

SDG 13: Climate Action

Outline, version June 17, 2016

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Date: June 28, 2016, 13.30-15.00

Venue: B2.06

Abstract:

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change that was adopted in December 2015 is a major achievement in dealing with climate change that is a critical threat to sustainable development. It focuses on mitigation and adaptation actions in the period till 2030, has a mechanism to regularly ratchet up the mitigation plans of countries in order to enhance the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, commits to building capacity in developing countries, promotes technology transfer and promises financial support to developing countries. It also provides a long-term perspective in terms of a strengthened objective of keeping global temperature increase to “well below 2 degrees and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5” and it translates that in a goal of “net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the second half of the century” and encourages all countries to develop low emissions development strategies by 2020.

The Paris Agreement goes a long way in implementing the provisions of SDG13 that features enhancing adaptive capacity, integrating climate measures into development, improving climate related education and capacity, address financing challenges, with a special focus on least developed countries and small island states.

In this session, we focus on the issue of “net zero greenhouse gas emissions” , or in other words, how to move to a fossil fuel free world in a 30-40 year timeframe and what the key issues are in trying to do so, for both developed and developing countries. We debate on what a fossil-fuel free world looks like and how does one get there. What does a fossil-fuel free world imply for our banks and pension funds, for our oil multinationals, for us as individuals and what does it mean for poor developing countries that have domestic fossil fuel resources or even earn significant revenues from exporting them. Do they run the risk of being left with stranded assets when demand for their export commodity dries up?

As this issue cannot be resolved easily, the aim of the session is to formulate a set of research questions on how to reach a fossil fuel free world, both in the Western world and in developing countries.

Programme

Chair: Bert Metz (European Climate Foundation, former co-chair IPCC Working Group 3)

1. Introductions by the chair (5 minutes)
2. Is a fossil-fuel world around 2050 technologically and economically possible, how would it look like and are people ready to be fossil free? What are key research questions? (25 minutes)
 - Marjan Minnesma (Urgenda) (10 mins)
 - Sible Schoene (HIER) (10 mins)
 - Questions from the audience (5 mins)
3. How can poor fossil fuel dependent developing countries make the transition to a fossil free world? Should they abandon fossil fuel investment or run the risk of stranded assets? How fast can they shift to renewable energy investment? What are key research questions? (25 minutes)
 - Kyra Bos (UvA) (10 mins)
 - Elvira Eurlings (FMO) (10 mins)
 - Questions from the audience (5 mins)
4. Discussion with the panel and the audience on key research questions (30 minutes)
5. Wrap-up by the chair (5 minutes)