



PS 1.5

CLIMATE INACTION: POWER, POLITICS, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

| BACKGROUND

Climate change and biodiversity loss are existential threats to humanity but in most countries the mitigation and adaptation measures implemented thus far have been exceedingly modest. In communities living in vulnerable circumstances in low- and middle-income countries climate change is already real. For instance, the Pacific Islands' very existence is threatened by rising sea-levels and in Bangladesh flooding is more extreme and threatening to lives and livelihoods. Extreme weather, rising water levels, and other effects have already changed lives and livelihoods for the worse. By contrast, in rich countries urgency is felt mainly by specialized groups of activists and researchers that thus far lack the political influence to drive large-scale change. The distribution of vulnerability is not well correlated with carbon emissions, either, which means that the largest contributing nations and populations are less motivated to act by the changes already apparent to others. Within countries similar dynamics mirror those of the international story. Using a lens of power, politics, and political economy this session explores reasons why countries are having difficulty acting against climate change even as it is manifested in deadly or harmful ways in many settings.

| OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this session include clarifying some of the major political and political economy problems that currently frustrate action that could counter climate change and providing a forum for amplifying views on these topics. For example, the session will discuss lobbying activities of fossil fuel industries and explore the difficulties of making the plight of communities in vulnerable circumstances salient in national and global politics.



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Dr. Minah Kang is professor at the Department of Public Administration at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. Until recently, she served the Korean government as the first female Commissioner of the Board of Audit and Inspection, the Supreme Audit Institution of Korea. She served as a committee member of various expert advisory committees, including the Presidential Committee on the 4th Industrial Revolution, the Primary Ministers' Committee for International Development Cooperation (CIDC), and many advisory boards for the Korean government. Since 2018, she is an active member of W20, one of the engagement groups of the G20 focused on gender equity, and in 2022, is co-chair of the Working Group on Health for the W20 G20 Indonesia. Her research interests include global health and governance, public accountability, M&E for ODA, women empowerment, and audit and evaluation for innovation. She published numerous articles in internationally recognized public policy and health policy journals including the New England Journal of Medicine, Health Affairs, Asia Pacific Viewpoint, Medical Care, Health Policy, and JAMA. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Health Systems & Reform and Associate Editor of BMC Health Services Research. She completed a Ph.D. in Health Policy from Harvard University, Master of Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School, and BA from Ewha Womans University.