

Statement from President of Science Council of Japan

Freedom of movement among scientists is indispensable for progress of science and technology

On 31 January, the International Council for Science (ICSU) expressed its concern that the Executive Order issued by President of the United States on 27 January, which is effectively banning entry to the United States for citizens of seven countries, is inappropriately broad in its scope and unfairly targets individuals based on their origins, and that especially the Order will have negative effects on free movement of scientists worldwide. Science Council of Japan (SCJ) is supportive of the statement, and expects that some measures to correct the negative aspects of the Order be taken in the United States.

SCJ thinks that the free movement of scientists in the world is essential for the scientific development of Japan as well as of the world. Therefore, SCJ takes this opportunity to reaffirm that advancement of research activities based on the independent activities of scientists and its prerequisite of the free movement among scientists are indispensable to realise a more affluent human society.

In the current world of deepening globalisation, the progress in science and technology cannot be obtained solely by one country. This is why Charter of Science Council of Japan (Statement issued on 8 April, 2008) states that “Science Council of Japan shall actively liaise with domestic as well as overseas academic societies, and shall contribute to the expansion and deepening of national and international cooperative activities that are aimed at creative development of science.” In this spirit, SCJ pursues international scientific activities on various fronts by extensively cooperating and interacting with overseas scientific organisations. Vigorous participations in activities of international scientific organisations and hosting international conferences, among other things, are some illustrative examples, and through these undertakings, we have contributed to the advancement of science and technology both in Japan and in the world. In this regard, the free movement of scientists is obviously the prerequisite to such international cooperation and interaction. Thus, if the free movement of scientists stagnate and research exchange be impeded due to entry restrictions implemented by some countries, the progress in science and technology *per se* will be hindered accordingly. In order to nurture future generations of scientists, free movement of students, including international students, should also be secured.

Restrictions on the free movement of scientists from specific countries or regions are *inter alia* unreasonable. ICSU, the world's largest international scientific organisation that represents the world scientific community, also advocates the Principle of Universality of Science in its Statutes (Statute 5), and in order to realise this, it opposes discrimination based on such factors as ethnic origin, religion, citizenship, language, political or other opinion, among others, and promotes equitable opportunities for access to science and its benefits.

As the interaction among scientists has long been conducive to the well-being of human society through the advancement of science and technology, SCJ will continue to observe the aforementioned principles, and urges that the principles should be universally applied to society.

Note: SCJ is the representative organisation for Japan's scientists, and has been affiliated with ICSU as a National Member.

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