

Summary of the presentations at the Side Event: Research Community Shows Pathway towards Low-Carbon Society

Date & Time : 16 December 2009 (Wed.) 13:00-15:45

Venue : Room Monnet, EU Pavilion, Bella Center, Copenhagen

1. Opening

Dr Carlo Carraro (CMCC, Italy) outlined the objectives of the side event. He noted that the LCS-RNet was intended to provide inputs into the research on LCS pathways. He explained that the side event is based on key messages from the LCS-RNet meeting in Bologna, Italy in October 2009.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Corrado Clini (Director, Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy) noted that this side event coincides with tough negotiations over the future climate regime under the UNFCCC. Against the backdrop of these negotiations, he stressed that the activities of LCS-RNet could help enable science-based policy-making by providing a platform for researchers to discuss issues such as GHG targets, the future climate regime's financial mechanism, and technology transfer. He mentioned that Italy is committed to continuing support for LCS-RNet activities.

2. Key messages from the synthesis report of the Bologna, Italy meeting

Dr. Stefan Lechtenböhmer (Co-Chair of the Steering Group of the LCS-RNet, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy representing Germany which will host the next LCS-RNet Meeting in Berlin, Germany in September 2010) introduced key messages and synthesized results from the inaugural meeting of the LCS-RNet. He explained that LCS-RNet focuses on five key issues: 1) long term and mid-term targets; 2) economic aspects of LCS; 3) the role of technology; 4) public policy and lifestyle changes; and 5) cross-cutting issues. Other results from the inaugural meeting can be downloaded from the LCS-RNet website at <http://lcs-rnet.org>.

3. LCS research in different countries and regions

Dr. Mikiko Kainuma, (National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan) introduced modelling research on LCS in Japan that suggests a 70% to 80% reduction in GHGs could be achieved by 2050. She also identified a dozen specific measures that could help realise the 70% to 80% reduction. She then pointed out this research helped to reduce public scepticism over Japan's ability to achieve a steep reduction in GHGs required for a LCS. But she also pointed out that while innovative technology is important to realize a LCS, policy support for technology dissemination is critical. She further noted that achieving LCS is a major challenge, but there would be potential for multiple benefits such as energy security, air pollution reduction, green jobs and sustainable lifestyles that would make the challenge more manageable.

Dr. P.R. Shukla, (Indian Institute for Management, Ahmedabad, India) noted that the scepticism over the climate change-centric paradigm can be avoided by shifting to a sustainable development-centric paradigm. The key to this paradigm shift is aligning development goals and climate actions, especially at the local level in different cities in India. He also argued that it is important to map low carbon technologies and identify financial countermeasures to overcome barriers to technology dissemination.

Dr. Jiang Kejun, (Energy Research Institute, China) provided an overview of LCS studies in China. He emphasized that it is important to link visions for LCS at the national level to specific implementation plans at the regional and sectoral levels. He also presented a technology roadmap showing the timing of key technologies to be implemented and a policy roadmap showing energy efficiencies and subsidies.

4. Low carbon technologies and behavioural change

Dr. Jean Pierre Tabet (ADEME, France) argued that “ideas, technology and social changes” are needed for LCS to materialise. He also suggested that it is important to consider the differences between individual and social behaviour as well as cultural and historical differences developing visions of an LCS.

5. Question and answer (Q&A)

The following summarises the main points raised during the Q&A session.

- To strengthen the integration between mitigation and sustainable development, the combination of various measures and both private financing through cap and trade and public funding through nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) is essential.
- It is important to link various low carbon measures at the sub-national levels with planning at the national level
- LCS scenario research can help create roadmaps to help policymakers identify when and where to invest human capital and financial resources efficiently.
- To minimise gaps between models and reality it is important that models account for market imperfections.
- Models can be a useful tool to link research and society because they can help promote a dialogue between what models show and actual developments.