



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY



International Symposium on Green Growth and Global Environmental Change

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite **early career-researchers and policy practitioners**¹ from the member countries of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) (see here: <http://www.apn-gcr.org/member-countries/>) to submit papers for a symposium on *Green Growth and Global Environmental Change: Political Ideology, Political Economy and Policy Alternatives*.

The symposium will be organized by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) Tokyo, on **25th and 26th July 2014**. The symposium is supported by a grant from APN (<http://www.apn-gcr.org/>), under their CAPaBLE Programme and UNU-IAS. This support will help us cover travel and accommodation expenses for accepted participants.

KEY DATES

Deadline for application: **10th June 2014**

Notification of acceptance: **15th June 2014**

Full papers due: **15th July 2014**

¹ This includes researchers who have currently advanced to candidacy in their PhD programs or those who completed their PhDs not before January 1st 2009; and policy practitioners, policy advocates, broadly defined, including members of social movements, with less than five years of professional experience.

CONCEPT NOTE

The world is abuzz with “green growth.” A multitude of influential conferences, reports and policy prescriptions advocate and pursue this objective in policy consequential ways. The Rio+20 process posits a green economy, realized through green growth, as one of the foundations of the “future we want.” Amidst these endorsements, this symposium asks a basic question. What are the ideological commitments that rationalize this green pursuit? Adopting a critical stand, it interrogates these ideologies, their materialization and their political economy and explores alternatives from the vantage of advancing imperatives of greater fairness on a shared and finite planet.

Green growth enabled by a green economy boasts of a world of scientific insight, engineering sophistication and managerial smartness that purports to redress the accumulated harms and impending consequences of “old” industrialization. It encompasses strategies ranging from geo-engineering to myriad modest proposals that, collectively, may be referred to as an “efficiency strategies.” Through such instrumentalities, green growth promises to stem the environmental crisis and mitigate its consequences while addressing persistent challenges to the emancipation of human beings from destitution and disempowerment.

Green growth, the Secretary-General of the OECD declared, “means fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies” (OECD, 2012: 8). Another influential voice reflecting on the “green economy,” notes that it enables “growth, social progress and environmental stewardship” (UNDESA: 20011: v). This foundational emphasis on continued growth, as a prerequisite to politically acceptable options is situated within an acknowledgement of ecological limits, with the assertion that the “objective of the green economy is to ensure that those limits are not crossed” (UNDESA, 2011: vi, also see WCED, 1987).

Such assertions notwithstanding, the fact is that ecological limits have already been breached. Humanity’s “ecological footprint” exceeds the earth’s biocapacity and uses up stocks and sinks faster than the earth is able to replenish them (Global Footprint Network, 2012). Despite the overwhelming evidence of already breached limits, green growth advocates assert

a strategy of more growth based on greater efficiency and technological innovation. It presumes that productivity gains will negate overall increments in energy and material throughput necessitated by more growth. This strategy is not new and has long been recognized in the environmental literature as an underlying rationale of the “ecological modernization” (Mol and Spaargaren, 2000) approach that emerged in the 1970s. While greater productivity is on balance preferable to its opposite, because it enables doing more with less, it is a self-deception to think of it as an adequate response to the social and environmental challenges of greater fairness on a finite planet that confront us (e.g. Wilhite & Norgard, 2004; York & Rosa, 2003, and many others).

This symposium takes the considered position that greater efficiency (technical and economic) in the throughput of matter and energy is a necessary but insufficient condition for guiding energy and resource use policies in the present context. Sufficiency, along with efficiency, is an urgent necessity (e.g. Mathai & Parayil, 2012, among many others).

Against this evidence, what explains modern society’s abundant faith and investment in “green growth”? This symposium is an effort to answer that question. It sifts through the ideological commitments, policy choices and the resulting political economy that have shaped the contemporary world, and searches among them for narratives that rationalize an idea that in its essence was identified, accurately in our view, as an “impossibility theorem” (Daly, 1990). The symposium then trains its focus on ideological and policy innovations that offer creative alternatives for people and our planet.

The symposium will include presentations by leading scholars and practitioners in the field and presentations by early-career participants combined with extensive opportunities for discussion. Leading researchers and practitioners in the field invited to the symposium include:

1. Ricardo Abramovay, Professor, University of São Paulo, Brazil
2. Steffen Boehm, Professor and Director, Essex Sustainability Institute, Essex Business School, University of Essex , UK
3. John Byrne, Director and Distinguished Professor of Energy & Climate Policy, Centre for Energy and Environmental Policy, University of Delaware, USA

4. John Crowley, Team Leader for Global Environmental Change, Division of Ethics, Science and Society, UNESCO-Paris
5. Ulrich Hoffmann, Senior Trade Policy Adviser to the Director of the International Trade Division UNCTAD, Switzerland
6. Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, India
7. Larry Lohmann, The Corner House, UK
8. Birgit Mahnkopf, Professor of Political Economy, Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany
9. Juan Martinez-Alier, Professor, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
10. James Meadway, Senior Economist, New Economics Foundation, UK
11. Adrian Parr, Chair of Taft Faculty, Director Taft Research Centre, UNESCO Co-Chair of Water, Department of Sociology & School of Architecture & Interior Design, University of Cincinnati, USA
12. Anne Posthuma, Senior Researcher at the International Institute for Labour Studies, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland
13. Sun-jin Yun, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Seoul National University, Korea

(Participation by some of them is to be confirmed.)

APPLICATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Please include the following as part of your application:

- a) Abstract of the paper to be presented (250 words);
- b) Summary of research interests and/or engagement with relevant policy processes, policy advocacy and social movements (500 words)
- c) Curriculum vitae (4-pages max.)

Please email your applications by May 31st to: fueta@unu.edu

The selection criteria include:

- Fit between the applicant's research and/or policy engagement, broadly defined, and this project
- Potential to benefit from and contribute to the symposium and follow-up activities
- Balance of country representation among participants from the Asia-Pacific Network region.

We look forward to receiving your applications,

Manu V. Mathai, Research Fellow, UNU-IAS

Jose Puppim de Oliveira, Senior Research Fellow, UNU-IAS

Gareth Dale, Senior Lecturer, Brunel University, London