

### **Session 3**

#### **Rethinking Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism Development**

Thanks Halona

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me welcome all of you one second to this 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the day. You might be aware about the session title 'Rethinking Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism Development'. I would like to give an overview of the topics a bit in-depth which will later be discussed elaborately by the session speakers.

You all know that coastal areas and islands are among the fastest growing destinations worldwide, so similarly in Bangladesh. A total of 330 million people of Bangladesh live in 19 coastal districts, so far. Their life and livelihoods are some way around depends on the coastal and marine resources. With the rapidly growing economy of the Bangladesh, the coastal areas are also entering into a new dimension of economic development, and hence their lifestyle and their livelihoods are being changed a lot with diversified sources of income. One of those is obviously the emerging tourism development in different coastal destinations. Besides, Bangladesh is a fascinating mix of great history, vibrant cultures, sandy beaches, abundant wildlife and rich flora and fauna.

Specifically, Cox's Bazar combines the world's longest unbroken beach with the unique lifestyle of ethnic minority groups in the neighboring hills. Other than the beach activities, tourists are fond of exploring the natural and cultural beauty of other few locations within the district boundary. Cox's Bazar is very popular to the locals until now with recent phenomena of being popular rapidly to the international tourists. As a

consequence, rapid infrastructural development have been done over the last decade. Still more need to be done. But all this happened with the growing demand of accommodating rapidly growing tourist number each year, not as a part of long term plan of investment. However, most of the investments done so far in CXB in building hotels, without having forecast of meeting other needs of water supply, drainage, waste collection, sewerage system, beach management, roads, electricity, etc. The scenario of other local destinations around CX, most of which are located in Ecologically Critical Areas- are worse.

Dear Audience

As you know, tourism is one of the most powerful tools for economic growth and social development. The most interesting and unique attractions-including indigenous culture, wildlife and natural landscapes-are nearly always located in areas like Hill tracts, St. Martins, Tanguar Haor or Sundarbans, where access is difficult and poverty is often the greatest.

The challenge is to evolve those assets into attractive, marketable tourism products that maximize social and economic benefits while minimizing any negative impacts and ensuring the sustainable coastal and marine development. Although the harmful impacts of tourism are acknowledged, the challenges remains on how to integrate tourism development within the wider context of coastal management.

In the next one hour, we all gathered here together will discuss this vital issue of how we can introduce an integrated approach to coastal and marine tourism development by adopting innovative sustainable initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It's my honor to invite the panelists of the session on stage and be seated in these individual armchair.

At first I request **Dr. Aparup Chowhdury** to come on stage who is Chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and also the Additional Secretary to the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Now I would like to invite **Dr. Paul Rogers**, Consulting, Ecotourism Expert for Instituto Oikos Onlus, Australia.

Now I request **Ms. Tania Miorin**, Country Representative, Instituto Oikos Onlus, Myanmar to come on the stage.

At last I invite **Ms. Marjorie van Strien**, Sustainable Tourism and Livelihoods Specialist, Nepal to have your seat.

As PATA NTFF is looking forward to promoting Cox's Bazar as an emerging tourism destination, it would be nice if the session can start with the experience of 'Lampi Marine National Park' by Paul and Tania.

Then, we can move to hear local experience and challenges as well from Dr Aparup.

Then Marjorie will speak on the consequences of unsustainable tourism development and the need for effective planning from the perspective of Cox's Bazar area would be very much contributing towards achieving the session objective.

Then we may proceed in seeking some leading questions from the moderator end, followed by questions from the audience.

Q1. How can we ensure financial sustainability of a community based organization that involved in responsible tourism?

Q2. Do you think Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES) is an effective mechanism for ensuring both ecological and livelihood sustainability of a nature based tourist area?