

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Conference held in Bali from 26-31 August 2013 focused on the practical application of the ecosystem services concept in planning, management and decision making, and the development of case studies.



During a post-conference professional training session on “Mainstreaming the value of water and wetlands into decision-making”, a “Spotlight on Asia” roundtable was organized to discuss local management and stakeholder issues with regard to water and wetlands and the potential benefits of communicating nature’s values to decision-makers at local, regional and national levels.

**Mr. Maheshwar Dhakal** shared his experiences working for Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation in Nepal.

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**UNEP-TEEB: What are the main threats/pressures to water and wetlands in Nepal?**

**Maheshwar Dhakal:** Nepal is rich in water and river ecosystems, which are themselves full of species and genetic diversity. The Government of Nepal, local communities and conservation partners are all committed to conserving our water and wetlands, yet they are constantly decreasing in quantity and are being degraded in their quality. The main anthropogenic causes for that are deforestation, hydropower production, and rural road construction. In many instances, the lack of education and awareness of the importance of sustainable and wise use of water among the local communities is equally responsible. Also it is widely believed that climate change and its effects are causing a reduction in water sources, and eventually drying up our

wetlands.

**UNEP-TEEB: What is the potential contribution of TEEB and the ecosystem approach to promote wetland wise management in your country?**

**Maheshwar Dhakal:** Nepalese people use water sources for drinking, irrigation and hydropower production and therefore the economics of water and wetland ecosystems in Nepal is enormous. In Nepal, being a mountainous country, there is a huge possibility in establishing Payment for Environmental Services programmes. The up-stream communities can be remunerated by the down-stream communities who use and benefit from water-related ecosystem services. Small-scale farmers can apply the TEEB approach in irrigation and drinking water schemes, while the government can impose royalties or taxation to large-scale hydropower production. The income generated from such PES schemes can be used for improving the welfare of local and marginalized communities and create incentive packages to motivate them to conserve water and wetland systems, aiming for long-term sustainability.

**UNEP-TEEB: Can you provide an example of a good practice related to wetland wise management in your country?**

**Maheshwar Dhakal:** The local institutions in Nepal manage Ramsar-listed wetlands, for example Gosaikinda Lake and Bis Hazari Lake. Various conservation activities have been implemented in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve by local communities. A multi-stakeholder approach is being applied in Ghodaghodi and associated lakes in order to organize local communities into local institutions, identify the available financing for conservation and fair distribution of the conservation benefits among local communities.