

Izabella Koziell Deputy Director General ICIMOD speaks on SANDEE's mandate to develop critical human capital in the region to tackle multiple crisis including climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Izabella Koziell, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD
Welcome Remarks

Good morning and it's very nice to be here with you in Sri Lanka for this session today. To everyone in the room and those joining us virtually, I would like to welcome you to the South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics, in short, SANDEE's Karl Goran Maler Memorial Lecture. But just before we dive into the lecture today, I wanted to share a little bit more about SANDEE. Since its launch in November 1999, this network has provided over 250 grants to help young researchers from the region to enhance their research capacity and academic leadership, whilst also, of course, addressing the critical environment and development challenges in South Asia. The key difference between SANDEE and other research capacity building efforts is the extremely dedicated mentorship and repeated interactions that we facilitate between the researchers and their mentors.

And I really would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the dedication of all our mentors. Indeed, I think some of us heard last night that someone's hobby was to be a SANDEE mentor. So, wow, amazing. Thank you. And of course, for through these efforts for developing such a pool of well-trained economists in our region, sitting right across a multitude of different institutions, tackling what is one of the first worst crises facing this region, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

And currently, I'm very pleased to say that several SANDEE alumni and advisors are collaborating with our research teams at ICIMOD, for instance, looking at what is the investment gap around air quality improvement, or conducting a cost benefit analysis of spring revival activities, and also contributing to a major review of the state of springs in the mountain areas. So, we hope that we can build further on these kinds of collaborations and have our research trainees working alongside our teams within ICIMOD and across the Hindukush Himalayan region. This workshop is one of the flagship events of SANDEE. And over the next few days, we'll be hearing from researchers and advisors, and discussing ideas and proposals.

And just a reminder that today's lecture is in memory of one of SANDEE's co-founders, the late Professor Karl Goran Maler, who passed away four years back. For today's memorial lecture, we're very happy to welcome Dr Mark Smith, the Director General of the International Water Management Institute, who will speak on water systems, food, and the climate crisis. And of course, Professor Subhrendu Pattanayak from Duke University, also one of SANDEE's long-standing faculty advisors, who will be speaking on climate change. And tomorrow, we'll have a plenary where Dr Bingwei Tian from Sichuan University will be speaking on disaster risk reduction.

Before I leave you, I want to thank the entire organizing committee for all their hard work in bringing us together here from across the entire region. The next few days will no doubt be powerful for many young researchers, and I'm very much looking forward to listening and learning from all the bright young minds in this room. Thank you.