



**International
keynote speaker
confirmed**

Dennis Dimick

For many years the executive environment editor at *National Geographic* magazine, Dennis has focused his more than four-decade journalism career on the collision between human aspiration and the planet. He guided creation of several major *National Geographic* projects: on climate change in 2004, a 2010 issue on freshwater, a 2011 series on population, and the 2014-2016 Future of Food series on global food security. He grew up in the United States and holds degrees in agriculture and agricultural journalism.

A faculty member of the Missouri Photo Workshop for 20 years, Dimick received the Sprague Memorial Award in 2013 from the National Press Photographers Association for service to photojournalism. From 2008-2012 he co-organised the Aspen Environment Forum, serves as a board member of the Society of Environmental Journalists, and is co-

founder of Eyes on Earth, an educational project to inspire a new generation of environmental photographers.

His talk at Congress is titled, *The Human Age: Confronting the Anthropocene Conundrum* and looks at how, for most of human existence, we survived on current sunshine – wood, water, and wind – to power society. Then, over the past few centuries, we discovered fossil sunshine – coal, oil, and natural gas – to power our lives. We primarily rely on this ancient sunlight now, the fossilised carbon remains of ancient plants and animals, to turn our wheels and light our world. Fossil fuels have allowed an extraordinary expansion of our food supply, material wealth, and population. We have transformed our finite planet – the land, seas, and atmosphere – with a rapid expansion of our dominion over Earth, and scientists and others have begun calling this new human-dominated era The Anthropocene, or "Age of Man." Worrisome trend lines from our use of fossil fuels – rising temperatures, extreme weather, melting ice and rising seas – indicate that our continued conquest of Earth could be at risk as wild habitats and species vanish, and the planet is polluted and heats up from the effluent of our expanding aspirations. We are approaching a turning point. Can we create a soft landing for civilisation and what will it take? Can ingenuity, wisdom, and those same fossil fuels build a bridge to a sustainable energy future powered once again primarily by renewable current sunlight?

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