



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.

Speaker



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Ian Dunlop is Advisory Board Chair of the Australian Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration, a Member of The Club of Rome and of the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group.

He has wide experience in energy resources, infrastructure, and international business. He worked at senior level in oil, gas and coal exploration and production, in scenario and long-term energy planning, competition reform and privatization, for many years on the international staff of Royal Dutch Shell.

He chaired the Australian Coal Association in 1987-88, and the Experts Group which developed the first Australian national emissions trading proposal in 1998-2000. From 1997-2001 he was CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

An engineer from the University of Cambridge (UK), he is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the Energy Institute (UK), a Member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers of AIME (USA) and of the Advisory Board of the University of NSW ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes.