

Parallel/ Lunch Sessions

Lunch Session

KEY MESSAGES FROM IGES WHITE PAPER V: HOW REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN ASIA CAN BENEFIT PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1 Context/Rationale

IGES' forthcoming Fifth White Paper "Greening Integration in Asia: How Regional Integration Can Benefit People and the Environment", discusses how regional integration in Asia and the Pacific could be a driver for sustainable development. The current regional integration processes in the region are focusing on economic integration through trade and investment liberalisation. The White Paper provides input to the discussion on what kind of regional integration amongst Asian nations would be beneficial, not only in the short term and from the narrow viewpoint of national interests, but from a wider sustainability perspective.

2 Objectives

This session aimed to present key messages of the White Paper to a general audience and to receive feedback from the discussant, Ella Antonio of the Earth Council.

3 List of Speakers

[Moderator]

Magnus Bengtsson Principal Policy Researcher, Programme Management Office, IGES

[Speakers]

Satoshi Kojima Principal Policy Researcher, Programme Management Office, IGES

Henry Scheyvens Leader / Principal Policy Researcher, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Services Area, IGES

Abdessalem Rabhi Task Manager / Senior Policy Researcher, Business and the Environment Area, Kansai Research Centre, IGES

Simon Olsen Task Manager / Senior Policy Researcher, Regional Centre, IGES

[Discussant]

Ella Antonio President, Earth Council Asia-Pacific, INC.



4 Key Messages

Asia is developing rapidly but unsustainably. Currently, regional cooperation and integration processes contribute only marginally to addressing these undesirable trends.

Joint action at the regional level holds considerable potential to complement and strengthen country level efforts.

Recommendations from the White Paper are under three headings: (i) Make trade and investment work for sustainable development, (ii) Strengthen and refocus regional institutions, and (iii) Build capacity at national and sub-national levels.

5 Summary of Presentation

The session had four presentations from IGES researchers who are contributing authors of the White Paper.

Satoshi Kojima made the first presentation entitled “Greening Asia’s Integration: An Urgent Challenge”. He introduced the overall idea and structure of the publication. He illustrated some unsustainable regional trends such as rapid increase in material consumption as well as carbon emissions in the region. It was also demonstrated that income inequality has been worsened in many countries despite of rapid economic growth in the region. The presentation emphasised the role of regional policy processes, as an important complement to national and global policy making in order to address these issues.

Henry Scheyvens made the second presentation entitled “Protecting Forest Values as Economic Integration Advances – The Importance of Regional Collaboration”. He highlighted some key challenges related to the forest sector, and also presented some negative environmental impacts, such as deforestation, associated with the ongoing economic integration. Against this background it was argued that the creation of responsible regional markets and production chains was the key to address the problems and that regional collaboration, especially on timber certification, could help improve the situation in this direction.

Abdessalem Rabhi made the third presentation entitled “Low Carbon Technology Transfer in the Context of Asian Regional Integration”. He explained the significance of climate friendly technologies and the need for trans-border technology transfer. He explained the huge mitigation potential through deployment of low carbon technologies, in particular energy saving technologies, in Asia. To materialise such potential, a three-stage model for technology transfer was introduced together with a set of recommendations on how regional integration could help address key obstacles.

Simon Olsen made the fourth presentation entitled “Sustainable Development Goals in the Context of the ASEAN Community 2015”. He highlighted the potential links between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ASEAN Economic Community process, an ongoing regional integration process in this region. He also explained the structure of ASEAN and how the Millennium Development Goals were dealt with by ASEAN. Based on this analysis, discussions focused on how ASEAN could prioritise SDGs as part of its integration process to facilitate sustainable development in member countries.

6 Summary of Discussion

In the discussion part, the overall ideas and messages of the White Paper were enthusiastically supported by Ella Antonio. However, she pointed out the need for some recommendations to be further elaborated, especially with regards to how they can be put into practice. She also underscored the significant progress made by ASEAN and the need for the White Paper to take notice of these achievements. Finally, she emphasised that the key to reforming Asia’s regional integration is to go through governments in the member countries.