

THE SCIENCE COUNCIL OF JAPAN

The Science Council of Japan (SCJ) was established in January 1949. Although under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, it operates independently of the government.

The SCJ, which represents some 790,000 scientists, consists of roughly 2,000 members with 210 serving as council members.

Its primary functions are, first, to make policy recommendations and deliberate on scientific issues; second, to coordinate the scientific community; third, to promote international exchanges in the scientific field; and fourth, to communicate with society at large.

The SCJ organization consists of a General Assembly, an executive (comprising a President and three Vice-Presidents), a Managing Committee, three divisions (Humanities, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences and Engineering), five administrative committees (Planning, Nominating, Scientists, Science and Society, and International Affairs), thirty committees covering different academic fields, a series of ad hoc committees devoted to specific issues, and an Executive Office.

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Inquiries may be directed to:

Science Council of Japan

7-22-34 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8555 Japan

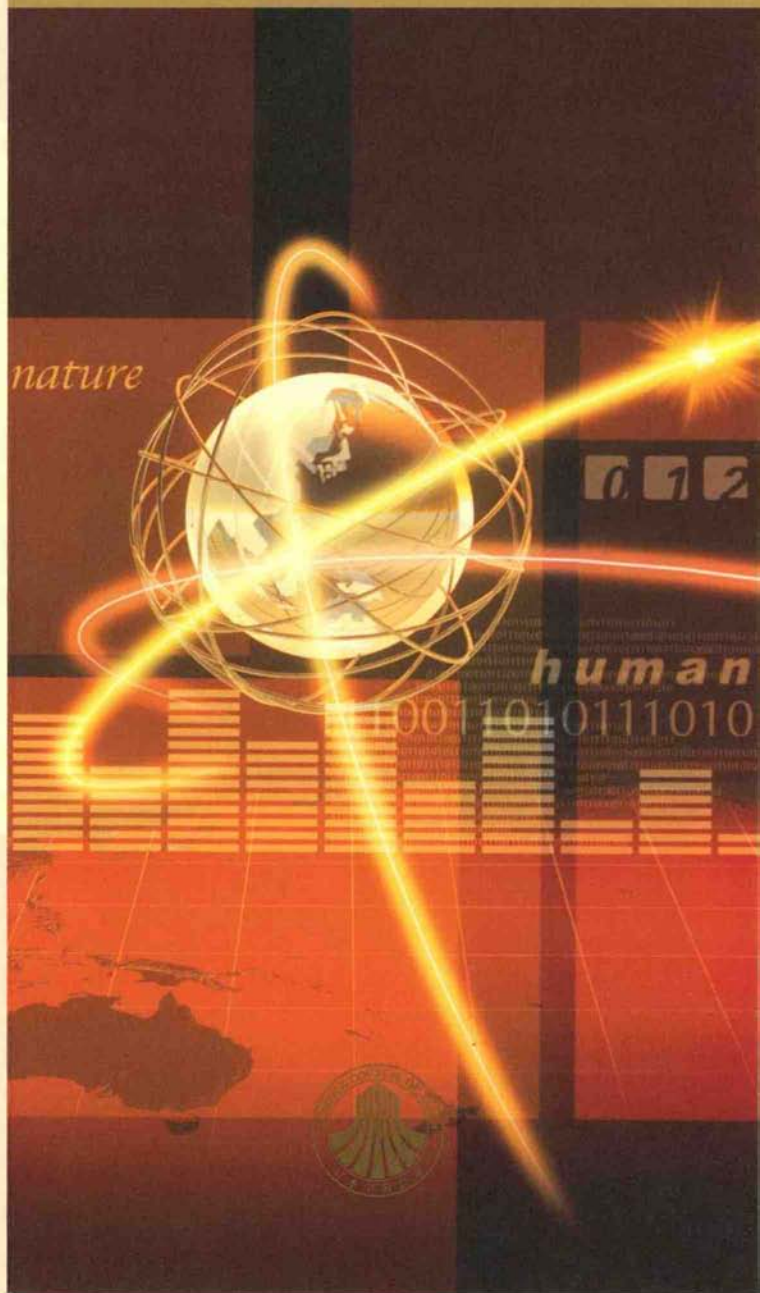
Tel: 81-3-3403-1906

Fax: 81-3-3403-6224

URL: <http://www.scj.go.jp>

E-mail: info@scj.go.jp

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I

MAKING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND DELIBERATING ON SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

The SCJ provides policymakers with reliable expert input and advice from a scientist's standpoint. Its recommendations have led to the implementation of numerous policies, including the establishment of major research institutes.

The SCJ, which submits some eighty recommendations and reports during each of its three-year terms, has close ties with the Japanese government. The Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy attends the SCJ General Assembly to speak on the government's policy directions in the science and technology field; the SCJ's President is an ex officio member of the Cabinet Office's Council for Science and Technology Policy; and the SCJ executive holds regular meetings with the members of that council.



Recommendations being presented to the Prime Minister

II

COORDINATING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

The SCJ functions as the hub of the Japanese scientific community. As such it aggregates the views of scholars in both the humanities and the natural sciences; and it coordinates activities with various research organizations, as well as over 1,200 scientific societies with the status of SCJ academic partners.

To foster communication between scientists working in different areas of Japan and promote the advancement of learning at the local level, moreover, the SCJ has set up regional councils in seven geographical blocks covering the whole of country.

In addition, the SCJ promotes the exchange of information by publishing a monthly magazine and an e-mail newsletter for members of the scientific community. It also endeavors to improve the research environment for young scholars, champions gender equality in the scientific field, and draws up a code of conduct for scientists.



The SCJ General Assembly

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES IN THE SCIENTIFIC FIELD

I. CONVENING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

For the past several years the SCJ has hosted the Science Council of Japan Conference on Sustainability, an annual conference devoted to such themes as "Energy and Sustainability Science", "Asian Megacities and Global Sustainability", and "Dynamism and Uncertainty in Asia". Each year's conference produces a set of recommendations on the role of scientists.

Since 1953, moreover, the SCJ has, in partnership with Japanese scientific societies, sponsored the most important international conferences on scientific subjects that take place each year in Japan.



International conference in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress

2. SCIENCE COUNCIL OF ASIA (SCA)

The SCJ played the leading role in laying the groundwork for the launch of the Science Council of Asia (SCA), an international academic organization

founded in 2000. The SCA, whose membership comprises academies and other scientific bodies from eleven Asian nations, promotes discussion and joint research on the advancement of knowledge in the region and on approaches to cooperation within it. The SCJ serves as the SCA's secretariat and as such organizes its annual conference in conjunction with the host nation.



The 5th Science Council of Asia Conference, Hanoi, 2005

3. COOPERATION WITH ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Academies of sciences in the G8 countries have agreed to develop a framework for formulating joint recommendations pertaining to items on the agenda of each year's G8 summit. In June 2005, in advance of the July summit in Gleneagles, Britain, they issued a joint statement on climate change and development in Africa, influencing the course of the leaders' discussions.

The SCJ has organized bilateral academic exchange

programs every year since 1983. These are designed to facilitate the exchange of views and information on all aspects of scientific research with scientists from other countries, and thereby to strengthen ties of cooperation. Recent examples include a workshop on sensors and sensor systems held jointly with the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and Science Council of Japan-Royal Society workshop on potential health, environmental and societal impacts of nanotechnologies.

4. ACTIVITIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS

The SCJ works closely with many international academic organizations to promote the advancement of knowledge around the world. It is a member of forty-eight such organizations, including the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP). The SCJ's President served as President of the ICSU between 1999 and 2002, and SCJ played host to the IAP Conference of the World's Scientific Academies in 2000 at Tokyo.

The SCJ is also involved in various international scientific cooperation programs on issues of global concern, looking after planning and coordination within Japan and liaising on research matters. For example, it organizes an annual symposium on the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP).

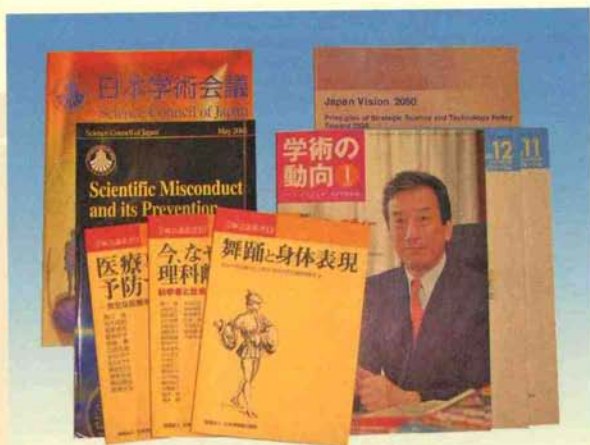
Each year the SCJ sends some ninety delegates to general meetings and board meetings of such international academic bodies and to conferences on international scientific cooperation programs.

IV

COMMUNICATING
WITH SOCIETY AT LARGE

The SCJ organizes lectures and symposiums where scientific findings are shared with the general public. With the cooperation of universities and other organizations in different parts of Japan, it also arranges community development forums designed to nurture minds capable of contributing to regional growth. In a single three-year term, the SCJ sponsors a total of some five hundred lectures and symposiums nationwide. Of late it has been focusing its energies particularly on developing scientific aptitude among young people, to which end it is committed to organizing such events as so-called science cafes.

The SCJ issues various publications as well.



SCJ publications