

5th Asia Environment Lecture

“Birds, Humans and our Sustainable Future”

Ms Patricia Zurita, CEO, Birdlife International



From L to R: A/P Yew Wen Shan, Deputy Chair, Masters of Environmental Management (MEM) Programme Management Committee; Dr Lau Siu Kit, MEM Programme Management Committee; A/P Roger Tan, Vice Dean, Faculty of Science; A/P Lin Shuwen Jolene, Co-Director, Asia-Pacific Centre of Environmental Law (APCEL); Ms Kirtida Mekani, MEM Programme Advisory Committee; Prof Lam Khee Poh, Dean, School of Design and Environment (SDE); Ms Esther An, Chief Sustainability Officer, City Developments Limited; A/P Sekhar Kondepudi, Director, MEM Programme; Ms Patricia Zurita (Speaker, 5th Asia Environment Lecture); A/P Lye Lin Heng, Chair, Programme Management Committee, MEM Programme and Co-Director, APCEL; Prof Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large & Chair APCEL & MEM Programme Advisory Committees; Mr Ronnie Tay, CEO, National Environment Agency & Member, MEM Advisory Committee; A/P Kua Harn Wei, Asst-Dean & former representative for SDE, MEM Programme; A/P Matthias Roth, Deputy Director, Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) Programme; Mr Vinayagan Dharmarajah, Regional Director, Birdlife International Asia; A/P Edward Webb, Director, BES Programme.

Event Report

Date of Event:	Friday, 3 rd November 2017, 4.30PM to 7PM
Venue:	Auditorium, NUS Faculty of Law
Name and Type of Event	<p>Lecture Series: 5th Asia Environment Lecture: “Birds, Humans and our Sustainable Future.”</p> <p>Organised by: Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) Programme, NUS, Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), M.Sc. (Environmental Management) [MEM] Programme.</p> <p>Co-hosts : National Parks Board & City Developments Ltd</p> <p>Sponsor : City Developments Ltd</p>
Number of Participants	167

The current environmental issues are global, complex and interconnected. These issues are gaining interest among industries, organisations and government establishments worldwide. While Asian states have made considerable economic progress in rapid time, they are finding it increasingly challenging to balance development and environment sustainability. There is a need for sound environmental management practices and cooperation among stakeholders are necessary to address the environmental challenges.

The Asia Environment Lecture series started in 2013 and since its beginning, world leaders championing environmental sustainability were invited to speak at the lecture, providing the audience with an opportunity to gain insights on issues pertaining to environmental conservation and sustainability. The lecture series also provides a unique platform for knowledge exchange and networking with world leaders with expertise and experience on environmental sustainability. This year's Asia Environment Lecture is the 5th in the series and the event is a joint effort by the NUS Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) programme, the Law Faculty's Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL) and the NUS MSc (Environmental Management) [MEM] programme. The lecture is co-hosted by City Developments Limited, a Singapore-listed international real estate operating company that advocates the development of sustainable living spaces, lives and communities; and the National Parks Board, a government agency which is dedicated and committed to providing and enhancing the greenery of Singapore.

The speaker for this year's lecture is Ms Patricia Zurita, CEO of Birdlife International. Birdlife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership that strives to conserve the habitats and biodiversity of birds. As the widely recognised world leader in bird conservation, Birdlife International conducts field research on the ground for data to enable successful implementation of bird conservation programmes across national borders. There are some 120 Birdlife Partners worldwide from 118 countries and the community is continuing to grow. In earlier years, Ms Zurita was the Executive Director of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, a global multi-donor fund enabling civil society to participate in and benefit from conserving some of the world's most critical ecosystem. Prior to that, she also led the Conservation Stewards Programme which is dedicated to the provision of economic incentives to local and indigenous communities in developing countries in exchange for their commitment to protect biodiversity through conservation agreements.

For her lecture, Ms Zurita focused on how birds and their migratory paths show us a common path to conservation and peace. Environmental habitats such as coasts, wetlands and grasslands are destroyed by land reclamation. Climate change is altering our landscape and weather in ways that can be difficult to predict. These conditions make it difficult for migratory birds to make their yearly journey across borders between their breeding and wintering grounds as the areas that they are able to rest and refuel are decreasing. As a result, many of the world's migratory birds are in sharp decline. If we are to save them from extinction, countries would need to work together as there is little value in protecting birds in one country if they are doomed to die from exhaustion in the next. Only by working together, across borders we can effectively build and maintain a happy, healthy planet. Birdlife International is driven by this belief. People working for nature locally are brought together and connected nationally and internationally through the organisation to deliver huge positive impacts and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

The event attracted more than 150 participants mainly from NUS and members of the public as well as environmental practitioners, activists, government officers, researchers, educators, faculty members and students from other institutions.

The Q & A session that followed was chaired by Ambassador-at-Large Professor Tommy Koh, who also chairs the Advisory Committees for APCEL and the MEM programme.

The organisers take this opportunity once again, to thank City Developments Limited (CDL), Singapore's leading "green" developer, for its generous support for this lecture series, since 2015.