

November 2023 international forum on species in Haikou, China

Extensive social engagement is required to conserve species at risk of extinction. The development of national eco-security systems (NESS) encompassing both ecological systems (e.g. protected areas) and social management systems (e.g. legal frameworks) is crucial given that biodiversity declines could potentially result in damage to ecosystem services vital for human wellbeing.

The inaugural NESS International Science Congress and Workshop on an Eco-Security System for All People (the NESS Congress) held in Haikou, China, in 2022 underscored the urgent need to preserve the ecological conditions needed for the survival of humanity. The congress launched the One Target–An Eco-Security System for All People (Haikou) Initiative, a call to scientists worldwide to form a collaborative consensus on eco-security. Currently, the Haikou Initiative has garnered support from experts in 129 countries, with over 40 nations establishing NESS expert networks.

In the November 2023 NESS Congress there were five forums, including an inaugural forum on species, coordinated by the IUCN Species Survival Commission China Species Specialist Group in partnership with Shenzhen University and the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. Nineteen experts from 14 countries delivered talks on the fundamental role of species conservation in supporting the Haikou Initiative.

The forum urged species experts and institutions to monitor eco-security for the wellbeing of humanity. It emphasized the need for research and awareness initiatives that highlight the crucial role of species in providing eco-security. Proposed measures include the establishment of fungi commissions and a dedicated commission for criteria and indicators to achieve the objectives of the Haikou Initiative. This collaborative, multifaceted approach aims to strengthen ecological resilience to ensure the survival of humanity.

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