

## **The Scientific and Cultural event on 'From Frost to Desert Heat'**

**23 May 2012, Tehran-Iran**

Every year, International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated on 22 May to show the world the importance and value of Biological Diversity; also, the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is on 21 May. Both biological diversity and cultural diversity are mutually reinforcing and mutually dependent.

The scientific and cultural event, on the occasion of two above mentioned international days, is organized in cooperation with the Embassy of Sweden in Tehran, Geological Survey of Iran, Iranshahr, (Iran's Cultural and Natural Heritage Devotee Organization), and National Committee of IBC in Iran, on Wednesday, 23 May 2012 in the conference hall of Geological Survey of Iran.

The main theme of this event is in commemoration of the scientific work of Sven Hedin and celebrating and drawing attention to his personality.

The key note speakers of this event are Mr. Siavash Safarianpour, representative of Star Peace Project, Mr. Eric Salmgren von Schantz, representative of the Embassy of Sweden in Tehran, Dr. Mohammad Ahyae, representative of Iranshahr, (Iran's Cultural and Natural Heritage Devotee Organization), Mr. Jafar Sabouri, Dr. Razieh Lak and Mr. Alireza Salehipour, representatives of Geological Survey of Iran and Mr. Hamidreza Mahmoudi representative of the National Committee of IBC in Iran.

The speakers emphasize on the importance of the biological and cultural diversity as well as deserts of Iran and eco tourism and the biography of Sven Hedin.

The invitees of this event are representatives from the Geological Survey of Iran, different NGOs, Iranian Veterinary Organization and Iranian Veterinary Association, UN agency, representatives from different embassies in Tehran, students and professors from universities.

It is worthy to mention that Sven Hedin (1865-1952), Swedish explorer of, and prolific writer on, Central Asia and Persia. He never held any official or academic position, though he was offered professorships, and chose to remain an independent scholar. His achievements were exemplary. He spent almost 20 years on Asian soil, carrying out or leading expeditions and research into the most forbidding areas of the continent, and wrote some 65 books and voluminous scientific reports as well as thousands of scholarly and political papers.

Hedin embarked on a long journey through Persia (Iran) that took him to places like Tehran, Isfahan, Persepolis, and Shiraz. He learned how to organize traveling in unknown areas and how to endure both physical and economic hardships. It also sharpened his ability to travel and work with people of all walks of life, a talent that was to serve him well in the years to come. Upon his return to Sweden he quickly wrote a book on his time in Baku and his experiences in Persia, in which the account of his adventures is richly interspersed with information from the best available sources on

the natural and cultural landscape and the history of the visited sites. This book set the tone for the string of travelogues that were to make him into one of the most widely read explorers of his days.

Even by the mid-1880s Hedin had not received formal training for his future expeditions. Therefore, on his return to Sweden, he embarked on academic studies in geography, geology, and paleontology. By 1890 he had become known in Sweden as an authority on Persia; and so, when in that year an official Swedish Mission was sent to the Shah of Persia, its leader requested the support of Hedin.

The journey once more enabled him to get to know and understand Persia and, in particular, to study Mount Damāvand at close hand. He also made a reconnaissance expedition from Tehran to Kashgar via West Turkestan. In the early 1890s he continued studying geosciences in Berlin with Ferdinand von Richthofen, the foremost expert on geography of China of his time. The teacher implored him to continue his studies before leaving for Asia, but Hedin chose Mount Damāvand, which he had climbed, as the subject of his dissertation, so that he could speedily finish the assignment and be free for a first expedition.

In Persia he carefully explored and mapped the great basins of its eastern areas, with their salt lakes and deserts (the *Kavir*), offering an explanation of the formation of these intriguing landscapes within a framework of recent postglacial climatic changes.

His scientific and financial estate was bequeathed to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in the name of the Sven Hedin Foundation. It is administered by the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, which, together with the Museum of Natural History there, also houses most of his ethnographic, archeological, and natural science collections.

This event gives all of participants this opportunity to create a platform for dialogue among two different nations and discussing and improving scientific collaboration in the field of Ecotourism, geology science, natural preservation and cultural exchange between Iran and Sweden, which it is one of the most important aims of world or international days.

The poster is as available at [www.cbd.int/idb/2012/celebrations/ir](http://www.cbd.int/idb/2012/celebrations/ir)

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