PMAC
PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2023

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 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.

Chair

Jesse Bump

Executive Director of the Takemi Program in International Health and Lecturer on Global Health Policy

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
United States of America