Population and the Human Dimensions of Climate Change

The role of population in the causes and consequences of climate change needs to be better understood. While much of the public debate focuses on population numbers and rates of growth, human populations are in fact complex systems and much of their complexity is involved in the way they interact and are coupled with ecosystems.

This seminar explores the ways in which population dynamics influence both greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change on human and managed ecosystems. The presentation draws from a study I have just completed on population and climate change in Indonesia; data from other countries are also included. I conclude with a discussion of some policy implications of the analysis: the role population-related policies should play in a country’s mitigation and adaptation strategies, and the role social scientists should play in national and international climate debates.