

Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future – Topical Lunch Summary Report

Title: What is Climate Justice and What Are Its Implications?

Organizers: Ravi Kanbur

Attendees: Mark Milstein, Peter Hess, Margaret McCasland, Lindy Williams, Gerald Torres, John Finn, Andrew Waxman, Elizabeth Keokosky, Frank DiSalvo, Alireza Abbaspoarrad, Nina Chaopricha, Kim Weeden

Brief Summary:

This topical lunch on May 12 was a prelude to the Cornell-Oxford conference on May 24-25 on Climate Justice: Economics and Philosophy. Climate justice requires sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly. It thus takes us beyond the supposed neutrality of climate science. It brings together justice between generations and justice within generations. In particular, it requires that attempts to address justice between generations through various interventions designed to curb greenhouse emissions today, do not end up creating injustice in our time by hurting the currently poor and vulnerable. More generally, issues of distribution and justice are of paramount importance in any discourse on climate change. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) summit in September 2015, and the Conference of Parties (COP) in December 2015, brought climate change and its development impact, including climate justice, center stage in global discussions. I made the attached presentation to the Topical lunch. The subsequent discussion focused on how best to manage possible negative impacts on the poor of the present generation of policies to mitigate climate change. The question of resources for adaptation to the climate change that is already “baked in” to the atmosphere was also discussed. Of particular interest in terms of participants was the presence of a number of people from the broader Ithaca community who were working on advocacy for changing policies towards climate change.