

P-1 Accelerating Low Carbon, Resilient and Inclusive Development in the Region: Implications of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report for Asia

10:00 – 12:20 23 July 2014

Climate change is posing substantial threats to both present and future generations, and action must be taken not only to mitigate but also to adapt to its impacts. With its significant economic expansion and huge population, Asia has seen an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. If a carbon intensive development pattern continues, Asia will account for about 50% of global GHG emissions by 2050. In that sense, there has been growing importance in low-carbon development in Asia. Leading experts on climate change and sustainable development were invited to this session to discuss how Asia can lead the world into a sustainable future, fully taking into consideration the implications of the Fifth Assessment Report of IPCC.

Rajendra K. Pachauri mentioned that sustainable development should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. He stated that in order to ensure a resilient and sustainable pathway for humanity at large, interaction among climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk management is important.

Shuzo Nishioka stated that unless we completely eliminate emissions, temperatures will continue to increase. Japan must take a path to reduce emissions by 85% using deep decarbonisation and is now at the turning point for transformation.

Rintaro Tamaki explained that establishing better policies is necessary to achieve a successful transition to a low-carbon economy. He indicated four key policy approaches for low-carbon transition.

Emil Salim mentioned that economic growth with low GHG emissions is possible and added that cooperation among Asian countries through technological innovation, and development in carbon capture storage and clean coal development are also important for ensuring the transition to low-carbon societies.

Abdul Hamid Zakri spoke of the need for implementation of policy, institution arrangement and governance, which can utilise existing national institutions as well as management of a common pool of resources in the ecosystem. He emphasised that communication and education are fundamental to achieving decarbonisation.

Akimasa Sumi stated that it is necessary to obtain support from people to ensure the success of sustainable development. He added that there is a need to show successful concrete examples of overcoming the barriers against addressing climate change and to establish detailed action plans by using various scientific tools.

Ligia Noronha focused on two issues that are of particular concern to UNEP - financing change, and sustainable consumption and production, and also called for international and regional cooperation to create employment, improve the environment and reduce risks.

Key messages of the session

- A stable climate is one component of sustainable development. Climate change is posing substantial threats to both present and future generations, and action must be taken not only to mitigate but also to adapt to its impacts.
- The global climate system could be impacted by Asian development patterns as Asian countries pursue their development path.
- Successful transition to a low-carbon economy needs better policies than now, such as financial policies that lead to low-carbon development.
- Economic growth with low GHG emissions is possible in Asia. Countries in the region need to revisit their development patterns and also work together for low-carbon development, such in innovation of low-carbon technologies.