

Will Climate Change Dominate Global Innovation?

Chair: Prof. Erik Baark

The 20th Century witnessed the birth of path breaking global innovations that have transformed economies and international relations, such as containerization that led to a global logistic revolution and the proliferation of transnational supply chains. Similarly, the information and communications technology revolution gave us the Internet and brought deep-seated changes in business, social relations and personal entertainment. However, climate change may present challenges for societies and international relations that will be even more significant for global society in the 21st Century, and demand new concerted global innovation initiatives. At present, it appears that the core of such innovation will concern energy production and utilization, but no doubt other innovative technologies and social innovation may be crucial too.

Notwithstanding the Paris Agreement reached in December 2015 to limit the greenhouse gas emissions, and private initiatives like the Breakthrough Energy Coalition, the global transition to a low-carbon economy hardly appears to be moving forward. Moreover, a wide range of innovations will be required to deal with the consequences of climate change (floods, draught, sea-level rise, etc.), and these areas seem to receive even less attention from governments and the private sector. Will such global innovation become important for international politics and relations? If not, why not?