

Living with Climate Change

Session: Session 3

Date/Time: April 27, 2016 / 10:45-12:15

Moderator: Kim Sang-Hyup, Korea Advanced Institute for Science and Technology

Speakers: Christian Egenhofer, Centre for European Policy Studies
Sarah Wade-Apicella, The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
John Bruce Wells, U.S. Agency for International Development

Session Sketch

The moderator of the session, Mr. Kim Sang-Hyup, visiting professor at Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and chairman of Coalition for Our Common Future, began the session titled “Living with Climate Change” highlighting the urgency of dealing with climate change. Explaining that severe draught was the dominant cause of the Syrian Civil War, which led to massive displacement, Chairman Kim reiterated that the climate change is the biggest security challenge in our time. Mentioning the Paris Agreement, he stated that collective efforts to combat climate change have reached new levels and unprecedented challenges can be turned into new opportunities.

Prof. Christian Egenhofer, associate senior research fellow and director of Energy Climate House at the Centre for European Policy Studies, stated that there is nothing new on the climate change. It has been known for decades and even the Paris Agreement failed to achieve much. However, Prof. Egenhofer noted that the agreement made substantial achievements in terms of framework. Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) was adopted and the joint Chinese-US leadership was founded in the process. Regarding the European Union, internal economic disruption was mentioned as a new feature. Technological improvement led to fast qualitative development on renewable energy reinforced by regulations and policies.

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Next, Ms. Sarah Wade-Apicella, programme officer at UNISDR ONEA-GETI, agreed that there is nothing new on the issue itself but raised new challenges to sustainable growth. The climate-related natural disasters cause economic, social, health, cultural and environmental losses by destroying unsustainable buildings, infrastructures and communities. Exposure of people and communities to natural disasters has increased faster than vulnerability has decreased. The loss is projected to increase to impeded sustainable growth. But positive signs are there. The increased exposure made people to take the issue more seriously and hold their government more accountable. Three major agreements were passed and are to be implemented; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement. Pointing out a people-centered, rights-based approach embedded in the three agreements, Ms. Apicella reiterates that it's important to coherently implement them both by developed and developing countries.

Finally, Mr. John Bruce Wells, USAID Low Emissions Asian Development (LEAD) program director, noted cautious optimism as new normal. Mr. Wells distinguished the current era from the old of intensive political dialogues, scientific researches and projections. The Paris Agreement succeeded in creating a virtuous cycle of reinforcing actions from making commitment, reporting and implementing it. Once countries make voluntary commitment, reporting is mandatory in the new framework. It is also noted that institutions are in place to encourage bilateral, regional and global cooperation to improve each country's capacity and to deliver its commitment. Mr. Well found collective hope from the current framework and it would be the beginning of advancing green growth all over the world.

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