PL-10: Building a Transformational Post-2015 Development Agenda: Perspectives from Asia  
Wednesday, 24 July 2013, 13:45

This parallel session took place on Wednesday July 24 2013 at Pacifico Yokohama, Japan - as a part of the International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP), which this year focuses on Regional Perspectives on Green Economy. The session focused on sustainable development goals (SDGs) proposed for the period post-2015 and aimed to solicit views on the experience in Asia. The focus areas for discussion included key themes pertaining to: 1) lessons learned from the MDGs; 2) linkages across issues; 3) measurability of goals/targets; and 4) means of implementation. These focus areas refer to IGES’ research work on governance aspects of the SDGs, which is a part of larger project called S11 involving both Japanese and international experts in and beyond Japan.

Surendra Shrestha from UNEP emphasized that for future development goals there needs to be a link between global goals and national development plans. He also stated that each target could be nationally differentiated but that universal indicators are necessary to enable global progress tracking towards the SDGs.

Dave Griggs from Monash University showed that earlier development has happened by exchanging natural capital for human capital. He went on to present his proposal of six sustainability goals: thriving lives and livelihoods, sustainable food and security, secure sustainable water, universal clean energy, healthy and productive ecosystems, and governance for sustainable societies.

Yoshihiko Wada from Doshisha University presented the Ecological Footprint (EF) and the concept of overshoot, warning that we are far from achieving sustainable development. He compared the Human Development Index (HDI) and the EF, showing that most countries are using too much ecological space to achieve development objectives.

Tetsuro Yoshida from IGES presented on governance for the SDGs, with a particular emphasis on an energy SDG. He thought that future goals would not be relevant for planning purposes but would be better for awareness raising. He also stated that SDGs should be informed by science, but that sometimes negotiations are not well-informed by science and evidence. He argued that energy would be a good candidate for an SDG due to its importance for both development and the environment.

George Varughese of Development Alternatives presented how local priorities can be incorporated in the global development agenda and vice-versa. He warned that the world has seen too many lofty global processes but that local implementation remains lacking. Furthermore, he stated that the local population needs simple and relevant frames and methods for implementation and measurement of progress.

Key messages of the session
- The process to define sustainable development goals (SDGs) represents a golden opportunity to refocus governments’ attention towards sustainable development.
- There is a need to generate implementation on the ground. For this to happen, inclusive participation in goal setting and especially national level target setting will be essential;
- While the SDGs have to apply to all countries - targets will ultimately be up to countries to decide and design implementation mechanisms;
- The long-term SDGs also need shorter term targets relevant for measuring implementation in governments’ 4-year legislative periods. Such short-term targets will enhance government accountability over shorter time frames.
- Energy is a good candidate for an SDG. Much headway has been made with the SE4All Initiative, but there is a need for differentiated targets depending on countries’ specific development situation, as well as their natural resource endowments.

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