Silk Road – Connecting People for Peace and Sustainable Development in ECO Region through the Power of Biosphere Reserves and IBSE

Manzoor Hussain Soomro
President

ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)
MOST Building, 1- Constitution Avenue, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad-Pakistan
ECOSF and the ECO Region
IGO of 10 Member States with Good Natural Resources
Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan
The Historic Silk Routes

Silk Routes have existed for thousands of years, connecting Asia, Africa and Europe, and many different empires, kingdoms, reigns, societies & cultures, and enriched them by transporting:

- Knowledge, ideas, cultures, religions, languages
- Material goods including silk, spices, grain, vegetables, fruit, animal hides, tools, woodwork, metalwork, art work, precious stones, religious objects, and much more.
- Also uniting them all, with a common thread of cultural, religious, and environmental heritage.
Maritime Routes/Spice Route
Economic Belt & Maritime Silk Road

- In 2013 China announced “The Belt and Road” or “One Belt, One Road” Initiative- a development strategy and framework.

- It is worth $900 billion (?) and focuses on connectivity and cooperation among countries primarily in Eurasia and consists of two main components:
  1. The land-based Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)
  2. The oceangoing 21st Century Maritime Silk Road
Economic Belt & Maritime Silk Road

- https://www.google.com.pk/search?
The Belt and Road Initiative - Five Routes
Six International Economic Cooperation Corridors

- China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor
- New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor
- Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor
- China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor
- China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

- https://www.google.com.pk/search?
Almost all the 10 Member States in ECO Region situated along Silk Road.

Among five, following two International Economic Co-operation Corridors of The Belt and Road Initiative will be built in the ECO Region:

- China-Central Asia-West Asia
- China-Pakistan
China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- It runs from Xinjiang in China and exits the country via Alashankou to join the railway networks of Central Asia and West Asia before reaching the Mediterranean coast and the Arabian Peninsula.

- The corridor mainly covers five countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan) as well as Iran & Turkey (6 ECO countries) in West Asia.
The concept of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is to build an economic corridor running from Kashgar, Xinjiang, in the north, to Pakistan’s Gwadar Port in the south.

The two governments have mapped out a long-term plan for building highways, railways, oil and natural gas pipelines and optic fibre networks stretching from Kashgar to Gwadar Port; and the work has already begun on the mega project.
China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
Paving way for socio-economic development for all provinces of Pakistan

Afghanistan

Kashgar

China

India

Pakistan

India

Pakistan
When it comes to geography, ecosystems and natural resources, the ECO countries have:

- Steppe and grasslands
- Desert and mountains
- Alpine forests
- Lakes, and tundra

They also face the same environmental issues, such as controlling invasive species, managing water scarcity, erosion, and land degradation, the loss and degradation of forests, and the threat of climate change.
The exploitation of natural resources in the name of “progress” without concern to the environment has had disastrous consequences. The drying up of the Aral Sea is probably the best known case.

Toxic waste from mining and heavy industries, and deposits of radioactive waste in disaster-prone areas endanger the health of millions of people as well as the habitat.

Competition for energy sources is also straining the relations between the states of the region.
The gorgeous mountains in the region with their narrow white-water river canyon, walnut forests, glaciers and snow leopards make a huge impression on the traveller going along the Silk Road. The scenery is extraordinary.

But will it last? The Glaciers are melting and some small ones (smaller than 0.5 km²) have totally melted.
The transboundary basins and aquifers link populations of different countries and support the incomes and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

Rivers flow travelling between countries in a common basin, have been source of tension between states!

But they have also contributed lot to unify the regions.
Central Asia and Waterways
Water being transboundary in nature has long been a major cause of conflict in Central Asia.

The Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have a surplus of water while the other three countries complain that they do not get their due share from the region’s great rivers.
The communities and regions along the Silk Road that are vulnerable to climate change, are also under pressure from population growth, resource depletion, and poverty.

Thus, Promotion of Biosphere Reserves concept with IBSE-FFS approach, can lessen pressure on resources, improve management of environmental risks & increase the welfare of the poorest, and advance the Sustainable Development.

The HOPE: “One Belt One Road” initiative of China around BRs linked with SDGs.
Silk Road- Role of ECOSF

ECOSF being an Inter-Governmental Org in the region aimed to promote and fund scientific research and Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) at grass root level, promoting gender balance, as well as being Stakeholder of IPBES in the Region; has a great potential to play a role.

ECOSF would welcome to join hands with MAB-UNESCO Programme for pursuing Agenda-2030 through educating and engaging school children & teachers, college and university students and youth in general on SDGs and conservation of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development along the Silk Road in ECO Region.
ECO Science Foundation, CAST China, ISTIC Malaysia and IAP SEP have already planned an IBSE workshop in July 2016 at Karamey in Xinjiang linked with “One Belt- One Road”.

IBSE and BRs as Entry point for bringing people together around Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Water issues as a tool for IBSE, can address numerous SDGs.
ECO Science Foundation
a Catalyst for the ECO Region
10 Member States with Good Natural Resources
Objectives of ECOSF

- Function as a reservoir of highly skilled scientific and technical manpower in ECO
- Facilitate promotion of scientific research & collaboration leading to Economic Development among the member states
- Promote and Popularize Science at grass root level (IBSE, Travelling Science Expos etc.)
- Harmonize ST&I Policies of ECO countries
S&T Fund of ECOSF

- Funding of Scientific and Technological Research
- Funding of R&D-Industry Programme
- Funding of Training Workshops
- Funding of Science Conferences and Travel Grants
- Funding of key Science Popularization Activities
- Promotion of IBSE in the ECO Region
Thank You