

A Brief Report of the ICLEI World Congress 2015 on 8-12 April 2015 in Seoul, R. Korea

Kuniyoshi Takeuchi on 11 April 2015

It was only a six hours visit to the ICLEI (International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives) World Congress 2015 from 10:30 to 16:30 on 11th April 2015 but got some information on their activities and the directions that they seem heading. They consider it is no longer the time of advocacy but of implementation, for which local initiative is the key. They seem thinking of the use of ISO on resilient cities and Ten Essentials and related indicators as instruments for improved practices. One of the ways of S&T sectors to influence policy making and practices of local governments would be through the ISO and the indicators that they are going to employ. At the same time, many cities seem to be seeking for the opportunities to get more direct advises from S&T experts.

1. In the plenary session “World of local action – anchoring sustainability in the post-2015 development agenda”, Patricia McCarney, Canada explained the city data collection activities of WCCD (World Council on City Data) and establishment of ISO37120 sustainable cities, ISO37121 resilient cities and smart cities in preparation based on such data.
2. Following the session, a signing ceremony was held for ICLEI to exchange MOUs with the WCCD (World Council on City Data) (Patricia McCarney, Canada), IUCN and UCLG (United Coalition of Local Governments). This would indicate the direction ICLEI heading, a strong aim to local initiatives with some set standards.
3. During a lunch break, I met Hironori Hamanaka, Chair of the board of trustees of ICLEI-Japan Committee and Takashi Oishi, its SG. They are planning collaboration with Future Earth-Japan and expressed their interest to collaborate with IRDR-Japan. They said Japan has not been very active on climate change mitigation but recently adaptation policy was declared by the government and cities started actions. They also said that ICLEI used to be mainly interested in environment, bio-diversity, climate mitigation, energy etc. but now in resilience and starts engaging in data and ISO. There are some cases of pooling academic experts for local consultation in Japan.
4. In a parallel session “C2: Cities at Risk: Reducing and responding to disasters and climate threats”, I met Sanjaya Bhatia (ISDR North Asia, Incheon) and Steve Gawler

(ICLEI Oceania, Jakarta). They presented that ISDR and ICLEI are promoting the New Ten Essentials for Resilience. They will produce final essentials (April), draft local indicators (July), pilot lists of local indicators (Sep-Oct), handbook for local government leaders (Dec) and the platform for campaign (Jan 2016). Some examples of Indonesian case were reported.

5. After the session, I briefly talked with Laura Kavanaugh (ICLEI, global coordinator of the resilient cities program) who said ICLEI has close relation with, in addition to UNISDR on 10 essentials approach, Urban climate change research network (Cynthia Rosenzweig, NASA, U Colombia and William Solecki) and produced the 2nd Assessment Report.

Unfortunately I could not meet Eilish O'Loughlin as she was very busy.