

## Global Climate Change

Tim Gould (International Energy Agency, Head of Unit, Resources and Investment)

Aldo Flores-Quiróga (IEF, Secretary General)

Huu Ninh Nguyen (Center for Environment Research, Education and Development (CERED), Chairman)

Eugenia Kalnay (University of Maryland, Distinguished University Professor)

Yvo de Boer (Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Director-General)

Donald Johnston (Secretary-General of the OECD (1996-2006), CONSULTANT LAWYER)

On October 21, 2015, at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual World Knowledge Forum, Donald Johnston, former Secretary-General of the OECD (1996-2006) led a panel discussion about the changes in our global climate and the actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. According to Mr. Johnston, “Climate change is the most serious issue that we face- more important than terrorism, more important than any other geopolitical issue. Climate issue is the most serious issue we face in this century.”

The panelists shared their thoughts on the state of the global climate and expressed their positive outlook on the Paris Summit 2015. Yvo de Boer, Director-General of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) offered his opinion on the summit.

“I personally see Paris more as one of the first stations on a much longer journey,” he said. “I expect it to launch a process of global engagement on climate change, a modest beginning to a much more global process.”

Tim Gould, Head of Resources and Investment for the International Energy Agency, agreed with Mr. de Boer's sentiments.

“We need to look for measures that could be adopted by governments to allow for a peak in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020,” he said.

Many of the causes of GHG were directed towards the boom in population growth since the Industrial Revolution and the immense consumption of fossil fuel.

Huu Ninh Nguyen, Chairman of the Center for Environment Research, Education and Development (CERED), highlighted the need to address the high demands for food, energy and water, expressing concern of the human footprint.

“Modern human moral is strange. Consumption is unlimited and economic development is stable,” Mr. Nguyen said. His Climate Smart Policy pushes for more research and collaboration between business and human dimensions including education, culture, behavior, communication and social resilience in order to reduce carbon emissions.

Eugenia Kalnay, Professor at the University of Maryland, proposed an alternative approach to eradicating greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Kalnay illustrated the steep increase in population growth and its correlation to global warming.

“In the last century, five billion more humans were added, so this is an incredibly fast, exponential growth,” she said.

Dr. Kalnay's approach added quite a stir to the discussion because her proposed solution suggests a reduction in population growth.

"We don't discuss population because it's a taboo subject. Implementing family planning is a low cost and effective policy tool, which should be part of the solution to reduce carbon emissions."

The solution for solving this issue does not come easily. Aldo Flores-Quiroga, Secretary General of the IEF stated, "The reason why we have guarded expectations about Paris, it has to do with mainly the choices that are difficult to make politically by governments...because it involves the decision for economic growth. We still have to find a way to generate high economic growth rates in a more clean way."

Although the panelists did not share the same views on reducing the population as a means of reducing emissions, they unanimously agreed that the biggest challenge therein lies in a sustainable economic growth model.

"Technology and innovation is important not only for what it can do for people's lives and people's economies. It's a very important enabler for climate ambition," said Mr. Gould.

However, the panel's outlook on global efforts to reduce climate change was glum.

"Progress has been extremely slow for anyone that cares about reducing emissions," Mr. Quiroga concluded. "We have to do much better."