

# International Conference

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## Session 1. Biospheric Parameters in Actions and Norms: Institutional Arrangements and Quantified Expressions

At the start of the international conference, three presenters actively argued about institutional and policy-related issues concerning natural resource management, and the quantification of sustainable humanosphere.

The first presentation by Prof. Vishwa Ballabh (XLRI Jamshedpur School of Business & Human Resources), titled “Conflicts and Anarchy in Indian Natural Resources Governance: Need for a Paradigm Shift,” critically addressed natural resource conflicts and their consequences in India. After a review of water and forest resource management regime, he pointed out that resource conflicts brought about by resource scarcity have disadvantaged many poor and marginalized people. Although participatory resource management schemes have recently been introduced, they have not yet changed the dominant tendencies characterized as centralized bureaucracy and unequal resource distribution. Finally, he concluded that paradigm shift is required. Reconsidering resource scarcity as multiple and relative terms can be regarded as a step in this direction.

The second presentation by Dr. Fumikazu Ubukata (CSEAS, Kyoto University), titled “Bridging the Formal-Informal Gap? Changing Institutional Arrangements in Communal Forest Management in Thailand,” argued how the gap between formal and informal forest management institutions had been created and have recently been transformed. After a brief review of both the formal, governmental regime and local informal institutions, he pointed out that the logic of the latter had not been seriously considered in creating the formal institutions. The recent introduction of community-based natural resource management can be understood as measures to narrow this formal-informal institutional gap. An empirical assessment on institutional development of communal forest management in Thailand indicates some positive consequences in terms of conservation performances, which implies that the gap has narrowed. At the same time, new emerging concerns related to the formalization of informal institutions were pointed out.

Three discussants commented on these two presentations. First, Prof. Koichi Fujita (CSEAS, Kyoto University) raised several aspects that differ when it comes to the institutional performances of Thailand and India. Prof. James E Nickum (Tokyo Gakkan College) argued that there is a need to go beyond Ostrom’s “commons” paradigm. Prof. Takeshi Murota (Doshisha University) pointed out that Japanese experiences are suggestive in developing institutional

arrangements in other Asian countries including Thailand and India.

The third presentation by Dr. Takahiro Sato and Dr. Taizo Wada (CSEAS, Kyoto University), titled “How to Assess the Sustainability of Our Humanosphere? Towards the Development of Humanosphere Index,” proposed a basic concept to quantify sustainable humanosphere. Based on Human Development Index (HDI) and Ecological Footprint, the presenters proposed a direction to revise these two indices in order to assess sustainable humanosphere. The underlining part of the concept includes the exception of economic indicators such as per capita GDP, and inclusion of potential capacity of both biosphere and geosphere. Prof. Yasuyuki Kono (CSEAS, Kyoto University) and Prof. Hiroki Nogami (IDE-JETRO) commented on this presentation. What is needed, according to them, is a way to assess the processes that combine input (resource base) and output (human well-being). Consideration of social infrastructure and social arrangement were discussed.