

Reaction Paper Makiko Kikuchi

In "climate and Health", Epstein discusses how climate affects the health status of human-beings. It was very interesting to read through the explanation about the mechanism of reemergence of infectious diseases that comprises social, ecological, and global levels. Though solutions are mentioned as surveillance systems, early-warning systems, alternative clean energy, and optimal development, the international community should not ignore the importance of radical improvement in tackling the global warming by reducing greenhouse gases emission.

In "Is global warming Harmful to Health", Epstein gives us a strong warning how the global climate change deteriorates- even has deteriorated - our health by showing several examples regarding vector-borne and water-borne diseases. He also reviews the solution consisting of three components, improved surveillance system with control and prevention, early-warning system, and tackling global warming itself. The most striking fact was that either floods or droughts, having happened more often recently because of the global warming-induced climate change, could exacerbate the vector/water-borne diseases.

In "Assessing Climate Stability", Epstein takes a step further to answer the question, "How do we judge if a system is unstable and prone to rapid changes in state?". Articulating various ways of analysis, he suggested "a group of parameters that can help assess systemic stability and propensity for change". Nevertheless, he did not miss to mention the more fundamental issues that the international community should explore every means to "reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases and help create the framework and incentives for doing to stabilize the climate and stimulate healthy and sustained economic growth". In fact, it was disappointing to know that U.S. Government has been reluctant to follow the international movement to the carbon-dioxide reduction, although the recent Pentagon study has elaborated that global security in oil, water, and food could be widely threatened by a rapid climate change.

In "Smoke and mirrors: deficiencies in disaster funding", the authors point out the downside which the international community tends to be more enthusiastic to donate for immediate disaster relief operations rather than a long-term development aiming disaster-avert nation building. "A new system - for responding to large scale disasters" was very impressive, comprising three concepts, utilizing fund-pooling system for sustainable support rather than relying on donation from an ad hoc appeal, increasing the accountability, and promoting vulnerability-averse development by "incorporat(ing) local knowledge and capacity for self protection". In fact, the affected countries might be overwhelmed by catastrophe of tsunami as well as by the humongous amount of donation, that they are expected to utilize effectively in spite of large loss of human resource. It is undoubtedly a time for the international community to assist to mitigate the impact of upcoming disaster with well considered developments in the light of vulnerability reduction.