Report of the Panel Discussion
Education and Learning in and through Environmental Assessment:
Experiences from Higher Education Institutions in Asia

On the occasion of the 10th World Environmental Education Congress
3-7 November 2019
BITEC, Bangkok, Thailand

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I. Background

i. Overview

On 4 November 2019 at the 10th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) in Bangkok, Thailand, UNESCO Bangkok, in cooperation with the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), organized a panel discussion on 'Education and Learning in and through Environmental Assessment: Experiences from Higher Education Institutions in Asia'.

The session brought together panelists from four institutions that are/have been involved in environmental assessment in Asia. Through the exchange of experiences and discussion on lessons learnt, the session aimed to draw insights into how higher education may be able to contribute effectively to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

ii. Objectives

The panel discussion aimed to explore the following questions:

- Is learning for environmental sustainability triggered and enhanced for the whole campus community in the process of undertaking the assessment? If so, how?
- Does environmental assessment facilitate and contribute to promoting campus-wide environmental education and learning?
- If so, what are some of the key aspects or issues that we need to be mindful of if we are to leverage environmental assessment as opportunities to promote education and learning for sustainability?
II. Proceedings

i. Introduction

Speaker: Ushio Miura, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok
Link to the presentation: https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8mf2tgkrs7ni9/01%20WEEC%20Session%20Introduction.pdf?dl=0

Miura thanked the organizers for inviting UNESCO Bangkok to conduct a side event during the WEEC. Then, she announced UNESCO’s framework entitled ‘Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030)’. This upcoming international framework on ESD builds upon the lessons learned and experiences of the current phase of UNESCO’s Global Action Programme on ESD, which has been implemented from 2015 to 2019. UNESCO will organize a global conference on 2-4 June 2020 in Berlin, Germany, in order to officially launch the framework.

Then, a video message from Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, was played. In her message, Giannini stressed that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not conceivable without deep and far-reaching changes in society, and that such required changes represent immense learning challenges for humanity, calling for an education that explicitly addresses how everyone can contribute to sustainable development. She also pointed out the need for transformation in education itself in order for education to become transformative.

Miura concurred with Giannini, emphasizing that everyone needs to transform the way they think and act in order to create a sustainable future. She highlighted the importance of teachers by quoting from the ESD for 2030 framework: “Educators must be facilitators of learning that guide the learners through the transformation as well expert transmitters of knowledge.” In this view, she posed the question of how higher education institutions (HEIs) can become such facilitators.

The session would explore this question by focusing on HEIs undergoing environmental assessment and how these processes can facilitate education and learning for sustainability. She shared some examples of the environmental assessment tools used by HEIs in Asia, namely, ISO 14001, University of Indonesia GreenMetric, and Alternative University Appraisal.

Examples of environmental assessment tools used by higher education institutions in Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO 14001</td>
<td>- provides a framework for organizations to follow for an effective environmental management system.</td>
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<td>- 71 universities in Japan had been certified at least once by May 2016, of which 45% continued, and 35% did not renew. What differentiates between the two is their perceptions of whether or not it had a positive impact on education and learning (S. Okayama, 2017, “Effects and challenges of acquiring ISO 14001 et Universities”, <em>Journal on Public Affairs</em>, vol.13:no.1.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Indonesia GreenMetric World Ranking</td>
<td>- provides a platform for universities around the world to assess and compare their sustainability efforts based on common performance indicators including education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative University Appraisal</td>
<td>- provided a model for universities “to review and critically reflect upon their own practices...from the perspective of ESD” (Tadeeva &amp; Mochizuki 2010).</td>
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Figure 2: Examples of environmental assessment tools used by HEIs in Asia
The four panelists from higher education institutions in Asia who shared their experiences of implementing these tools were as follows:

- Gliceria Arlyn G. Garancho, Executive Director and Provost, Philippine Normal University (PNU) Visayas, Philippines
- Riri Fitri Sari, Chairperson of UI GreenMetric, University of Indonesia (UI), Indonesia
- Chanita Rukspollmuang, Vice President, Siam University (SU), Thailand
- Arun Kansal, Dean, Research and Relationships, TERI School of Advanced Studies, India.

ii. Panel Presentations

1) Philippine Normal University Visayas

*Speaker:* Gliceria Arlyn G. Garancho, Executive Director and Provost.


Philippine Normal University (PNU) has established the ‘Hub Framework’, through which it aims to combine training and research and extend its influences from the local to the international level. In 2002, PNU Visayas was designated as the Environment and Green Technology Education Hub. In May 2019, it was granted the ISO 14001:2015 certification.

![Figure 3: PNU Visayas was granted the ISO 14001:2015 certification in May 2019](https://www.dropbox.com/s/d4qzyihv9mhys77/02%20Revised2%20Presentation%20for%2010th%20WEEC-Garancho%20Gliceria%20Arlyn%20G.pdf?dl=0)

As the Environment and Green Technology Education (EGTE) Hub, PNU Visayas commits itself to the protection and preservation of the environment and promotion of renewable resources and clean energy technologies through education. An environmental management plan was developed,
including designing, development and delivery of EGTE instruction, research, and community extension programmes and support services. To ensure that goals are met for each programme, PNU Visayas follows the following process: (1) Awareness, (2) Implementation, (3) Monitoring, and (4) Evaluation.

In addition to research and curriculum implementation within the school community, PNU Visayas also works with the local communities to enhance their environmental awareness. A series of workshops and conferences has been organized in schools and local communities as extension programmes on the integration of the SDGs, ESD, energy conservation, water conservation, biodiversity conservation, etc.

Garancho affirmed that the ISO 14001 certification strengthened the university’s capacity to consider environmental concerns in operation processes and procedures. Moreover, PNU Visayas developed the awareness of environmental protection and preservation among students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders. Finally, Garancho stressed that, as students enrolled in PNU Visayas are future educators, it is important for them to acquire the skills to share and transfer the knowledge to the local communities through extension programmes.

2) University of Indonesia

Speaker: Riri Fitri Sari, Chairperson of UI GreenMetric

Link to the presentation: https://www.dropbox.com/s/nbuu7wekl770y23/03%20Final-Prof.Riri%20Fitri%20Sari-WEEC-thailand-30102019%20LK.pdf?dl=0

Sari introduced UI GreenMetric as indicators for education and research in sustainability with the aim to enhance the implementation of the SDGs in campus communities. There are six criteria and indicators in the following areas:

- Setting and infrastructure
- Energy and climate change
- Waste
- Water
- Transportation
- Education and research.

She noted that all indicators are interconnected and aligned with the SDGs.

Sari then presented UI as an example of the implementation of the UI GreenMetric, showing how the University of Indonesia (UI) has performed, specifically in education for sustainable development. It performed particularly well in research funds dedicated to sustainability research and the number of courses related to sustainability. Moreover, she shared that the facilities and systems in UI that are related to the criteria of the UI GreenMetric. For example, UI has some energy saving systems, eco-friendly buildings and zero emission vehicles within the campus.
Finally, Sari concluded that many factors in university operations can contribute to the outcome of environmental assessments, and also education and learning. Such factors include courses, budget, events, research, policies, actions, etc.

3) Siam University

Speaker: Chanita Rukspollmuang, Vice President
Link to the presentation: https://www.dropbox.com/s/hdkofg0wzvm9ry0/04%20WEEC%20UNESCO%202019%20Chanita.pdf?dl=0

Rukspollmuang presented how Siam University (SU) promotes education and learning for sustainability through the UI GreenMetric. SU is the fifth largest private university in Thailand and it joined the UI GreenMetric World Ranking two years ago. Sustainability is one of the three pillars of SU and there are official policies and strategies set by the working committee for SU to be a sustainable university.

She further explained the reason of taking part in the UI GreenMetric World Ranking, commenting that the ranking methodology is relatable and fair. Firstly, environment, economy and equity are all considered in the criteria. Secondly, the UI GreenMetric takes into account the different campus settings of universities - it is divided into suburban, urban, rural, city center and high-rise building. Rukspollmuang stated that it is not fair to compare universities with different campus settings by the same standard measurement.

SU was ranked 168 out of 619 in the UI GreenMetric World Ranking in 2017. However, she stressed that taking part in the assessment is more than about the ranking. She perceives the assessment as a learning opportunity for SU itself to improve each year by revising its policies and courses. More importantly, changing mindsets is crucial as many people still do not understand what the SDGs are
and why they are important. Thus, it is a learning process from the individual level to the international level.

Figure 5: SU’s performances in the UI GreenMetric in 2017 and 2018 demonstrate the university’s improvement

Rukspollmuang gave examples of how SU has adapted and improved as a result of the ranking. For instance, SU underwent a curriculum revision and added courses with sustainability components, organized workshops with UNESCO and SEAMEO, and took part in building the Sustainable University Network of Thailand (SUN).

She concluded that “education” is the key word in the assessment process and that self-assessment is more important than competition with others. Therefore, the main goal of assessment is to address how to raise the awareness about sustainability at individual, campus, community, national and international levels.

4) TERI School of Advanced Studies

Speaker: Arun Kansal, Dean, Research and Relationships

Link to the presentation:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/h3vmp7eoxjgn6p2/05%20PPT_arun_AUA.pdf?dl=0

Kansal shared information on the Alternative University Appraisal (AUA) project. The project was initiated under the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net) under the auspices of UNU-IAS, a network of several HEIs in Asia-Pacific committed to working together to integrate sustainable development into postgraduate courses and curriculum.

AUA was developed and piloted in 2009-2012. It aimed to enhance the value and attractiveness of universities engaging in ESD and create learning and supporting community to improve their practices. Moreover, the goal of this project is developing an ‘Alternative University Peer Consultation System’ based on ESD. Kansal shared that they decided to use the word “appraisal” rather than the word “ranking” as they wanted to trigger universities to think of their own future scenarios more than focusing on competition with others.
Kansal explained the self-assessment framework called ‘Theme X’ which creates a set of indicators to assess institutions in various areas including governance, education, research and outreach. In addition, gender equality and adaptability to climate change are also considered. Based on the self-appraisal results, the framework sets an ideal alternative university model. Under the various appraisal areas, groups of universities share information and knowhow and can learn good practices from each other. Kansal shared his view that recognition should be given to the institutions who do well in ESD, and the AUA appraisal system can be used as a tool to achieve this.

Then, Kansal shared the outcomes of the AUA pilot programme with universities in India. A workshop was held to gather various opinions and perspectives of the universities. There were some concerns about AUA’s interdisciplinary nature that may lead to the dilution of disciplines. It was also suggested that AUA should include a competitive appraisal system as rankings do hold market value for universities.

Kansal concluded by stating that students are the most significant stakeholders in this system. Thus, their involvement and opinions matter a great deal. In addition, representatives from different departments of the universities should be included in the whole appraisal process.

### iii. Discussion

Miura introduced the commentators, who asked questions to the panelists about their experiences and provided further observations and insights on the higher education institutions’ environmental assessment practices, in terms of their contributions to education and learning for sustainability.

1) **Comments and questions from Janne Leino**

Janne Leino, Chief Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation Zhejiang Representative Office, briefly introduced his organization. The Hanns Seidel Foundation is a German political think tank working in around 60 countries. In China, the foundation works with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment and Ecology. It is one of the foreign advisors to the Chinese government in the
Leino asked the following questions to the panelists:

1. How does the university motivate the staff to take part in the assessment? This is not only restricted to heads of institutions and professors, but also including other campus staff, such as administrative and maintenance staff.

2. The assessment systems presented by the panelists mainly focused on instruction, research, and campus greening. However, the goal of ESD is to bring about change, particularly in people’s behaviours and actions. In view of this, do the assessments have indicators or follow-up mechanisms to demonstrate the changes that have been made or what has been learned?

The panelists gave the following responses:

- Garancho explained that PNU Visayas, as the Environment and Green Technology Hub, has been designated to focus on all aspects pertaining to the environment. Additionally, for the ISO 14001 system, the objectives were set based on the university’s functions, i.e. extension, research, and curriculum. At PNU Visayas, the staff goes through performance-based evaluations depending on their focus, which is one way to motivate them.

- In terms of following up on the changes made from the assessment process, Garancho explained that in ISO 14001, specific objectives and targets are set, and the university is focused on whether or not they are attained. Measurement tools are used for monitoring and evaluation of the targets.

- At the same time, PNU Visayas’s sole focus is not only on attaining targets; the university also focuses on the development of environmental literacy and advocacy as well.

- Sari shared that when the UI GreenMetric was established, there was much discussion on the terminology of ‘ranking’. She expressed how, in universities, rankings can serve as motivation for self-improvement, collaboration, and sharing. In UI, there are also other measures, for example, faculties receive funding based on how well they perform in certain indicators.

- Kansal shared his personal experience, observing that youth and students today are more conscious of sustainability issues than the older generation. Because of this, motivation of professors and staff is coming from the bottom up.

- Rukspollmuang stated that, when Siam University first took part in UI GreenMetric, only two or three people were involved. She expressed the importance of leadership and top-down management in making a new initiative successful as people are often apprehensive towards new tasks. After the first year of participation in the GreenMetric was successful, others came to understand and became more involved in the second year.
2) Comments and questions from Mario Tabucanon

Mario Tabucanon, Senior Visiting Professor, UNU-IAS, reiterated the three different types of assessments systems that the panelists had shared, which were: (a) ISO 14001, (b) UI GreenMetric, and (c) AUA. ISO 14001 is a systemic approach based on a generic management cycle. The UI GreenMetric is another type of approach that is based on key performance indicators (KPI), which is often used in industry and businesses. The third approach by AUA is self-imposed, developed on their own for universities to conduct self-assessments.

Tabucanon commented that the experiences of the aforementioned universities have shown that an institution may choose to apply any approach that is fitting. Universities can also use combined methodologies, as the approaches are reinforcing and not conflicting each other.

Specific questions were then asked to the panelists. Firstly, PNU Visayas was asked to elaborate on the learning, mechanisms, and process of involving stakeholders in the assessment. Garancho explained that the process of ISO 14001 consists of planning, checking, and evaluating. Consultations were held with the faculty, staff and students on the university’s environmental management system. Afterwards, the policies and guidelines were presented to both internal and external stakeholders.

As certification was given this past May 2019, the ISO process is still ongoing and will continue to be monitored on the PNU Visayas campus. Garancho shared that, with the process, the university has begun to understand and embrace the changes. They have also learned to adapt and consider whether or not it is applicable or effective—not only in terms of extension programmes, but also in revising the curriculum as well.

UI and SU were asked about how they transformed the KPI assessment into learning processes and improvement in the university. For UI, faculties do yearly reporting on the KPIs. Sari explained that the six indicators were developed so that they are simple enough to remember when planning and carrying out activities.
For the KPI assessment, evaluation is conducted and most faculties put the results into action by revising their practices. Lecturers and students are encouraged to work together to learn and conduct research, knowing that all their activities must be in line with what is evaluated. The practice is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches.

In addition, Sari also expressed that UI would like to see students come up with new activities and innovations, bringing new energy to the university.

For SU, Rukspollmuang stressed that the assessment process is more than a ranking—it is a whole-institution learning process. Students, staff and the surrounding community are all targets of the assessment and learning. SU established a committee to work on becoming a sustainable university. Students are part of the committee and they also learn about the assessment.

In addition, SU has revised its general education programme as a tool for learning, developed to include sustainable development and SDG-related courses, which are mandatory for all students. From the assessment as a learning process, all staff and students have been able to gain a clear understanding on sustainability and greening the campus. They also maintain good relationships with the surrounding community and the government. Rukspollmuang explained that the university utilizes the assessment process to learn from their practices in the past year and to improve on them in the following year.

Tabucanon inquired about the obstacles and challenges that have led to AUA not being mainstreamed as of yet, despite the fact that it has already been piloted by TERI and other universities. Kansal shared his observation that traditionally, ESD has been conducted and promoted by various departments of the university, and not fully supported by the institution as a whole. In addition, other conventional rankings and assessments are allocated much of the university’s data and resources. However, AUA is ready to be mainstreamed, and is expected to be taken forward by interested members of the ProSPER.Net community.

Tabucanon commented that AUA is a simple tool, consisting of yes/no questions and it is short. It serves to show the university’s strengths and weaknesses, and it indicates case studies in order for the university to further learn and improve on any particular aspects. He expressed that it is an interesting concept as it can be implemented fairly easily, it can support education and learning processes, and it can be revisited as needed.

3) Other comments and questions
Kansal then asked Garancho to share the prime driver that made PNU Visayas want to pursue the ISO 14001 certification. She responded that, as mentioned, PNU Visayas is the hub for environmental and green technology education, so there is a focus on the connection of education and learning and the environment. In view of this, the aforementioned should also be present in all of the campus operations, whether it is curriculum, research, extension, and general campus management. She shared that other campuses are also interested to pursue the EMS certification.

An audience member from the Ministry of Education of Japan asked a question to the panelists. From observing the general attitude of lecturers and staff of universities in her country, she noticed there is some aversion towards conventional university rankings. She inquired how green metrics and assessments differ from these general academic rankings.

Sari shared that from the 13 Japanese universities that participated, only 43 per cent renew the UI GreenMetric process throughout the years. She shared that it is different from other academic
rankings, not only in terms of the focus on ESD, but it is also a network of universities that share and learn with each other.

Rukspollmuang expressed that she doesn’t regard the green metric ranking as a competition. Similar to the network that Sari mentioned, there is also the Sustainable University Network (SUN) in Thailand with more than 30 member universities sharing best practices among each other. The UI GreenMetric also has its yearly event for sharing best practices among participating universities. Rukspollmuang stressed that it is more about self-improvement than competition.

Leino inquired about how governments can promote the movement of greening universities. He commented that, as mentioned, ranking is not always welcomed, so it is a challenge. Sari shared that in places that this movement is enforced by governments such as Iran, Colombia, and the Taiwan Province of China, there are many participating universities.

Rukspollmaung shared that the Thai government supports these activities, particularly as sustainability is a goal of the nation’s 20-year strategic plan. Similarly in India, Kansal explained that all universities must have at least one sustainability-focused subject, and the government has developed a comprehensive guideline for sustainable campuses.

iv. Closing

In closing, Miura commented that the session had been very thought-provoking as it explored many of the various dimensions of environmental assessment in higher education. She shared that UNESCO Bangkok would like to continue to further explore how we can consciously and explicitly bring out education and learning in these assessment processes. She invited those who may be interested to work together on this effort to contact UNESCO Bangkok.

Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi, Director, UNU-IAS, delivered the closing remark. She expressed her appreciation for the speakers, commentators, and UNESCO Bangkok, for sharing their interesting stories and experiences.

Yamaguchi shared that UNU has been certified under ISO 14001 since 2001. While it is difficult to acquire the certification, she stated that it is even more difficult to maintain. As there is an annual audit and periodical renewal of the certificate, motivation is very important for the institution.

Yamaguchi then shared her experience at the Tokyo Institute of Technology during the summer after the East Japan Great Earthquake in 2011. Universities and research institutions were requested by the Japanese government to reduce electricity and the university established the target of 25 per cent reduction. With three simple regulations—turning off lights, laptops, and air conditioning—the university was able to reduce its electricity consumption by 35 per cent. For transparency, the energy usage for each floor was displayed on the website and was effective in motivating the staff and students. By using simple methodologies and visualization, sustainable practices can be effectively implemented.

In addition, Yamaguchi emphasized the importance of motivating youth as was mentioned by several speakers. Finally, she expressed that the session showed brilliant results, in particular on how to motivate people to make changes for sustainability.
Panel Discussion
Education and Learning in and through Environmental Assessment
Experiences from Higher Education Institutions in Asia

On the occasion of the 10th World Environmental Education Congress
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Concept Note

As the world converges around efforts to move forward with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region are increasingly placing “greening the campus” high on their agenda as never before. Along with the rise of this aspiration, many institutions have also begun to introduce environmental assessment as a part of their administrative and operational strategies. Some implement it through international frameworks and tools such as ISO 14001, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), and UI GreenMetric while others develop their own indicators.

Regardless of the approach chosen, a crucial question from the perspective of education is if, and how, learning for environmental sustainability is triggered and enhanced for the whole campus community in the process of undertaking the assessment. Does environmental assessment facilitate and contribute to promoting campus-wide environmental education and learning? If so, what are some of the key aspects or issues that we need to be mindful of if we are to leverage environmental assessment as opportunities to promote education and learning for sustainability?

In order to explore the above questions, the present session will bring together panelists from four institutions that are/have been involved in environmental assessment in Asia – the University of Indonesia which hosts and leads the UI GreenMetric World University Ranking, Siam University which takes part in the UI GreenMetric, Philippine Normal University-Visayas which has been certified for ISO 14001 on environmental management this year, and the TERI School of Advanced Studies which implemented the Alternative University Appraisal initiated by ProSPER.Net: Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network hosted by UNU-IAS. Through the exchange of experiences and discussion on lessons learnt, the session aims to draw insights into how higher education may be able to contribute effectively to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through advancing the SDG4 on quality education and SDG 4.7 in particular.

Organizers: UNESCO Bangkok and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)

Date and Time: 4 November 2019: 15:00 – 16:30

Venue: Bhiraj Hall 2

Speakers and Facilitators
Glicerio Arlyn G. Garancho, Executive Director of the Philippine Normal University Visayas
Arun Kansal, Dean, Research and Relationships, TERI School of Advanced Studies, India
Janne Leino, Chief Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation Zhejiang Representative Office in China
Ushio Miura, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok  
Chanita Ruksppollmuang, Vice President, Siam University, Thailand  
Riri Fitri Sari, Chairperson of UI GreenMetric, University of Indonesia  
Mario Tabucanon, Senior Visiting Professor, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability  
Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi, Director, UNU-IAS

**Programme**

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<td>• Introduction to the session, Ushio Miura, UNESCO Bangkok</td>
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<td>15:05-15:45</td>
<td>Panel presentations</td>
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<td>• Gliceria Arlyn G. Garancho, Executive Director of the Philippine Normal University Visayas</td>
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<td>• Arun Kansal, Dean, Research and Relationships, TERI School of Advanced Studies, India</td>
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<td>15:45-16:25</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Questions and comments from commentators</td>
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<td>• Janne Leino, Chief Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation Zhejiang</td>
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<td>• Mario Tabucanon, Senior Visiting Professor, United Nations University</td>
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<td>Discussion by the four panelists in response to the questions from the commentators</td>
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<td>Questions and comments from the floor</td>
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<td>16:25-16:30</td>
<td>Closing</td>
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<td>• Closing comments, Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi, Director, UNU-IAS</td>
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