



International Peatland Society

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More than 1500 members for the responsible management of peatlands.

PRESS RELEASE

Jyväskylä, 15 August 2024

Splendid 17th International Peatland Congress attracted 350 participants to Taizhou

The 2024 International Peatland Congress was held on 4 - 9 August in the city of Taizhou, Zhejiang province, which is situated in eastern coastal China, with about 350 participants from 22 countries attending.

The event was the 17th in the 56-year history of the International Peatland Society and once again attracted scientists, company representatives, engineers and students from all sectors of peat and peatland management.



Participants of the closing session. Photo by Zhang Bin

Science and business under one roof

The conference consisted of 14 sessions on peatland and peatland science, including nature conservation, palaeoecology, forestry, restoration, horticulture, basic research, climate and biodiversity matters from all around the world, including tropical and arctic peatlands.

Special highlights were the session on the new Global Peatlands Assessment and a well-attended Sino-foreign Peat Industry Summit.

Altogether, the participants heard 18 keynote speeches and 132 presentations over four days and were able to participate in three different full-day field trips – visiting urban wetlands, pristine peatlands and peat(land) agriculture. All of them in hot weather; some 35-40-degree humid heat and sun somewhat limited outdoor activities. However, the organisers had done their best to make our stay pleasantly unforgettable.

In a Changing World

The theme of the Congress was “Peatlands in a Changing World”, which truly applies to the situation in many countries, as peatlands used to be stable ecosystems but their situation has become fragile in many respects. A similar fate can be observed for peat which is still urgently needed in the horticulture sector to feed a growing population, but a valuable asset for climate and biodiversity elsewhere. This was expressed by the new IPS President, **Hannu Salo**, during his closing speech.

Peatlands also do not stop at borders, as the Secretary General, **Susann Warnecke**, emphasized during her address to the IPS General Assembly which was held on 8 August. International cooperation is needed especially in difficult times, as we observe increasing polarisation in politics and land management.

IPS will continue building bridges and bringing the international community together. However, core funding remains a challenge; and Congress delegates were strongly encouraged to join the IPS as a member as well as current members keeping their promises with regard to financial contributions.



Venue of the Congress. Photo by Susann Warnecke

Networking and social events

The participants were also invited to attend an interesting poster session and get in touch with salespeople from about 30 exhibiting companies from China and Europe. Furthermore, local art and export good exhibitions were on display at the venue, and tea and local food could be tested.

The evenings were filled with an ice-breaking party, a gala dinner, a visit to Taizhou museum, a dinner with major local representatives, and a happy-hour event, all of which with Chinese and international music, dance and theatre. The networking opportunities were spiced up by the excellent catering by Ramada Wyndham West Taizhou Hotel throughout the week.

Hannu Salo new IPS President

The Annual Assembly of National Representatives met on 8 August and, among other matters, elected a new Executive Board. The new Board consists of the following people, and their terms:

President: Hannu Salo, Finland 2024-2026

1st Vice President: Ilze Ozola, Latvia 2024-2028

2nd Vice President: Anna-Helena Purre, Estonia 2024-2028

Ordinary members:

Asha Hingorani, Canada 2024-2028

Lulie Melling, Malaysia 2024-2028

Paddy Rowland, Ireland 2024-2028

Guus van Berckel, the Netherlands 2024-2028

Bernd Hofer, Germany 2022-2026

Sabine Jordan, Sweden 2022-2026

Päivi Peronius, Finland 2024-2026

Meng Wang, China 2022-2026

In addition, **Bernd Hofer** was appointed Chair of the Peatlands and Environment Commission until 2026, and **Philip Testroet** Chair of the Peatlands and Economy Commission. The position of Chair for the Peatlands and Society Commission remains vacant.

The IPS warmly congratulates all elected persons and expresses its sincerest thanks to those Board members whose terms ended, especially new honorary members Jack Rieley and Donal Clarke.

Special thanks go also to outgoing President Marko Pomerants who navigated the IPS through Covid and wars in 2020-2024. He summarized his and IPS' impressive achievements during the General Assembly which was attended by 22 people.



Participants of the Annual Assembly. Photo by Susann Warnecke

The 18th International Peatland Congress will be held in June 2028 in Riga, Latvia. The next IPS Annual Convention is to be hosted by the Swedish National Committee in Gysinge, on 9 - 12 June 2025. During the same week in June 2026, we will meet in Ireland. The next Executive Board meetings will be held in Copenhagen and Vienna, as well as virtually.

The IPS wishes to thank all participants, sponsors, exhibitors and organisers of #IPC2024. You have done a tremendous job and we will never forget our stay in Taizhou. We also warmly thank the 100 volunteers of Taizhou University who supported us in every possible way. Xièxiè and welcome to Sweden.



Industry summit and panel discussion. Photo by Susann Warnecke

About the IPS

The International Peatland Society (IPS) is an organisation of individual, corporate and institutional members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat.

Currently the IPS has 1,557 individual, corporate, student, institutional and NGO members from 37 countries. This includes 15 National Committees and three Commissions plus numerous Expert Groups with different activities related to peat and peatlands, mires, bogs, fens and tropical peat swamp forest.

For further information, please contact:

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