

International Symposium for Sustainable Science
Future Earth: a new platform promoting science for society.

November 21st, 2015

At Yasuda Auditorium, the University of Tokyo
Takashi ONISHI, President, Science Council of Japan

I am honored to be here with you this morning. It is the Future Earth Week. We have a series of meetings and symposia starting from Friday, last week, the opening ceremony of Science Agora in Tokyo. Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, we will have Governing Council of Future Earth as a closing event of the Future Earth Week.

We are delighted to have an intensive discussion on Future Earth in Japan. However, some of the key persons, I am afraid, have been attending the most meetings without taking days off in this best season of the year.

I am Takashi Onishi, president of Science Council of Japan, and also the representative of Japan consortium for Future Earth. A piece of good news on Future Earth I had this week is that our new science and technology 5 year plan still keeps a term of Future Earth in it. The Science and Technology Basic Plan for the next Five Years will start from April next year. We are finalizing the draft.

Now, the draft has a sentence that as future earth shows, research activities jointly conducted with various stakeholders are important. Simply, it stresses that Transdisciplinary Studies should be promoted to implement the implications of the scientific research on Global Environmental Problems.

In this regard, today's symposium is particularly important, because it focuses on multi-stakeholders aspect of sustainability sciences. I hope that we will be able to discuss how to involve various stakeholders in the activities to promote sustainable development.

Let me take this opportunity to introduce the concern of Science Council of Japan about the Future Earth. We started our engagement with Future Earth more than three years ago. Since then, we have been promoting this research activities with our colleagues in Japan and overseas. We have a scientific committee for Future Earth, consortium. We also send our members to scientific committee of Future earth at international level. Also, the engagement committee, and even the governing council have members from Japan. Besides these, more importantly in terms of the promotion of research activities, we have a part of international secretariat of Future Earth and Asian Center of Future Earth in Japan. Therefore, Science Council of Japan truly expects that the Future Earth research activities in Japan will make a great progress by having this week of Future Earth.

Looking at People's behavior in this country, I think many people recognize the importance of the global environmental problems, notably that of energy issue. Japanese people were concerned about the reduction

of the consumption of fossil fuel. However, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and Nuclear Power Plant accident in Fukushima caused by it changed the situation. Since all the nuclear power plants in this country stopped their operation, we had to rely on thermal power plants instead. In this situation, Science Council of Japan has been suggesting that we have to promote renewable energy, such as solar, wind and biomass energy to reduce the consumption of fossil fuel and also not to increase the share of the nuclear power. This is not easy, but we are thinking this energy policy is one of the most important themes we should tackle in Future earth activities.

In this regard, the Future Earth in Japan must get involved in energy policy. And also it is related to Disaster Risk Reduction policies as well. Because, the natural disaster triggered a man-made disaster of nuclear power plant. Therefore, Future Earth should cover not only trans-disciplinarity but also inter-disciplinarity, the collaboration with Disaster Risk Reduction for instance. We should promote joint research program among different scientific research fields.

Finally, I would like to mention that Future Earth has also an aspect of the reorganization of Global Environmental research programs so far having been done, such as IGBP, DIVASITAS, IHDP. It is important to reorganize researchers and research organizations which were involved in those programs for new activities of Future Earth. For this purpose, we are expecting the leadership of ICSU and ISSC or United Nations organizations. This will be one of the subjects GC meeting of Future Earth held, on Sunday and Monday. I hope the week will be successful in this regard too.

I am closing my words expecting fruitful discussions can produce fruitful results.