

ISAP SESSION SUMMARY 2

P-1: Green Economy – Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific

Tuesday, 23 July 2013, 10:00

In ISAP's first plenary session, eminent experts shared their views on Green Economy, emphasizing the challenges and opportunities facing the Asia-Pacific region.

- These challenges and opportunities, according to Rajendra Pachauri, Director-General, the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) / Chair, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), are particularly related to urbanization, cities and coastal regions, as those areas would be prone to natural disasters, especially flooding. He then underlined that a green economy should not only promote low-carbon economic activity, but also protect those vulnerable to climate impacts.
- Masamitsu Sakurai, Executive Advisor, Ricoh Company, Ltd. further developed this sentiment when speaking on low-carbon society. He emphasized the importance of involving business and industry, as these sectors were responsible for a large part of GHG emissions. Presenting good examples on the importance of leadership from his own experience as a CEO, he pointed to a need for more involvement from the business sector. Could the government design greater incentives for business and industry involvement?
- National and international public-private-partnerships should be expanded to help other countries in the region make a low-carbon transition. Business and the government should engage in a dialogue to define the terms of such partnerships. They might consider working within the contours of existing partnerships such as the Corporate Leaders Partnership and the new Joint Crediting Mechanism, so that businesses with a sound social and environmental profile are considered the prime candidates to enter into international partnerships in the region.
- Rae Kwon Chung, Director, Environment and Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) shared his vision on Green Growth, emphasizing that a green economy not only generates economic growth but also enhances other forms of capital, including natural and human capital. He reminded the audience that the transition to green economy requires political leadership.
- Tomoko Nishimoto, Director, Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), underlined the action that had been generated on Green Economy initiatives since the Rio+20 conference last year. She also remarked that convergence of views from businesses, governments and international organizations regarding the necessity to transition to a green economy is a promising sign. While this convergence is indeed encouraging, it will not happen without governments taking an active and leading role.
- Laws, regulations and fiscal policy tools must be designed to create a mix of incentives to encourage the transition to a green economy. How to facilitate and accelerate decision-making among governments to create a supportive governance structure for the green transition remains a key challenge. It is hoped that events such as this year's ISAP can help generate momentum, awareness and a sense of urgency that a transition to a greener and more inclusive economy is necessary.

