, and local cuisine, lifestyles by interacting with the local community and encouraging the rural community to embark on tourism so that the community could earn an alternative income for their families and alleviate poverty in the society.

Because of these industry collapses, many tourism stakeholders are affected, mainly the small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector.

As far as community and ecotourism is concerned, many rural communities who are engaged in home stay tourism business, operators of small scale ecolodges and restaurants were mainly affected.

Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation in association with its international Net Works and local partners has devised a programme to assist these small-scale community-based tourism stakeholders as details given below

Steps to be taken under the strategy devised by the SLEF to assist SME's and Community Based Ecotourism sector;

- We have urged the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau to assist SLEF to conduct meetings with the stakeholders of SME's and Community Based Ecotourism sector, particularly active in the beach resort areas and in the Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka, enabling SLEF to meet the stakeholders and advise them how to cope with the situation and how to recover from the current crisis.
- Support them to prepare proposals in case they wish to reschedule their loans already obtained from the Banks.
- Make them aware of the "Green Loan Facilities" scheme initiated by the government on reduced interest rates and support them to develop their 'Business Plans' if they are interested in securing the loan facilities from the Banks.
- Promote their businesses through SLEF websites and Networks urging the visitors to patronize the Ecotourism Businesses in Sri Lanka. Inform the visitors through our print and electronic media that Sri Lanka is now a safe destination to visit.

## CITES; Sri Lanka missed the opportunity!

The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora's (CITES) World Wildlife Conference has been shifted to Geneva from Colombo citing security concerns following the Easter Sunday bomb attack.

This International Meeting was to be the Sri Lanka's biggest ever event with more than 3000 delegates from well over 180 countries. The Sri Lanka Government should have canvassed the conference to be held in Sri Lanka but didn't do at the highest levels and right time. In fact, the government should have sent a powerful ministerial delegation to Geneva to convince the host organization that the security situation had improved and Sri Lanka could host the conference without any security risk. The CITES conference was originally scheduled to be held from May 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 at the BMICH, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

## Tourism Minister Amararatunga wants more and more casinos and night clubs opened to attract tourists to Sri Lanka



"According to the Minister of Tourism, Sri Lanka, tourist arrivals have dropped contrary to the claim of other officials in the Ministry of Tourism who speak of an increase. Though weird, the Minister also feels that the natural beauty—the lush green tea gardens, the sandy beaches and historic sites are no longer of much use". He made these observations when he met a delegation from the Association of City Hoteliers recently. Tourism Minister has now come out with a novel idea to induce tourists to visit Sri Lanka – open more casinos and night clubs so that more young Indian tourists in particular would visit Sri Lanka for entertainment at night clubs and casinos"

However, with presidential elections due in six months, the question is whether Minister Amararatunga himself will be in a position to declare open casinos and night clubs. This is notwithstanding casino owners and night club bosses backing him.

## Tourism is the only way to overcome poverty in Sri Lanka- Kishu Gomes, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau

"Tourism is the only way to overcome extreme poverty in Sri Lanka where 40 percent of the population is unable to afford three decent meals a day. There is extreme poverty in our country. People are dying of starvation in our country. As per my estimate, 40 percent of the population can't afford to have three decent meals a day and 20 percent of the population can't afford to have one proper decent meal a day. The only industry they can depend on is tourism. Expatriate remittances have been declining sharply over the past three years, and the apparel sector is not faring well due to competition. Without tourism, there's no way our economy can survive" Mr. Gomes elaborated.





## Ecotourism Is the Solution to Overtourism

Overtourism is a grave challenge that is harming the entire tourism industry. It has been covered in media and publications increasingly as a problem that stems from the very concept of travel, even if it encompasses just a small part of it. Overtourism is not only completely unsustainable; it is a growing problem that should be taken seriously. Policy responses to it are, in many cases, as clumsy and ill-considered as the policies which produced it in the first place. Overtourism can negatively affect travelers' sentiment as well as the small-scale sustainable tourism industry.

Let us be clear from the outset: **Overtourism does not result from ecotourism**, and the principles of those who extol increasing tourism revenue to a destination at any cost are completely antithetical to those of ecotourism. Overtourism—which in its simplest form is tourism that harms communities by overuse or destruction of resources through overcrowding—stems from a lack of concern about destination community health and welfare. **Again, this is entirely the opposite of the fundamental tenet of ecotourism.** Overtourism is the inevitable result of tourism that only considers the privilege of a tourist rather than a partnership between the traveler and the people of a destination. It is clear from our research and from the facts on the ground that the people, culture, environment and natural resources of a community are the most integral part of tourism, not the traveler. Overtourism is a common problem in some "hot spots" where degradation caused by inflow can vastly overwhelm even the benefits of tourism revenue, especially when that revenue is not distributed equitably.

Developing countries are particularly sensitive to the effects of overtourism in their natural, economic, and social environments. Their waste and sewage systems are ill equipped to support large influxes of people, and overtourism often overwhelmingly litters the destination. Locals are pushed out of their homes and do not even get to participate in the tourism revenue economic benefits that result from the very use of their home communities. Wildlife habitats are razed down or compromised to make way for increased construction, culminating in the destruction of local communities. Ecotourism is a positive alternative and the solution to this swelling crisis. Ecotourism can provide a near term, relatively low-cost solution to overtourism if it is implemented correctly. Ecotourism allows revenue to be distributed more evenly to underserved areas, while ensuring that tourism revenue stays within and works for the communities that engage in it. Consider the following, only a few of the many differences between ecotourism and overtourism that underscore this contrast and highlights why ecotourism is a very sound solution:

### Ecotourism

- Results from carefully planned tourism policies developed in partnership with communities, indigenous peoples, conservationists, and experts.
- Considers the health and welfare of the community as one of the main goals of travel.
- Encourages travelers to diffuse naturally to areas underserved by tourism.
- Preserves and cares for natural resources.
- Results in sustainable revenue for the community.

### Overtourism

- Results from unplanned, poorly managed tourism that seeks to maximize revenue by allowing as many tourists as possible.
- Concentrates tourists into small areas without regard to the destruction this causes.
- Considers revenue as the chief goal of tourism.
- Results in the destruction of natural environment.
- Results in tourism revenue going to a few privileged people.

The growth of ecotourism will decrease overtourism, but our industry, and the wider travel industry as a whole, can be the part of the solution by:

- Creating more educational opportunities for professionals who are passionate about sustainability.
- Increasing the awareness of tourism's impacts among travelers.
- Facilitating partnerships among professionals, organizations, communities, businesses, and travelers.
- Promoting sustainable initiatives around the world.

## GLOBAL ECOTOURISM NEWS ROUND UP



### APREC EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAM NEWS

One of the core Objectives of APREC is to Promote cost-effective and donor supported National Sustainable Ecotourism Certification Programmes in the countries of Asia-Pacific Region which are adoptable to their socioeconomic and sociocultural background. In Sri Lanka, a National Sustainable Tourism Certificate (NSTC) Programme is now being promoted by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF).

A good cross section of stakeholders representing the following SMEs and CBT tourists have expressed their willingness to follow the Certification program.

- Hotels and Guest Houses
- Home Stay Operators
- Ecotourism Operators Companies and Individuals who are operating Camping and Adventure Tourism Activities
- Restaurants
- Travel Agents and Tour Operators - DMCs and Internet Based Travel Companies
- Community Based Ecotourism Enterprises from all parts of Sri Lanka
- Spice and Herbal Gardens, Indigenous Ayurvedic & Herbal Centers
- Agrotourism and Farm Based Accommodation providers
- Tourist Guide Lecturers (National, Chauffeur, Site and Area) \* Heritage Houses and Plantation Bungalows
- Landscape and Green Building Architects

Certification is a way of ensuring that an activity or a product meets certain standards. It is important to develop and conduct a cost-effective Certification Programme for Small and Medium Tourism Entrepreneurs and Community Based Tourism operators in Sri Lanka, enabling them to offer high quality tourism products and services to the national and international tourism markets in a more sustainable manner. Securing of 'Certification' will help the SME and CBT Tourism sectors to attract high-end, up-market tourists to Sri Lanka and maintain the quality of their businesses.

SLEF has been appointed by the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA), Sri Lanka, to the Steering Committee, to formulate a Certificate Programme and National Blue Awards Programme supported by Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) based in Denmark. MEPA is working with two programs offered by FEE. Green Key; Unlocking sustainability in the hospitality industry and the Blue Flag Programme dealing on the Theme; "Pure Water, Clean Coasts, Safety and access for all".

In the meantime, SLEF is also exploring the possibility of collaborating with similar Certification Agencies such as Hawaii Ecotourism Association (HEA), Certified Hospitality Trainers Programme offered by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, which provides online access to a quality management program, suitable for various business types and sizes.

## New Ecotourism Destinations in Asia-Pacific Region

Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation promotes Community Based Ecotourism between Sri Lanka and East Timor in collaboration with Timor-Leste Tourism Operators Association.

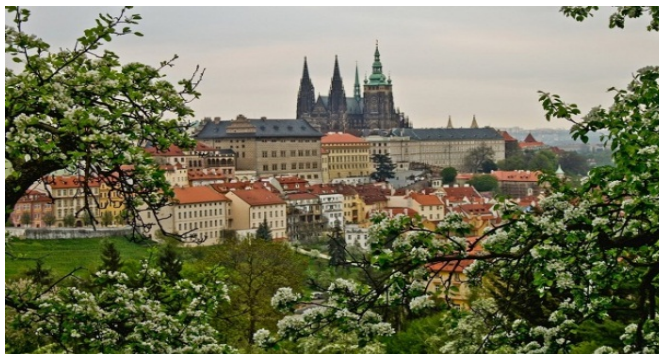


In a message sent to Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation by Egidio da Purificação Soares, the President of Timor-Leste Tourism Operators Association (AOTTL), stated "We are very interested to work with Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation for the Ecotourism Development between Sri Lanka and East Timor. Timor-Leste Tourism Operators Association as an umbrella for all the Tourism Operators in Timor-Leste. We are a new and first Association that established for Tourism in Timor-Leste and also as our National Ministry of Tourism partnership Association.

## Upcoming Ecotourism Events



### The Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC) 2020 Prague, Czech Republic



TIES announce that it will be holding the Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC) in Prague, Czech Republic in 2020. TIES personnel have spoken on many occasions with representatives of the capital city, and have discussed sustainable initiatives as the destination moves towards its goals of greater sustainability. Prague is a beautiful, walkable city and we look forward to holding ESTC, the foremost ecotourism conference, there in 2020. We'll devote a newsletter to the topic in the next two months.



### Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference 2-4 December 2019 Cairns, Queensland, Australia

Since 2008, Tony Charters and Associates has organized and convened Ecotourism Australia's annual Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference. Global Eco brings the world's leading speakers on ecotourism, sustainability and responsible tourism Global Eco Heads to Cairns!

Ecotourism Australia has announced that the 27th Annual Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference will be staged in Cairns, Queensland 2-4 December 2019. The world's longest running and highly regarded ecotourism conference has a truly global following. It brings together all the key players that contribute to a sustainable industry - the operators, tourism commissions, protected area managers, industry professionals and researchers.

The Queensland Government is the major sponsor of the event, and its support once again reflects the priority being placed by the Government on this high value industry. "Flanked by two World Heritage Areas, the Wet Tropic of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns provides us with the perfect setting to bring the leading players in the ecotourism industry together", said conference convener Tony Charters AM.

Ecotourism Australia has also opened up the call for papers. To find out more about speaking at Global Eco. It brings all the key players to the table – tourism operators, protected area managers, tourism organizations, indigenous bodies and researchers. Increasingly Global Eco is at the hub of partnerships between protected area managers and the tourism industry – across infrastructure and investment, quality, conservation and land management.

It facilitates exceptional business networking and has consistently created significant business benefits for delegates. With 26 years of experience under its belt, Ecotourism Australia's members have been at the cutting edge of ecotourism development at a global level. Global Eco Asia Pacific is a business-to-business and business-to-government event focused on practical and applied ecotourism. It is a clearing house of ideas, innovation and best practice. It uses keynote speakers to open up discussions across the key thematic areas and concurrent theme streams to develop these discussions. There are specialized master classes and workshops to enable delegates to get the very most out of their investment. Global Eco is content rich. It seeks the maximum interaction of delegates and it maximizes opportunities for networking and technical tours.

[www.globaleco.com.au](http://www.globaleco.com.au)

## Events sponsored by RDI Network, Australia

Research for Development Impact Network (RDI) is a collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development & Australian Universities

### Weathering the 'Perfect Storm' – Addressing the Agriculture, Energy, Water, Climate Change Nexus (12-13 August, Canberra)

The 2019 Crawford Fund Annual Conference is titled "Weathering the 'Perfect Storm' – Addressing the Agriculture, Energy, Water, Climate Change Nexus" and is being held on 12 and 13 August 2019 in Canberra.

"The Perfect Storm" was a term coined by Sir John Beddington, to describe his prediction that by 2030, food shortages, scarce water and insufficient energy resources would threaten to unleash public unrest, cross-border conflicts and mass migration as people fled from the worst-affected regions. Now, 10 years on, the conference will examine the available evidence as to whether the 'storm' is still on track to happen, or whether scientific, engineering and agricultural innovation and what is happening in the farmer's field has lessened or delayed its impact.

The conference will open with Australian Nobel Prize Laureate, Prof Emerita Elizabeth H. Blackburn, PhD making her first address during a visit to Australia as the 2019 Sir John Crawford Memorial Address presenter.

Registration is now open – see the [conference website](#) for further details.

### Intersect 2019 (31 August, Melbourne)

Unbound and Global Ideas will host Intersect 2019, a celebration of social innovation and entrepreneurship - bringing together Australia's leading and emerging innovators for an engaging day of big ideas.

The event features hands-on, practice-based workshops, engaging debates, storytelling sessions and networking opportunities. This year Global Ideas will bring a specific focus on health and how local organizations are making a big impact both locally and internationally.

Register for the event [here](#).

### Melbourne Children's Global Health Annual Symposium 18 September, Melbourne

The Royal Children's Hospital hosts a day of dynamic and engaging discussions on key areas of interest in global child and adolescent health, with presentations from experts on campus and beyond.

Program and further information to follow at the [website](#).

### ACFID Conference 2019 (23-24 October, Sydney)

The [ACFID National Conference](#) will take place from 23-24 October 2019 at UNSW Sydney. The Conference will examine the dynamics at play in "Championing Sustainable Development Co-Operation", providing delegates with an opportunity to harness diverse perspectives from the global south as well as voices from outside the sector on adapting to the opportunities and challenges presented by shifts in the global political and economic landscape.

Registrations are will open later this month through the [conference website](#).

## International

### 2019 PNG Update (8-9 August, Port Moresby)

The annual PNG Update is the premier forum for the discussion of research and analysis relating to contemporary economic and public policy issues in PNG.

Organized by the University of Papua New Guinea's School of Business and Public Policy and the Australian National University's Development Policy Centre, the 2019 PNG Update will be held in Port Moresby on 8-9 August 2019. Speakers will be invited to present in four parallel sessions at venues across the University of Papua New Guinea. Participation is free and open to the public. The Update is multi-disciplinary in nature. View the draft program



### Madurawala Ecotourism Project shines at the ESTC and Sri Lanka Annual Tourism Awards

Palitha Gurusinghe, President, Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation made a Case Study on Sustainable Ecotourism; "Contributions to Poverty Reduction, Economic Development, Employment Creation, and Education" at the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC) held in Ansan, Korea in 2017.



In December 2018, 'Madurawa Ecotourism Village' was awarded the National Tourism Award for the Best Community Based Tourism Project in Sri Lanka.



### Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka

The book "Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is authored by Palitha Gurusinghe, founding President of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation and the founding Chairman of Asia Pacific Regional Ecotourism Council (APREC)

"Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is written basically from the practical point of view, through the experience gained by the author over the years. Palitha thought it is good to record important land marks of Sri Lanka Ecotourism for the benefit of those who are interested, inquisitive and looking forward to widen their horizons in Ecotourism.

In Sri Lanka, many, even some academics, researchers and most of the tourism officials, government, local government, bank officials, and the tourism stakeholders do not clearly understand what Ecotourism is and often mix up the concept with adventure and nature tourism. Therefore, perhaps, to some extent, the information contained in the publication may help decision makers, academics and students who are pursuing their studies and researches in Ecotourism.

"Story of Ecotourism Sri Lanka" is a recollection of important land marks of Ecotourism development in Sri Lanka. For the author himself, it was something like 'Going down the Memory Lane' of his journey through twenty one years, and how he got involved in promoting Ecotourism in Sri Lanka. Therefore, by reading this book, you could get an idea on what Ecotourism is and to what extent the concepts of Ecotourism and activities are integrated and rooted into the tourism fabric in Sri Lanka.

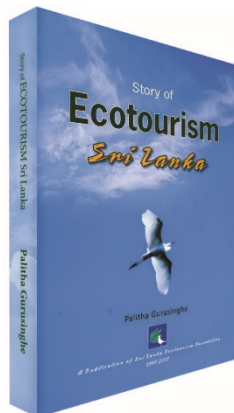
In this book, the author has attempted to provide information on the enormous potential the Island possess to position Sri Lanka as an Ecotourism Destination on the world tourism map and also to identify the major issues and challenges that Ecotourism confronted in Sri Lanka. At the same time, he has clearly highlighted how Ecotourism in Sri Lanka could contribute to alleviating poverty in the tourism generating areas and support environmental and biodiversity conservation in Sri Lanka.

However, the author is of the view that Sri Lanka Ecotourism is still not developed up to the satisfactory standards in comparison to our neighboring countries in South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific Region. To substantiate his views, he has sighted good examples and case studies from some countries like Sikkim, Tripura (India) and Bhutan etc.

The book is available for sale.

Please contact SLEF by email; [sleco@sltnet.lk](mailto:sleco@sltnet.lk)/mobile; + 9471 256 68 74

Price LKR. 1400/= (US \$8 per copy)



### A New Sustainable Travel Startup ([www.fairjourney.com](http://www.fairjourney.com))

The trend for sustainable tourism, or travel that has a positive impact, has gained a lot of marketing traction over the years. 'Sustainable', 'Eco-friendly' & 'Conservation' have become buzzwords, and greenwashing — where companies make vague and misleading claims about their sustainable credentials has become an epidemic.

Our new startup 'Fair Journey (FJ)' aims to address this issue. We've developed an online travel platform dedicated to hosting genuine sustainable travel facilities, products, and services which are certified and monitored on a periodical basis to maintain standards, reduce leakage and accelerate economic, social and environmental development across tourism hotspots.

FJ's unique five-step eco-certification allows us to scout, audit, certify, promote and monitor sustainable destinations via a broad network of intermediaries without having to bear any substantial costs.

Learn more about our eco-certification at – [www.fairjourney.com/fairlabel](http://www.fairjourney.com/fairlabel)

We are currently seeking an investor(s) to help us jump-start the project. If you'd like to partner with us, please send us an e-mail to [apply@fairjourney.com](mailto:apply@fairjourney.com) along with your CV and a cover letter expressing your interest in our project.

Please visit our demo website to learn more about our work – [www.fairjourney.com](http://www.fairjourney.com)

### The First Women-Centric Ecotourism Project in Sri Lanka

South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) Sri Lanka Chapter is pleased to inform you that we are now operating the Hikkaduwa Ecotourism Project, the first women centric Ecotourism Project in Sri Lanka,

Initiated in response to a decision taken at the SWAN AGM, held in Thimpu, Bhutan, in September, 2014, at the workshop of South Asia Women's Network (SWAN). The delegates unanimously agreed and emphasized that it is crucial to integrate women into the process of sustainable ecotourism development in South Asian Region. Attached, please find a media cover given by a leading News Paper in Sri Lanka. This project has entirely been funded by Ms. Rohini Nanayakkara, Chair Person, SWAN, Sri Lanka Chapter and facilitated by Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF).

**Editor's Note:** News appeared in the APREC News Letter is based on media reports, feature articles and internet publications, websites etc. If a reader wishes to know the source of the news the Editors could provide information on request.

#### Publisher: Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation

15-16, 'Water Front', Kahapola, Madapatha, Sri Lanka

Telephone: + 94 71 2566874 / + 94 777 631334

WhatsApp (Mobile) + 94 777 743 254

Landline / Fax: + 94 11 2052578

Email; [sleco@sltnet.lk](mailto:sleco@sltnet.lk) / [palithasleef@gmail.com](mailto:palithasleef@gmail.com)

#### Edited by:

Samitha Surendra (SLEF Programme Coordinator)

E-mail: [sleef.internships@gmail.com](mailto:sleef.internships@gmail.com)

Alisa Kurtcenovskaia (SLEF Intern - England)

<https://alisakurtcenovskaia.com/blog/>