

Shennongjia International Congress on An Eco-Security System for All People along the Belt and Road

(Second round of invitation)

In 2013, President Xi Jinping of China introduced the concept of "Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind (CSFM)" to the international community, which has been integrated into a number of United Nations resolutions and is gaining recognition and support from an increasing number of countries. In the same year, President Xi proposed the "Belt and Road" (B&R) Initiative, focusing on the future and destiny of humanity, fostering cooperation with partners, and jointly creating a community of shared interests, shared future, and shared responsibilities characterized by political mutual trust, economic integration, and cultural inclusiveness. As of December 2023, China has signed over 230 cooperation agreements on building the B&R with 163 countries and more than 30 international organizations.

In 2024, the first year of the second decade of the CSFM concept and the B&R Initiative, the People's Government of Shennongjia Forest District and NESS International Science Network plan to host the "*Shennongjia International Congress on An Eco-Security System for All People along the Belt and Road*" during May 26-29, 2024. The congress aims to invite 300-600 experts, scholars, and students (both offline and online) from 163 countries along the B&R. The congress will propose and encourage B&R countries and regions to actively establish **National Eco-Security Systems (NESS)** that serve and ensure the Eco-Security conditions necessary for long-term survival of their people in their countries and globally building "**An Eco-Security System for All People (ESSAP) along the B&R**".

The congress will feature special forums of "*International Forum on Protected Areas*," and "*International Forum on Species*," advocating academic exchange among various disciplines. The event will establish broad consensus, discuss and issue the "International Initiative on Jointly Building ESSAP along the B&R", and release the description of *NESS Index* and the *NESS Global Report*.

In recognition of your achievements in promoting NESS in your country, we cordially invite you to participate in the Congress. Please find the following information on the congress:

I. General Information

1. Congress Name: Shennongjia International Congress on An Eco-Security System for All People along the Belt and Road

2. Time and Venue: May 27-29, 2024 in Shennongjia, Hubei, China

3. Theme: Promoting the establishment of "An Eco-Security System for All People along the Belt and Road" among relevant countries and specialized disciplines, and promoting conservation and green development of Shennongjia

4. Number of Participants: Participants from 163 countries along the B&R will be in attendance. Onsite, there will be a total of approximately 380 participants, including 90 experts and international students from 80 countries along the B&R, 120 experts, and

170 managers from 150 protected areas (PAs) in China. Additionally, around 200 participants will join online.

5. Sub-Forums and themes:

(1) **Theme Forum on An Eco-Security System for All People:** Representatives of various countries exchange views and discuss the progress, experience and work plan related to the ESSAP along B&R.

(2) **Forum on Protected Areas:** The development of protected area system and its role on supporting the ESSAP along B&R.

(3) **Forum on Species:** Exploring how species research and conservation can contribute significantly to the joint building the ESSAP along B&R

6. Main Outputs: In the inaugural year of the second decade of CSFM and B&R Initiative, the congress will

(1) Call universities, research institutes, and PA administrations from B&R countries to discuss and issue the "*International Initiative for Building the ESSAP along the B&R*"

(2) International Youth Forum will discuss and issue the "*International Youth Initiative for Building the ESSAP along the B&R*"

(3) Issue the plan and status on the *NESS Index* and the *NESS Global Report*.

(4) Facilitate international cooperation and sign MoUs among research institutions and PA administrations in B&R countries.

II. Organizers

1. Sponsors: People's Government of Shennongjia Forest District, NESS International Science Network, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

2. Organizers: Shennongjia National Park Administration; Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS); IUCN SSC China Species Specialist Group

3. Co-organizers: Chinese National Committee for the Man and Biosphere Programme UNESCO, Hubei Shennongjia Cultural Tourism Group Co. Ltd., Shennongjia Golden Monkey Conservation Foundation, Hubei Shennongjia State-Owned Capital Investment Operation (Group) Co. Ltd., Jingpai Shennongjia Liquor Co. Ltd., VooV Meeting (technical support)

III. Organization Committee

President: Wei Feng, Party Secretary and Director of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress, Shennongjia Forest District; Party Secretary, Shennongjia National Park Administration

Executive President: Qijun Liu, Deputy Party Secretary and District Mayor of the Government, Shennongjia Forest District; Deputy Party Secretary and Director General, Shennongjia National Park Administration

Committee members:

Zhicheng Xia, Deputy Director, Hubei Provincial Forestry Bureau

Dexin Tian, Chief Scientist and Secretary General, NESS International Science Network

Guangming Dai, Party Member and Deputy Director, Shennongjia National Park Administration

Secretary-general:

Jingyuan Yang, Director of the Scientific Research Institute, Shennongjia National Park

Members of the Academic Committee of the Congress:

Zhihong Xu, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chair of the Expert Advisory Committee of the Chinese National Committee for the Man and Biosphere Programme, UNESCO

Bojie Fu, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Academician of the Third World Academy of Sciences, Foreign Academician of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Researcher of the Center for Ecological and Environmental Research, CAS

Hang Sun, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Director of Kunming Institute of Botany, CAS

Zhiyun Ouyang, Foreign Academician, American Academy of Sciences; Director, Ecological Environment Research Center, CAS; Director, National Park Research Institute, National Forestry and Grassland Administration

Viatcheslav Rozhnov, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Director of the A.N.Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Komiljon Tojibaev, Academician of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences and Director of the Institute of Botany, Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences

Julio C. Calvo-Alvarado, Member National Academy of Sciences, Costa Rica and Research Professor, Costa Rican Institute of Technology

Roman Jashenko, Vice-President, UNESCO MAB programme for Asia and Pacific region; Director General, Institute of Zoology of Kazakhstan

Yohanes Purwanto, President of the Indonesian National Committee of Man and Biosphere, UNESCO; Professor of Ecology and Ethnobiology, National Research and Innovation Agency

Xiaoping Tang, Director, National Park Research Institute, National Forestry and Grassland Administration

Yan Zhang, China Program Director, IUCN

Baodang Liu, Deputy Secretary General of the World Heritage Expert Committee of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration; Member of the IUCN Green List of Protected Areas

Zhengyuan Hu, Chief Expert of China Federation of Commerce Think Tank and Director of Innovative National Strategy Promotion Committee

Dexin Tian, Chief Scientist and Secretary General, NESS International Science Network

Sung Wang, Researcher, Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Fengchun Wang, Ex First-level Inspector, Law Office of the Environment Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, National People's Congress

Xiwu Zhang, Vice President of China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA), Director, National Parks and Protected Natural Areas Committee, CWCA; Chief Supervisor, China Zoological Society

Jingfeng Zhou, Secretary General, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation

Yang Rui, President of National Park Research Institute, Tsinghua University

Ke Zhou, Professor, Law School of Renmin University of China; Ex Vice President, Chinese Society of Environmental and Resources Law

Youhai Sun, Member, National Ecological Environment Expert Commission; Vice President, Chinese Society of Environmental and Resources Law; President, Law School of Tianjin University

Tianbao Qin, Director and Researcher, Institute of Environmental Law, Wuhan University; Vice President and Secretary General, Chinese Society of Environmental and Resources Law

Haitao Shi, Professor, Hainan Normal University

Jiakuan Chen, Distinguished Professor, Fudan University; Senior Consultant and Researcher, Fudan Institute of Development; Consultant of Key Laboratory of Biodiversity and Ecological Engineering, Ministry of Education

Zhenji Li, Professor, School of Environment and Ecology, Xiamen University

Baodang Liu, Deputy Secretary General, World Heritage Expert Committee of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration; Committee Member, IUCN Green List of Protected Areas

Sub-forums:

(1) Theme Forum on An Eco-Security System for All People

Convener: Dexin Tian, Chief Scientist and Secretary-General, NESS International Science Network

Secretary-General: Yan Xie, Associate Researcher, Institute of Zoology, CAS, and International Liaison Officer of NESS International Science Network

(2) Forum on Protected Areas:

Convener: Zhiyun Ouyang, Director, Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences, CAS, and Foreign Member of the National Academy of Sciences

Secretary-General: Jingyuan Yang, Director and Senior Engineer at the Professorial Level, Scientific Research Institute, Shennongjia National Park

(3) Forum on Species

Convener: Sun Hang, Director of the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

Secretary-General: Gao Yufang, Secretary-General of the China Species Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission

IV. Agenda framework: May 26-29, 2024

Main Contents		Dates	Form	Specific contents
Registration, Preparatory Meeting of the Organizing Committee		26 th		Participant arrival and registration. Preparatory Meeting of the Organizing Committee
Opening ceremony		27 th AM	Plenary meeting	Opening ceremony and plenary speeches
Theme Forum on ESSAP along the Belt and Road	National Eco-Security System (NESS) Forum	27 th -28 th	Parallel meetings	Representatives of various countries exchanged views and discussed the progress and experience of An Eco-Security System for All People along the Belt and Road
	International Youth Forum	28 th		International students from domestic universities interact with experts from other countries to exchange and discuss the ESSAP
Forum on National Park and Protected Areas	National Park Forum	27 th -28 th		Conservation and development in national parks for supporting the ESSAP
	Protected Area Forum	28 th		Conservation and development in protected areas for supporting the ESSAP
	Eco-tourism Forum	28 th		Research on the development of ecotourism in protected areas and in Shennongjia
	IUCN Green List of Protected Areas	27 th		IUCN Green List of Protected Areas, management principles and best practices
	Annual Meeting of International Alliance of Protected Areas	28 th	IAPA/ISZS network development, training, cooperation and communication, and annual meeting	

	(IAPA/ISZS)			
Species forum	Discussion on the Priority Principle of Species Conservation Serving the ESSAP	27 th		Discussing the principle of prioritizing species conservation, with a focus on the ESSAP
		28 th		Discuss and draft the ChSSG recommendations on prioritizing species conservation
Closing ceremony		29 th AM	Plenary meeting	Closing ceremony; visiting the Shennongjia National Park
Field trip		29 th PM		Visiting the Shennongjia National Park
Departure		30 th		Departure from Shennongjia

V. Shennongjia National Park

Shennongjia National Park is located in the transitional zone from China's western mountains to the eastern hilly land and plains and the transitional zone between subtropical climate and warm-temperate climate, in the eastern section of the Daba Mountain Range. The elevation of its highest peak is 3106.2m above sea level. In November 2016, the National Park was established upon the integration of the former Hubei Shennongjia National Nature Reserve, Dajihu National Wetland Park, Shennongjia National Geopark and a part of the territory under the jurisdiction of Shennongjia Forestry Bureau, with a total area of 1,170 square kilometers.



Shennongjia National Park is a green emerald embedded in the 31° north latitude, with special geographic location, unique climatic conditions. It has forest coverage of 96%, nearly 10 million cubic meters of living wood growing stock, and preserves intact northern subtropical forest ecosystems and sphagnum wetland ecosystem, as well as distinctive altitudinal zonation of vegetation. There are 3,684 species of higher plants, 544 species of vertebrates and 4,318 species of insects, with 25 species of wild plants under national protection, such as dove tree and Chinese yew; 84 species of wild animals under national protection, such as the golden snub-nosed monkey and the golden eagle; and 116 species of plants endemic to the Shennongjia area.

As a globally rare species gene pool, Shennongjia is one of the world's 14 key areas of

international significance for biodiversity conservation and research and one of China's 16 hotspots for biodiversity conservation and research. Its forest ecosystems and altitudinal vegetation zonation is typical in the northern subtropics; it is a key zone of the world's Mesoproterozoic and Neoproterozoic geological processes; it has a northern subtropical subalpine sphagnum bog wetland ecosystem; its flagship species, Sichuan snub-nosed monkey, is the most easterly distribution of its populations; it is an important water source for the Middle Route of South-to-North Water Diversion Project and an ecological barrier for Central China; and it is a critical habitat for a large number of rare and endangered wild animal and plant species. In 1990, it became a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve; in 2013, it was designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark; in 2016, it was inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List as a natural Site; in 2013, Dajiuhu Wetland was included on the List of Wetlands of International Importance by the International Convention on Wetlands; in 2022, Shennongjia National Park was included in the IUCN Green List; and in 2023, it was awarded the "World's Best Protected Area" by the State Forestry and Grassland Administration and IUCN. Shennongjia National Park is a unique ecological model in China and even in the world.

