

At the request of the session moderator Hideyuki Mori, President of IGES, three distinguished panelists – Byung-wook Lee, President of the Korean Environment Institute (KEI); Kaveh Zahedi, Regional Director and Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia Pacific (UNEP-ROAP); and Ella Antonio, President of the Earth Council Asia-Pacific, INC. – provided their observations and shared points for improvement for ISAP 2014. Following their comments, two senior IGES researchers – Eric Zusman, Leader, Integrated Policies for Sustainable Societies, and Kentaro Tamura, Leader, Climate and Energy Area – introduced two IGES flagship initiatives for the current year as part of the ISAP 2014 Closing Session. Prof. Hironori Hamanaka, Chair of Board of Directors, IGES, then concluded by providing closing remarks.

Byung-wook Lee, President of the Korean Environment Institute, congratulated IGES for organising a successful forum that featured future-oriented discussions, particularly on sustainable development issues. He added that Korea is embracing the conflict between sustainability and development and moving towards a green and creative economy.

Kaveh Zahedi, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP/ROAP, remarked that the forum covered both high-level issues like the SDGs and more practical ones at the community level. He pointed out that ISAP is an important testing ground for ideas and added that IGES has a role to take the post-2015 global development agenda and make it practical.

Ella Antonio, President of the Earth Council, noted that ISAP could serve as a platform for indigenous people to contribute to the SDG discourse. She also pointed out that the forum could address technical ‘language’ barriers among NGOs, academics and development partners.

Eric Zusman, Leader, Integrated Policies for Sustainable Societies, IGES, highlighted one of IGES’s flagship initiatives looking at means of implementation in relation to the SDGs and how the goals can be translated to practical action. Kentaro Tamura, Leader, Climate and Energy Area, IGES, highlighted IGES’s other flagship initiative on climate change that seeks to provide practical policy recommendations for a post-2020 climate agreement.

Prof. Hironori Hamanaka, Chair of Board of Directors, IGES, expressed his gratitude and emphasised the need for scientists and academics to communicate well to policymakers so that they can better integrate social, economic and environmental issues to realise the SDGs. Prof. Hamanaka concluded by reiterating IGES’s aim to be a ‘change agent’ through conducting research that moves policy to action.

Key messages of the session

- There is a conflict between sustainability and development and this can be addressed by promoting green growth with innovation across various sectors.
- ISAP is an important testing ground for ideas and IGES has a role in taking the post-2015 global development agenda and making it practical.
- ISAP could serve as a platform for indigenous people to contribute to the SDG discourse and find a common understanding and language of different development terms and ideas.
- IGES launched two flagship initiatives aiming to contribute to sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. One focuses on the means of implementation on SDGs and the other explores practical policy recommendations for the post-2020 climate regime.