



World at a Crossroads: Asia-Pacific
UN Press Briefing & Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

SMARTER, GREENER, CLEANER?

**Rethinking Economic Risk and Opportunity in the Face of
Environmental Challenges and Extreme Events in World's
Most Populous Region**

23 May 2017

Foreign Correspondents Club, Bangkok

#GEO6

1. Essential Information

Date: Tuesday, 23 May 2017, 12:00 – 15:00
Venue: Foreign Correspondents Club, Bangkok
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2. Context

According to Global Environment Outlook - Regional Studies, unprecedented economic growth is putting heavy pressure on natural resources in the Asia-Pacific region. Unsustainable consumption patterns have led to worsening water quality, air pollution, land degradation and waste generation; threatening human and environmental health and costing the economy billions, annually.

Consider this:

About 30% of people living in the region depend on drinking water contaminated by human waste.

- Peat burning, to clear land for agriculture, resulted in worsening air quality and trans-boundary smoke and haze; costing the region an estimated US \$16 billion during the 2015 wildfires.
- Annual labor income losses caused by air pollution's health impacts cost the equivalent of almost 1 percent of GDP in South Asia, while short-lived climate pollutants contribute to 102 deaths per 100,000 people in Western Pacific.
- Natural forest areas in Southeast Asia, recognized as global biodiversity hotspots, are being deforested annually by more than 1 million hectares, resulting in hundreds of millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year between 2005-2015.

The region is also the most vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters, with climate change costing the regional economy an estimated US \$1,076 billion and impacting the lives of 4.5 billion people in the last 15 years. Yet, the region continues to be the largest contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Smarter, greener and cleaner investments of around US \$2.5 trillion a year, between 2013 and 2030, can transform the region into a hub for sustainability. Growing financial and capital markets provide a unique opportunity for innovative policies, regulations and standards that can align private capital flows to the financing needs of sustainable development. Without climate-oriented, greener development policies, over 100 million people in Asia-Pacific could be forced into extreme poverty by 2030, wiping out poverty reduction gains achieved over the last decade.

So, are we moving in the right direction? Fast enough? Soon enough?

3. Programme

12:00 – 12:45	Registration / Refreshments
13:00 – 13:20	Panel 1: Where we are
13:20 – 13:30	Interventions from the floor
13:30 – 13:50	Panel 2: Where we want to be
13:50 – 14:40	Q&A / Open Floor
14:40 – 15:40	Open Buffet

4. Running Order:

Part 1: Where We Are and Where We Want to Be

Peter King, Co-Chair of GEO-6 Asia Pacific Regional Study, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies: The state of play – 4 minutes

Jian Liu, Chief Scientist at UN Environment: On bridging the gap between fast development and environmental capacity – 4 minutes

Wijarn Simachaya, Permanent Secretary of the Thai Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: From Policy to Action: Thailand and ASEAN Perspectives – 4 minutes

Joyeeta Gupta, Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South, Amsterdam University / GEO 6 Co-Chair: *On the right to develop and the price to pay: wealth, equity, gender, security*– 4 minutes

Surendra Shrestha, Vice President of the Asian Institute of Technology: *On empowerment and education for development in Asia-Pacific and the world*– 4 minutes

Floor Interventions – 10 minutes

Part 2: Making Cents in an Under 2°C World

Professor Paul Ekins, Director of UCL Institute for Sustainable Resources & UK Energy Research Centre, GEO Co-Chair: *On the economics of keeping it under 2°C* – 4 minutes

James Donovan, CEO ADEC Innovations & Chairman, Global CEO Alliance: *On delivering innovative environmental, social and governance solutions – role of the private sector* – 4 minutes

Martin Rueegg, CEO, AXA Insurance, Thailand: On Managing direct environmental impact and the cost of inaction – 4 minutes

Maria Jesus Iraola, GEO Fellow, Uruguay: *On a future coloured by today's actions and inaction. Youth Perspective and Commentary*– 4 minutes

Open Floor – 40 minutes