

A hand holding a brass compass over a stylized map of East and Southeast Asia. The map is rendered in a light blue and white color scheme, showing various countries and regions with their names labeled. The compass is a vintage-style brass compass with a circular face and a needle. The hand is positioned in the lower right corner, holding the compass over the map. The background is a solid dark blue color.

Proceedings

Asia-Pacific Climate Security (APCS) Project
International Symposium
Climate Security in the Asia Pacific
under a Shifting Geopolitical Context

21–22 January, 2026 in Tokyo, Japan

Concept

This symposium discussed the challenges and opportunities of climate security and examined its continued relevance under a shifting geopolitical landscape in the Asia-Pacific region. The event presented an opportunity to take stock of the activities and achievements of the Asia-Pacific Climate Security (APCS) project conducted by IGES over the past three years. Moreover, the introduction of the upcoming APCS Policy Report Series also served to disseminate and critically reflect on the findings and insights from the APCS project to domestic and international researchers, relevant policymakers, and stakeholders interested in the field of climate security.

The APCS, launched in 2023 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, aimed to grasp the state of climate security in the region, particularly among those vulnerable to climate change impacts. The project has covered a wide range of topics - energy security, food security, human mobility, climate change adaptation, and ocean and maritime security. Amid recent developments, we have observed significant shifts in climate action and, more broadly, in the geopolitical context, including new international agreements on climate finance, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on climate change. The recent COP30, held in Belém, Brazil, has delivered a limited but needed step forward amid the difficult geopolitical situation. Within this dynamic landscape, climate security is of high importance as a field that contributes to continued progress in climate action. This symposium brought together relevant international researchers and policymakers, to consolidate the activities and achievements of the APCS project to date, and discuss the future outlook.

Note: This document is a non-peer-reviewed summary of symposium discussions and does not constitute an archival publication. The speakers may develop expanded academic manuscripts based on the concepts discussed herein.

Day 1 | 21 January 2026

Opening Remarks

Speakers

- **Masaya OKUYAMA**

Acting Managing Director, Strategic Management Office, IGES

- **Seita EMORI**

Vice Director, Institute for Future Initiatives, the University of Tokyo

- **Hiroki MATSUI**

Director, Climate Change Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Key points from the speech, Masaya OKUYAMA (IGES):

- The speaker highlighted the launch of the international symposium, “Climate Security in the Asia-Pacific under a Shifting Geopolitical Context,” which marks nearly three years of dedicated research. He emphasised that this initiative is a collaborative effort between IGES, the Institute for Future Initiatives of the University of Tokyo, and the SPF.
- The speaker highlighted several critical components of the Asia-Pacific Climate Security (APCS) project: The project gathered extensive climate security knowledge through literature reviews and field visits; It successfully built a global network of researchers and practitioners; the research team analyzed this data to extract specific policy implications for Japan and the broader Asia-Pacific region, and the upcoming APCS Policy Report Series will be released soon, providing the theoretical background for the symposium's ongoing discussions.
- Regarding the symposium objectives, the speaker emphasised that the symposium aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of climate security while examining its relevance within a shifting geopolitical landscape. He noted that the high level of international participation, with registrants from numerous countries, underscores the timeliness and importance of these discussions.
- Sharing his expectations for a comprehensive two-day program designed to envision future prospects through thematic sessions and plenaries, the speaker mentioned the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, and expressed his sincere hope that the symposium's efforts would contribute to long-term regional and global stability and resilience.

Key points from the speech, Seita EMORI (UTokyo IFI):

- The speaker addressed the symposium as part of the third jointly organised workshop under an ongoing collaborative effort. He emphasised the extreme urgency of the climate crisis, noting that the Earth is experiencing its hottest conditions in the last 100,000 years as the 1.5-degree Celsius warming limit rapidly approaches. He warned that accelerating warming is increasing the risk of severe and potentially irreversible impacts, including serious threats to infrastructure in more than half of the Pacific Island countries.

- He highlighted how climate change responses are deeply intertwined with energy, food and water security, migration, and health. He specifically cautioned against negative tipping dynamics, in which climate impacts trigger social and political reactions—such as conflict, loss of trust, or policy backsliding—that further increase vulnerability. Emphasising the region's strategic importance, he noted that the Asia-Pacific accounts for around 40% of global GDP and 60% of global carbon emissions, meaning actions taken today will shape the global trajectory.
- He concluded that the symposium provides an important opportunity to advance more resilient and equitable climate action, advocating a shift toward long-term benefits for humanity over short-term interests, and underscoring the importance of communication, social engagement, and evidence-based research in supporting regional and global stability.

Key points from the speech, Hiroki MATSUI (MOFA):

- The speaker emphasised Climate Change as a Security Threat and Opportunity. Climate change is recognized as a critical factor affecting national survival and regional stability through environmental shifts like floods and sea-level rise. While the term “climate security” is multifaceted and evolving, it requires a comprehensive international response to risks that affect economic activities, ecosystems, and the potential for regional conflicts. Conversely, shifting climate patterns may present new opportunities, such as the opening of the Arctic Sea Route and new agricultural possibilities.
- With a focus on Japan's Strategic Policy and International Role, the speaker highlighted that Japan has actively participated in global climate security initiatives, including co-sponsoring UN Security Council resolutions and participating in various international pledges. The 2022 National Security Strategy explicitly identifies climate change as a critical issue threatening the international security environment. Japan is committed to supporting developing nations, particularly island nations, in building resilient economies and societies.
- The speaker noted that IGES has conducted a three-year research project that examines whether specific regional characteristics exist in the Asia-Pacific and explores how different countries approach climate change as a security challenge.
- To accelerate regional climate action, the speaker stressed that it is essential to build dialogue and deepen mutual understanding within the Asia-Pacific. Japan aims to leverage its expertise in disaster prevention and the concept of “Human Security” as common ground for new diplomatic efforts. The speaker looks forward to the insights provided by experts to address these complex challenges.

Plenary 1: Keynote (13:15–13:45)

Speakers

Keynote:

- **Osamu MIZUNO**

Programme Director of Climate Change Unit, IGES

Discussant:

- **Kentaro TAMURA**

Research Director, Climate Change Unit, IGES

Key points from presentation, Osamu MIZUNO (IGES):

- The speaker identifies a “Tower of Babel” problem where fragmented interpretations of “Climate Security” across different sectors and global actors undermine effective coordination.
- He cautions against the risks of “hollow rhetoric,” noting that relying on the term as a “loud slogan” without operational definitions or causal mechanisms hinders international partnerships and risks eroding scientific credibility by replacing rigorous analysis with over-simplified framing.
- To support disciplined policy discussion, the speaker emphasizes the need to answer the “Missing Question”: demonstrating clearly why existing UNFCCC frameworks for mitigation and adaptation may not be fully equipped to manage specific security threats.
- The speaker identifies “residuals” by applying a filter for local exposure to climate risks, isolating systemic issues—such as Arctic geopolitics, critical mineral supply chains, and food price volatility—that remain after traditional site-specific adaptation efforts are addressed.
- He introduced the concept of Climate Socio-Economic Hazards (CSEH) as a working framework to categorize these systemic and transnational disruptions, representing systemic, indirect, and non-site-bounded disruptions that propagate through global and regional systems rather than manifesting through local geography.
- He highlights that effective policy development requires a dual-track approach: Nexus Research to understand complex interconnections and cascading risks, and a Concept Approach to help structure a more disciplined policy discussion and clarify roles across existing institutions.
- The ultimate goal is to move from political rhetoric toward a disciplined, evidence-based policy framework that supports clearer, more credible policy discussions and coordination.

Key points from presentation, Kentaro TAMURA (IGES):

- The speaker noted that Mr. Mizuno provided a clear working framework as Climate Socio-Economic Hazards (CSEH), shifting the emphasis away from site-specific natural hazards toward systemic risks.
- The speaker showed a particular interest in the aspect that the discourse is how it distinguishes climate security from risks that can be managed through traditional adaptation measures by focusing on what the speaker calls “residuals”.
- By addressing the “Tower of Babel” syndrome—the tendency to label diverse issues as “security” simply to signal urgency—the speaker aims to move beyond hollow rhetoric and support a more disciplined policy discussion.
- The speaker noted that the framework offers a structured way to distinguish climate security discourse from risks typically addressed through adaptation, and suggested it could help clarify roles and responsibilities across existing governance arrangements.

Key points from the discussion:

- **Tamura:** Why do these residuals exist? Are they the result of political response measures, gaps in Loss and Damage (L&D) provisions, or issues that are simply poorly addressed in current policy frameworks, and how does this new CSEH concept specifically tackle these gaps?
 - **Mizuno:** The current frameworks, which are primarily designed based on local exposure, may face limitations. It is suggested that distinguishing these ‘residual’ risks is a useful step toward structuring further discussion on system-mediated risks.
- **Tamura:** What specific policy frameworks are necessary for effectively addressing CSEH-based climate security?
 - **Mizuno:** Regarding policy frameworks, it is important to move beyond political rhetoric. It is a more disciplined policy discussion that can provide operational clarity for managing these complex risks rather than relying on broad slogans.

Key takeaways from the session:

- Climate change is increasingly recognised as a systemic security challenge. This raises questions about whether existing nation-based, site-specific approaches are sufficient in all cases, and suggests the potential value of system-oriented framing such as Climate Socio-Economic Hazards (CSEH) to capture non-site-bounded risks.
- The Asia-Pacific region lies at the centre of both vulnerability and responsibility, as it is warming faster than the global average, includes many of the world’s most climate-vulnerable countries, and simultaneously accounts for around 40% of global GDP and 60% of global carbon emissions, making regional action decisive for global outcomes.
- Speakers consistently emphasised the need to move beyond fragmented, slogan-driven climate security discourse toward a disciplined, evidence-based policy discussion grounded in rigorous research, regional cooperation, and institutional clarity, in order to effectively manage complex climate-security risks and contribute to long-term regional and global stability.

Introduction: Launch of the APCS Policy Report Series (13:45–14:00)

Speaker

- **Naoyuki OKANO**

Programme Officer, UNU-IAS

Key points from the presentation, Naoyuki OKANO (UNU-IAS):

- The APCS project was launched in July 2023, aiming to conduct original research to inform Japanese policy and to establish a regional research hub dedicated to climate security.
- Over a three-year research and networking phase, the project has focused on five key themes (thematic approach)—Energy Security, Food Security, Human Mobility, Adaptation, and Ocean Governance—culminating in this January 2026 symposium.
- Findings will be synthesised into a Policy Report Series, starting in February 2026, featuring analytical frameworks and integrated thematic papers that provide actionable recommendations and strengthen regional stability.

Key takeaways from the session:

- The APCS project was launched in July 2023, aiming to produce original research on climate security to support Japanese policy and build a regional research hub in the Asia-Pacific.
- Over three years, the project has focused on five themes—energy security, food security, human mobility, adaptation, and ocean governance.
- The results will be published in a Policy Report Series from February 2026, offering practical analysis and recommendations to support regional stability.

Thematic 1: Evolving Energy Security Under a Shifting Climate and Geopolitical Order (14:15–15:00)

Moderator

- **Kentaro TAMURA**

Research Director, Climate Change Unit, IGES

Speakers

- **Michael MEHLING**

Deputy Director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research (CEEPR),
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

- **Nanda Kumar JANARDHANAN**

Deputy Director of Climate Change Unit, IGES

Key points from presentation, Michael MEHLING (MIT):

- The global energy landscape is being reshaped by great-power competition, especially between the U.S. and China. U.S. energy policy is increasingly driven by national security concerns, while China's dual approach leverages both coal and massive investment in renewables.
- The U.S. remains the world's largest oil and gas producer, with fossil energy contributing up to 10% of GDP. High energy demand, such as from data centers, reinforcing policy tendencies toward abundant fossil fuel supply.
- China consumes around 5 billion tons of coal annually but leads in renewable capacity growth. Over 10% of its GDP is tied to the low-carbon economy, and it dominates critical mineral processing, positioning itself as the clean technology supplier for the developing world.
- Climate strategies are no longer converging globally. The U.S. sees fossil exports as strategic leverage, while its low-carbon industries remain politically divided. China, though not a diplomatic climate leader, materially shapes decarbonization globally, especially in the Global South.
- The U.S. adopts a mixed stance: withdrawing from UNFCCC/IPCC efforts, ignoring COP diplomacy, and obstructing progress in sectoral fora. Meanwhile, China continues Belt and Road investments, though fossil investments are declining. EU-led initiatives like JETPs and CTIPs are losing momentum.
- Efforts to decouple clean tech supply chains from China raise costs significantly. While justified on security grounds, this slows deployment unless offset by subsidies or policy support, which is now politically uncertain.
- As the U.S. and EU restrict Chinese imports, China's surplus clean tech (e.g., solar, batteries) increasingly reaches emerging economies, potentially accelerating decarbonization where most emissions growth is projected.

- Climate progress depends less on consensus and more on technology costs, electrification trends, and national resource strategies. But climate change will remain a persistent driver of future political discourse, regardless of current geopolitical tensions.

Key points from presentation, Nanda Kumar JANARDHANAN (IGES):

- Extreme weather increasingly impacts both fossil and renewable energy systems. For example, heatwaves reduce thermal power efficiency, and flooding in Thailand and Vietnam has disrupted transmission lines and manufacturing. Despite this, many policies still overlook renewable energy systems' vulnerability to climate hazards.
- The energy transition relies on climate-sensitive supply chains. Key materials like nickel, lithium, and rare earths are sourced from regions exposed to flooding, heat, or other hazards. For import-dependent countries like Japan and South Korea, this creates geopolitical and economic vulnerabilities.
- The Asia-Pacific is highly diverse. While East Asian countries face trade-offs between decarbonization and industrial strength, South and Southeast Asia deal with rising demand, development pressures, and high vulnerability. Pacific Island states face existential risks.
- A resilient energy transition must integrate climate risk into infrastructure planning and policy. Otherwise, clean energy growth may introduce new instabilities, particularly for countries facing simultaneous development and adaptation challenges.
- Japan is well-positioned to lead regional climate security efforts by offering: (i) advanced low-carbon technologies, (ii) long-term infrastructure finance, and (iii) experience managing energy insecurity. A security-framed approach to its energy diplomacy could unify resilience, development, and geopolitical strategy.

Key points from the discussion:

- **Tamura:** To what extent do you consider policy instrument such as tariff can lead to fragmentation and security issue to the global energy transition?
 - **Mehling:** Not all tariffs are equal. While some are designed to stimulate innovation and scale domestic renewable technology (e.g., environment-linked tariffs), others may hinder global renewable energy deployment. For instance, protectionist tariffs aimed at economic competition in sectors like EVs could fragment cooperation. Meanwhile, Border Carbon Adjustments (BCAs) like the EU's CBAM could reward mitigation efforts if properly aligned with international standards, though they risk creating regional divisions.
- **Tamura:** Do you think there will be convergence in carbon pricing policy in the future, considering the development of policies China in carbon pricing system and what the EU is facing nowadays?
 - **Mehling:** While carbon pricing systems are being piloted in China and institutionalized in the EU, widespread convergence remains uncertain. However, early cooperation mechanisms are emerging, which could pave the way for more harmonized or cascading carbon pricing systems that align with BCAs.

- **Tamura:** Critical mineral create a lot of attention and tension in the global supply chain and geopolitical constellation. How do you see the critical mineral supply chain dynamics shape the renewable energy transition?
 - **Nandakumar:** The Asia-Pacific's vulnerability to climate impacts, combined with rising renewable energy demand, may result in countries retreating to fossil fuels if renewable infrastructure proves fragile. Nandakumar agreed, suggesting that resilience planning is currently insufficient, especially in light of more frequent and severe climate-related disruptions. Critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel are vital for both renewable energy and other technologies, but their supply chains are exposed to climate impacts in producing countries. Current policy focuses on geopolitics while largely ignoring the physical climate risks to supply stability.
- **Tamura:** How we can strengthen the resilience and maintain the momentum of energy transition
 - **Mehling:** Foreign and regional policies should take a risk-based approach—emphasizing diversification of technology and supply sources to navigate U.S.-China geopolitical competition. This would allow smaller states to avoid overdependence on a single technological or mineral source and maintain autonomy in their transition.
- **Tamura:** What regional policies mechanisms that can help aligning the regional policy instrument
 - **Nandakumar:** Several countries have begun stockpiling critical minerals to manage geopolitical shocks. However, Michael emphasized the importance of embedding just transition principles—ensuring that mineral extraction and distribution are sustainable, equitable, and governed through inclusive frameworks that protect labor and community rights.

Key takeaways from the session:

- While the energy transition is commonly viewed as a solution to climate change, renewable energy systems are themselves highly exposed to climate risks. Without embedding resilience measures in infrastructure and planning, the transition could backfire, causing energy insecurity and political backlash in vulnerable countries.
- There is a lack of integration of climate risk into global critical mineral supply chain governance. Many critical minerals are sourced from climate-exposed regions. While policy debates focus on geopolitical dependencies and trade tensions, the physical climate threats to extraction and processing sites remain under-addressed.
- Japan can be a potential stabilizer in the region's fragmented energy transition landscape. With its strengths in low-carbon technology, long-term infrastructure financing, and experience navigating energy insecurity, Japan could lead regional cooperation frameworks that embed resilience, promote equitable transitions, and buffer geopolitical tensions (especially over critical minerals).

Thematic 2: Human Mobility and Immobility in the Context of Climate Change: How should policymakers understand and address it? (15:00–15:45)

Moderator

- **Pankaj KUMAR**
Senior Research Manager, IGES

Speakers

- **Md. Nasif AHSAN**
Professor, Khulna University
- **Miki FUKUDA**
Chief Policy Researcher, Integrated Sustainability Centre, IGES
- **Fumiko NOGUCHI**
Research Fellow, JICA Ogata Research Institute

Key points from presentation, Md. Nasif AHSAN (Khulna University):

- 70.1% of surveyed coastal households in Bangladesh chose not to migrate despite being exposed to recurrent climate shocks. This challenges the widespread assumption that non-migration is solely due to poverty or immobility. Instead, it reflects a strategic, informed adaptation strategy, termed “informed rootedness”.
- The decision to remain in climate-vulnerable coastal areas is strongly driven by psychosocial integration, measured by factors such as place attachment, social capital, community belonging, and institutional integration. Higher psychosocial integration was statistically associated with a greater likelihood of non-migration.
- Despite facing annual climate-induced shocks (e.g., tidal surges, cyclones), residents often still prefer to stay due to emotional, cultural, and institutional ties to their communities, thus showing that exposure alone does not trigger outmigration.
- Contrary to migration theories emphasizing capability-driven mobility, the study found that households with higher education and greater consumption levels were actually more likely to stay, as these factors strengthen local attachment and adaptive capacity. Education may increase mobility opportunities, it also enhances the ability and confidence to adapt locally, depending on the collective conditions.
- Decisions to stay are often collective, reflecting shared identity and resilience strategies. This challenges the individualistic lens of most migration literature and suggests a need for community-based policy responses.

Key points from presentation, Miki FUKUDA (IGES):

- Climate mobility includes a spectrum of movements: voluntary migration, forced displacement, planned relocation, and immobility (where people stay due to cultural ties, resources, or personal choice)
- Relocation is not a one-off event but requires sustained support. Key success factors include restoring economic stability (livelihood and markets), preserving cultural identity (e.g., rebuilding communal/spiritual hubs), and long-term institutional follow-up to reduce conflict
- There is a spectrum of (im)mobility in Pacific Island communities: while some are compelled to move due to rising sea levels and extreme weather, others choose to stay voluntarily despite risks, often due to deep place attachment, community belonging, and institutional integration.
- Australia is using climate mobility as a foreign policy tool to maintain regional stability. The new Falepili Union allows up to 280 Tuvaluans per year to live and work in Australia. However, concerns remain about ensuring decent labor conditions for Pacific workers already present. New Zealand on the other hand focuses on funding adaptation in origin countries and enabling “migration with dignity” through existing labor schemes (e.g., Samoan Quota, Pacific Access Category), supported by established Pacific communities as social safety nets
- Not everyone wants to or can move. Policies must also address the needs and rights of populations who remain in place under risk, either by choice or due to constraints, emphasizing inclusive and anticipatory governance.

Key points from presentation, Fumiko NOGUCHI (JICA Ogata Research Institute):

- Tuvaluans’ climate mobility cannot be understood purely through a technical or policy lens. Their cultural identity is place-attached, rooted in specific natural surroundings, spiritual values, and indigenous knowledge. Migration thus poses a risk to personal and communal dignity. Historically, Tuvaluans have migrated to Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia due to economic and political reasons. Now climate change has become an additional pressure.
- The 2023 Falepili Union provides a permanent residency pathway for up to 280 Tuvaluans annually, aiming to strengthen regional resilience while countering geopolitical competition (e.g., China’s Pacific influence). The treaty ensures the formal protection of ‘cultural identity’ of the migrants, which follows the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility (2023).
- When Tuvaluans migrate without communal space (e.g., in Australia), the loss of agency and place leads to emotional insecurity, disempowerment, and identity crises. In contrast, in places like Fiji, they can maintain cultural practices and update their traditions within a Pacific value system.
- There are epistemological gap and issues of power between Australia and Tuvalu. Western policy frameworks often impose a dichotomous, measurable, and universal logic that clashes with the Pacific’s holistic, intangible, and contextual worldview of the nature–culture–human relationship.
- To bridge cultural identity and human security, education interventions both in Tuvalu and among migrants are necessary. Education can help to empower the migrants to maintain agency and adapt without cultural erosion. This aligns with Japan’s ODA Human Security Policy, which emphasizes empowerment and protection.

Key points from the discussion:

- **Kumar:** In contexts where people choose not to migrate despite climate risks, what strategies can enhance their resilience? Do you have any recommendations for similarly vulnerable regions?
 - **Ahsan:** Voluntary non-migration should not be viewed solely as vulnerability, but rather as a form of resilience rooted in strong social capital and community integration. Enhancing resilience in such settings requires a holistic policy approach—including sustainable livelihood options, improved access to infrastructure, and strengthened local logistics to enhance preparedness against recurring climate extremes.
- **Kumar:** What similarities and differences exist among Pacific countries in terms of climate mobility? And what role can youth play as agents of change in this context?
 - **Fukuda:** Pacific countries share a common worldview where land and cultural identity are inseparable. However, the political and migration frameworks differ across countries. Youth are especially central in this conversation, as they are often the most mobile group facing the challenges of planned relocation. Empowering youth through education and experiential learning, both in origin and destination areas, can unlock new, context-relevant adaptation pathways by combining traditional knowledge with new ideas formed through migration.
- **Kumar:** What are the key considerations in empowering displaced people, particularly from the Pacific region?
 - **Noguchi:** Empowerment begins with recognizing and restoring a sense of agency among displaced populations. However, dominant policy frameworks often assess “value” through mismatched external criteria, overlooking what the displaced themselves hold as meaningful. Bridging this gap requires integrating indigenous knowledge systems, enabling displaced communities to contribute to decision-making and maintain dignity through continuity of cultural values and identity.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- Staying in place under climate risk is often a deliberate, informed strategy, not merely the result of poverty, immobility, or lack of options. Empirical evidence from coastal Bangladesh demonstrates that households with strong social capital, education, institutional integration, and place attachment are more likely to remain, even under repeated climate shocks. Similar dynamics appear in Pacific Island communities, where cultural identity and dignity are deeply place-based.
- Relocation is a long-term governance process, not a one-off technical solution. Successful outcomes depend on restoring livelihoods, preserving communal and spiritual spaces, and ensuring sustained post-relocation support. Evidence from Tuvaluan experiences shows that when migrants lack communal space or agency, particularly in Western host settings, relocation can lead to disempowerment, identity loss, and emotional insecurity.
- Youth emerged as a cross-cutting strategic actor in climate mobility dynamics. They are often the most mobile group, yet also the primary carriers of cultural continuity and innovation. Education, particularly approaches aligned with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), can help youth bridge traditional knowledge with new skills acquired through migration or relocation. This dual role enables adaptive solutions that neither romanticize staying nor normalize displacement.

Thematic 3: Redefining Food Security: Toward a Climate-Resilient and People-Centred Framework (16:00–16:45)

Moderator

- **Alice YAMABE**

Policy Researcher, Sustainable Consumption and Production Unit, IGES

Speakers

- **Kei KURUSHIMA**

Chief Policy Researcher, Climate Change Unit, IGES

- **Nazia HUSSAIN**

Assistant Professor, Institute for Future Initiatives, the University of Tokyo

- **Sayamol CHAROENRATANA**

Director, Center of Excellence for Human Security and Equity, Chulalongkorn University

Key points from presentation, Kei KURUSHIMA (IGES):

- Argued that the 1996 FAO definition (availability, access, stability, and utilization) is insufficient for capturing the realities of climate change, as it focuses narrowly on caloric intake rather than ground-level resilience.
- Proposed adding “Agency” and “Sustainability” as critical dimensions to the existing framework. This emphasizes the right of people to define their own food systems and the necessity of a long-term perspective that does not compromise future generations.
- Based on research in the Philippines, recommended supporting “People’s Organizations” (community-based groups) to help small-scale producers secure land and water rights, enabling them to make autonomous decisions and respond effectively to climate stress.

Key points from presentation, Nazia HUSSAIN (University of Tokyo):

- Noted that while absolute food shortages might be avoided through imports, climate change acts as a “silent threat” by disrupting traditional rainfall and temperature patterns, forcing farmers into high-risk crop switching.
- Highlighted that even with successful harvests, small-scale farmers face economic ruin due to global market fluctuations and a lack of national adaptation plans, leading to price crashes.
- Pointed out that food insecurity does not occur in a vacuum; it is exacerbated by pre-existing socio-political issues, such as the loss of agricultural land to commercial development or the diversion of water for hydroelectric projects.

Key points from presentation, Sayamol CHAROENRATANA (Chulalongkorn University):

- Argued that treating food security merely as a logistical or supply-chain issue is incomplete. It must address structural inequalities and prioritize the “human security” of the people actually producing the food.
- Observed from field research in Thailand and Myanmar that climate change intensifies existing injustices, such as landlessness and debt cycles, leaving those in the informal agricultural sector outside of social safety nets.
- Called for “procedural justice,” ensuring farmers have a “seat at the table” in policy-making, and “distributive justice,” ensuring climate-resilient resources are prioritized for the most vulnerable populations.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- There was a consensus to expand the definition of food security by adding the pillars of “Agency,” “Sustainability,” and “Resilience” to move beyond short-term adaptation toward long-term systemic resilience.
- Small-scale farmers must be repositioned not as passive aid recipients, but as active agents essential to global food system sustainability, supported by legal protections for their rights to land and water.
- In Japan, Thailand, and across Asia, the pursuit of food security must be conducted through a “people-centred” approach that safeguards the dignity and security of food producers, ensuring no one is left behind.



Plenary 2: Development and Peacebuilding Sector under Climate Change: Integrative Programming and Project Development (16:45–17:30)

Moderator

- **Miki FUKUDA**

Chief Policy Researcher, Integrated Sustainability Centre, IGES

Speakers

- **Lukas RÜTTINGER**

Senior Advisor, adelphi

- **Masashi TSUDAKA**

Deputy Director of Strategic Operations, IGES

- **Naoyuki OKANO**

Programme Officer, UNU-IAS

Key points from presentation, Lukas RÜTTINGER (adelphi):

- Emphasized that climate-related security risks arise through the interaction between environmental, social, political, and economic pressures—not from climate change alone. For example, resource conflicts escalate not just because of scarcity, but due to factors such as the availability of small arms, histories of conflict, and the exclusion of certain groups. Similarly, climate-induced livelihood insecurity can drive recruitment by armed groups, compounded by lack of economic perspectives and social belonging..
- Stressed that responses must reflect this complexity by linking climate change adaptation, peacebuilding, and livelihoods. Without addressing multiple drivers together, interventions risk being ineffective or exacerbate tensions. Integrated approaches create synergies and co-benefits across dimensions.
- Highlighted the critical need for policy coherence, ensuring that National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and international climate finance are effectively channeled into fragile and conflict-affected regions.

Key points from presentation, Masashi TSUDAKA (IGES):

- Noted the challenges of humanitarian organizations in responding to emergencies in a timely manner, in the meantime keeping the beneficiaries resilient to future climate threats by accommodating their climate adaptation needs.
- Shared his view that the UN's PKOs are impacted by climate change, giving an example of South Sudan, while the UN peacebuilding effort is taking climate security into consideration by establishing and activating the UN Climate Security Mechanism (CSM).

- Recommended donor countries and funding agencies to understand how humanitarian agencies are struggling to mainstream climate security in their operational programming, noting that some situations which can be dealt with funds for humanitarian and peacebuilding operations can overlap with the situations covered by funds for climate adaptation, hence flexible funding can be a solution.

Key points from presentation, Naoyuki OKANO (UNU-IAS):

- Asserted that the Asia-Pacific region requires a unique narrative for climate security that bridges Western concepts with regional priorities such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Human Security.
- Highlighted the potential for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to serve as a platform for regional cooperation, utilizing climate action as a catalyst for diplomatic stability and peace.
- Emphasized the necessity of institutional capacity building and evidence-based research (facilitated by organizations like UNU and IGES) to provide the analytical foundation for climate-resilient peacebuilding policies.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- The session identified a shift from traditional “hard” security toward an integrated framework where environmental stability and the protection of livelihoods are recognized as fundamental components of regional peace.
- A central conclusion was the imperative for cross-sectoral collaboration. Integrating conflict sensitivity into climate policy is essential to prevent a “rollback” of development gains and to foster long-term social resilience.
- It was concluded that Japan and other regional actors should spearhead the development of a regional climate security narrative that balances national security interests with a human-centric approach to development and peacebuilding.

Day 2 | 22 January 2026

Plenary 3: Climate Security Challenges and Opportunities in the Current Geopolitical Context (13:10–13:55)

Moderator

- **Naoyuki OKANO**

Programme Officer, UNU-IAS

Speakers

- **Michael COPAGE**

Director and Founder, CoTerran

- **Heng Yee Kuang**

Director of Security Studies Unit, Institute for Future Initiatives, the University of Tokyo

- **Uttam Sinha**

Senior Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute For Defence Studies and Analyses

Key points from presentation, Michael COPAGE (CoTerran):

- We are seeing a “rupture” of traditional relationships. Middle-power countries must identify strategic interests on a case-by-case basis, even with countries where there is outward disagreement on climate conversations (e.g., the U.S.).
- It is critical to engage on logistics, supply chain disruptions, and global systemic risks like food price volatility, rather than focusing solely on singular disaster events.
- The Falepili Union between Australia and Tuvalu serves as a model that links climate resilience (sea-level rise response) with broad economic and security interests for both nations.
- New challenges include the geopolitical repercussions of deep-sea mining in the Pacific and the need for governance frameworks for geo-engineering as a response to climate tipping points.

Key points from presentation, Heng Yee Kuang (UT):

- Geopolitics and climate change are like a “double helix”—intertwined and stuck in a worsening spiral.
- While China has filled some vacuums left by U.S. withdrawals (e.g., funding for SPREP), the situation is complex. China’s actions are based on its own budget constraints and political risk calculations.
- Efforts to reduce emissions through EVs and solar tech have fed into trade tensions (e.g., EU tariffs on Chinese EVs) and concerns over rare earth supply chains.

- Melting ice caps are opening the Northwest Passage, exacerbating traditional hard security concerns by potentially allowing Russian and Chinese joint naval patrols in the Arctic.
- While framing climate change as an “existential risk” (as in Japan’s 2022 NSS) can nudge action, it can also be counterproductive if it leads to a sense of helplessness among policymakers.

Key points from presentation, Uttam Sinha (Manohar Parrikar Institute For Defence Studies and Analyses):

- There is a disconnect between the urgency of the climate crisis and global politics, which now recasts climate governance as a domain of strategic competition and power realignment.
- A lack of trust exists because developed nations emphasize mitigation while failing to fulfill promises on climate finance and technology transfer to the Global South.
- When official diplomatic channels are closed, academic networks (Track 2) provide a neutral space for sustained dialogue and evidence-based analysis that can bridge environmental and security policies.
- For the Global South, climate security is inseparable from livelihood, energy access, and economic stability. Climate action must be inclusive and context-sensitive.
- Recent agreements like the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) showcase how India and Japan can lead effective and equitable climate cooperation in the Indo-Pacific through shared models and technological innovation.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- Climate change is a systemic security challenge that requires moving beyond nation-based models to system-based models to capture transnational risks.
- Geopolitics increasingly shapes climate action, turning it into a tool for strategic competition, yet this necessitates finding new inroads for cooperation based on mutual strategic interests
- The protection of human dignity and agency must remain central, particularly for migrants and vulnerable communities in the face of existential environmental threats.

Thematic 4: Realising Climate Security through Strengthening Adaptation Planning and Other Synergistic Approaches (14:10–14:55)

Moderator

- **Sivapuram Ventaka Rama Krishna PRABHAKAR**
Principal Policy Researcher, IGES

Speakers

- **Naoko KIMURA**
Policy Researcher, IGES
- **Nicholas Simon Taylor**
Senior Officer, Global Green Growth Institute
- **Nandasiri Weerasinghe**
Prof Emeritus & program Manager (FOUNTAIN project) Faculty of Technology Horizon Campus, Malambe, Sri Lanka
- **Kunal Singh**
Climate Finance Access Network Advisor, The Pacific Community
- **Sheetal Patil**
Lead—Academics & Research, Indian Institute of Human Settlements

Key points from presentation, Naoko KIMURA (IGES):

- Many developing countries are at the very early stages of integrating the climate security elements into their NAPs. The rationale in integrating climate security elements is considering climate security is a threat multiplier to the existing climate risks.
- By looking at the words use in the NAPs, different regions have different interests on the elements of climate security. By looking at the NAPs, the documents are less concerned about national security. Also, countries that have rather higher security scores on certain sectors are paying less attention to that particular sector.
- In the scenario exercise conducted, the interviewed participants exhibit signs of human security deficit. In addition, in Sri Lanka the government representative acknowledged that the country is facing certain climate security risks, however doesn't frame it explicitly as a climate security problem in the NAP.

Key points from presentation, Nicholas Simon Taylor (Global Green Growth Institute):

- In writing NAP as a policy document, it is creating a complex document integrating climate science while paying attention to the national policy process. NAPs developed by countries exhibit gaps in the ability to leverage (climate) finance.
- The NAP is created while not paying attention to the national ministry relationship, especially with the ministry of finance. The security arguments in NAPs are rarely present, it may be presumed that the outcome of NAP will reduce the climate sectors and improve the climate security. The current available NAP in general unfortunately is written through a not necessarily through a participatory way.

Key points from presentation, Nandasiri Weerasinghe (Horizon Campus):

- For Sri Lanka, climate change risks directly human security, economic stability, and national security. Therefore, the NAP ideally must integrate climate security perspectives, especially to strengthen the institutional capacity and cross-sectoral collaboration and incorporate learning from examples from other countries.
- Climate-induced extreme events such as cyclones in Sri Lanka directly affect the agricultural sector, infrastructure sector, and displaces people. The impact in the agriculture sector ripples and influences social and economic stability.

Key points from presentation, Kunal Singh (The Pacific Community):

- Fiji's NAP document does not account for Fiji's climate security perspectives, as the Pacific is framed as a regional approach instead of national approach. Regionally in Pacific, the climate security is acknowledged through Boe Declaration and has regional framework established.
- Similar to other developing countries, climate security concerns in Fiji arise because of the increasing impacts on climate change on livelihoods, land availability, disaster risk and relocation/displacement. These increasing risks are threatening to exacerbate the ability of Pacific countries, including Fiji, to respond adequately to external shocks and volatile global landscape. These threats also expose and worsens Pacific's fragile institutional structures, underdeveloped societies and underlying social concerns.
- Fiji has done systematic steps and well-informed steps to protect the country against climate security threats through policy approaches and policy instruments to counteract the climate security risks. Some of the policy approaches and policy instruments are directly related to adaptation actions.

Key points from presentation, Sheetal Patil (Indian Institute of Human Settlements):

- In India, climate security is a threat multiplier that intersects with human security, economic security, and internal stability. The NAP is positioned as a key policy lever to address these risks systematically. However, India has not submitted their NAPs.
- The climate security issues are seen stemming from climate hazards that stress the vital life supporting and livelihood systems such as health, water, food, etc.

- While the NAP is portrayed as acknowledging the climate hazard risks, climate security in India remains implicit. In addition, the climate risks are treated as sectoral challenges rather than interconnected, systemic threats. The adaptation approach also focuses on the quick-onset type of climate change rather than the slow-onset or CCDR.
- In planning for CCDR, one case study in Gujarat tries to treat heat risks as systematic and it results in a strategy that combat the compound risks adequately.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- Climate security remains implicit in NAPs, despite acknowledged risks. While countries like Sri Lanka, India, and Fiji are aware of the climate-related risks that intersect with national, human, and economic security, this understanding is not consistently reflected in their formal NAPs. This pattern suggests a disconnect between observed threats and institutional framing, where climate security is still seen as politically sensitive or too abstract for practical integration into planning instruments.
- Institutional silos and weak ministry coordination hinder effective climate-security integration is a common problem in developing countries. These observations suggest that improving vertical and horizontal institutional integration (across sectors and government levels) is a prerequisite for embedding climate-security considerations meaningfully into policy.
- Slow-Onset events and compound climate risks are underrepresented in current NAP approaches. This highlights a growing need to mainstream slow-onset and compound climate hazards into security-sensitive planning processes, especially in sectors like health, food, water, and urban development.

Thematic 5: The Impact of Global Warming on Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific Region (15:10–15:55)

Moderator

- **Kazumine AKIMOTO**

Fellow Emeritus, OPRI-SPF

Speakers

- **Julia TASSE**

Senior Research Fellow, The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs

- **Miko MAEKAWA**

Senior Research Fellow, OPRI-SPF

- **Gunnar REKVIG**

Non-Resident Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Key points from presentation, Julia TASSE (The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs):

- Since 2013, IRIS has worked with the French Ministry of Defence on integrating climate change into national defence strategy, including founding the International Military Council on Climate Security. This work contributed to the publication of the French Ministry of Defence's Climate Strategy in 2022, integrating climate change into all operational practices, ahead of other ministries.
- Since 2016, the Observatory project has assessed and mapped regional security stakes and produced thematic reports on health, water scarcity, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, agriculture, and geoengineering. The research focuses on how climate impacts identified by the natural science community may contribute to political destabilisation and cascading security risks. The [first report](#) was on the cascading impacts of a slowdown of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), specifically regarding submarine operations along the Greenland-Iceland-UK line, critical for nuclear deterrence submarines.
- Climate change affects military equipment, bases, and personnel through overheating, navigation system disruption, biofouling, infrastructure submersion, and heat exhaustion. At the same time, the French Navy is increasingly involved in humanitarian aid and disaster relief and in managing security implications of resource shifts, such as migrating fish stocks.

Key points from presentation, Miko MAEKAWA (OPRI-SPF):

- In recent years, the International Court of Justice has gone beyond its traditional role of arbitration, and engaging in policy-making litigation, and acting almost as a human rights court. This shift is occurring against clear scientific evidence of accelerating sea-level rise, as documented by the IPCC, NASA, and the World Meteorological Organization.
- Since 2012, international legal efforts have examined sea-level rise, relocation, and human rights, concluding that preserving statehood is tied to maintaining maritime zones and rights. This informed the 2024 ITLOS advisory opinion clarifying states' obligations under UNCLOS to reduce GHG emissions and ocean acidification, followed by the 2025 ICJ advisory opinion establishing legal obligations to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to maintain progressive NDCs under the Paris Agreement. International law does not require updating maritime baselines due to sea-level rise, preserving EEZs and economic rights for small island states and coastal countries, including Japan.
- Customary international law now sets obligations for states, including non-parties to climate treaties, to protect the climate system from anthropogenic GHG emissions. Failure to act with due diligence may constitute a wrongful act, opening pathways for climate litigation, restitution, and compensation beyond UNFCCC loss and damage frameworks. This momentum has been driven by strong regional initiatives led by small island and Global South coalitions, underscoring the importance for Japan to align with like-minded partners and promote regional scientific cooperation on sea-level rise, mitigation, and adaptation.

Key points from presentation, Gunnar REKVIG (SPF):

- The Arctic can be understood as a laboratory for humankind, functioning as a mirror and amplifier of global processes at a much faster pace. Climate change is opening the Arctic at unprecedented rates, with heating happening at approximately 4 times the global average and some regions heating at up to eight times the global average, making it the fastest-warming place on Earth.
- The Arctic is increasingly seen as a bridge connecting the North Atlantic and North Pacific, reshaping maritime routes and regional security dynamics, with implications for countries including Japan. China has formalised this vision through the Belt and Road Initiative and Polar Silk Road, signalling a fundamental shift in how regional security is understood. The war in Ukraine has divided the region between Russia and NATO, effectively ending Arctic exceptionalism and disrupting scientific cooperation, including the suspension of Arctic Council scientific collaboration with Russia. The suspension of the Council is also critical for climate research, as the loss of Russian climate data significantly impairs our ability to understand and respond to Arctic warming. Despite geopolitical tensions, some collaboration continues (fisheries management between Norway and Russia), highlighting that collaboration on shared existential challenges remains possible when political will exists.
- The Russian Navy is becoming a transpolar force capable of operating across the Arctic Ocean and linking the Atlantic and Pacific theatres. These shifts signal the end of Arctic exceptionalism, the belief that the region could remain insulated from global geopolitics. The Trump administration's threats to acquire Greenland exemplify this new reality, weakening international law and established norms, with implications extending far beyond the Arctic, including for Japan. As an Arctic Council observer and a major shipping nation, Japan has direct stakes in Arctic governance. The erosion of norms in the Arctic threatens the legal framework that underpins Japan's security and prosperity. The opening of Arctic shipping routes offers potential economic opportunities for Japan, but only within a stable, rules-based framework. If great powers can simply seize territory through threats or force, the entire system of maritime governance potentially collapses, not just in the Arctic, but globally.

Key takeaways from the session (3 bullets):

- Climate change has been fully mainstreamed into French defense and security thinking, with climate impacts now understood as a strategic risk multiplier that directly affects military operations, infrastructure, missions, and geopolitical stability.
- International courts are reshaping climate governance by establishing legally binding state obligations on mitigation, adaptation, and the protection of maritime rights, strengthening international law in ways that particularly benefit small island states and rule-based maritime nations like Japan.
- The Arctic is no longer a remote or exceptional region but a central arena where climate change and hard security transformations intersect, with the erosion of international norms and geopolitical conflict directly threatening regional stability, maritime governance, and Japan's security and economic interests.



Outlook: APCS Taking Stock and Prospects (15:55–16:15)

Speaker

- **Kei KURUSHIMA**

Chief Policy Researcher, IGES

Key points from presentation, Kei KURUSHIMA (IGES):

- It was noted that the three plenary sessions underscored the necessity of a disciplined, evidence-based policy framework and an integrated security approach prioritizing environmental stability and human-centric development. Furthermore, the five thematic sessions were observed to have provided a critical examination of the “risk multiplier” effect of climate change on sectors such as energy, food, and maritime security, emphasizing the imperative of integrating these impacts into national strategic planning.
- The session marked the conclusion of a three-year APCS project (supported by MOFA), which successfully enhanced regional climate security capacity and consolidated research findings across five thematic working groups: Energy, Food, Migration, Adaptation, and Oceans. It was further highlighted that the project has established extensive professional networks spanning the Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America, and Oceania, ensuring the continuation of dialogue beyond the project’s official duration.
- It was announced that the “Asia-Pacific Climate Security Policy Report Series,” comprising five thematic reports ranging from net-zero transitions to maritime security, is scheduled for release in February 2026. Additionally, it was noted that the proceedings of the two-day symposium, which garnered over 1,000 registrations, will be made available on the APCS website in both English and Japanese to disseminate the expert contributions to a broader audience.



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