

ISAP SESSION SUMMARY 9

PL-2: Exploring Reduction in the 3Rs: Improving Resource Efficiency in Asia and the Pacific Tuesday, 23 July 2013, 16:30

Driven by drastic economic growth, resource consumption in Asia and the Pacific has increased 6 times compared to 40 years ago. If the current trend continues, it will increase 3 fold in the next 40 years. This trend in resource consumption is far from sustainable. Therefore, this session discussed how to shift to sustainable resource use in Asia. Speakers discussed the potential use of recyclable resources as well as dematerialization at all lifecycle stages and tried to find opportunities for resource efficiency improvements in order to establish a sustainable society. The need to recognise resource constraints, as well as the need to implement urgent policy action in order to facilitate improvement in resource efficiency, was also discussed.

Prof.Dr. Raimund Bleischwitz, in his keynote presentation, argued for the importance of international resource policy improvement and Europe's recent trend of resource efficient policy development. He then discussed several approaches for policy development with policy recommendations that encouraged the development of international governance for resource management, and improved transparency in the resource value chain.

Mr. Shaoyi Li from the Secretariat of UNEP International Resource Panel (IRP) explained major outputs regarding the work of IRP. He first showed the significance of the Asia Pacific region regarding world resource transactions. Then he introduced some recent findings of IRP. These were namely that relative decoupling is happening, that the involvement of all actors is necessary for an efficient recycling system and that industry can be the driver for maximization of resource Efficiency. Lastly, he argued that a systematic approach would be crucial to address complicated resource links.

Ms. Chika Aoki-Suzuki, a policy researcher at IGES, presented various drivers behind improvements in resource efficiency policy in emerging Asia, with a case study of Indonesia. She discussed that a stable increase in labour population, outstanding industrialization, and low penetration of infrastructure and consumer goods are the key drivers to be taken into consideration. Based on the discussion, she argued that prioritised establishment of a resource efficient social system would be crucial for realising a "leapfrog type" of development in Indonesia.

Mr. Kazunobu Onogawa, senior fellow at IGES and former president of UNCRD, discussed the need to make considerations beyond efficiency as well as the need to put a cap on resource consumption in order to avoid reaching the planetary boundary. Whereas he questioned the feasibility of achieving decoupling, expressing his belief that an improvement in people's quality of life could be realised, to a certain extent, through consuming resources in developing countries.

In the panel discussion, presenters discussed the issue "beyond 3R, beyond recycling". Presenters responded that product innovation, systematic type invocation and lifestyle change is needed; all the sectorial decoupling efforts have to be linked at the global scale in order to achieve resource efficiency.

Key messages of the session

Resource efficiency has become one of the important indicators for sustainable development. Also, the session discussed the 3R concept which was born in Japan and has been recognized as an important tool for achieving resource efficiency which will lead to a reduction in resource consumption. Promoting Resource Efficiency and Resource Reduction through systematic approaches is crucial for achieving decoupling and establishing a sustainable society. Dr. Yasuhiko Hotta, session moderator, concluded the session by emphasising the effectiveness of international collaboration for improving the governance of sustainable resource management.

