

Summary of Academy of Science Presidents' Meeting (APM)

Date: 18:30 - 20:00, 5th October, 2020

Venue: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Organizer: Science Council of Japan (SCJ)

Participants: Presidents and Representatives from Academia Sinica, Academy of Sciences Malaysia, Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Australian Academy of Science, Brazilian Academy of Sciences, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, French Academy of Sciences, German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, Indonesian Academy of Sciences, InterAcademy Partnership, International Science Council, International Sociological Association, The Korean Academy of Science and Technology, Mexican Academy of Sciences, Mongolian Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, The National Academy of Sciences Republic of Korea, Polish Academy of Sciences, The Royal Society, The Royal Society of Canada, Science Council of Japan, and Slovak Academy of Sciences (in alphabetical order). In total 27 participants from 23 academies attended.

Co-chairs: Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society

Professor KAJITA Takaaki, President of Science Council of Japan

Theme: "Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19"

Humanity faces a self-inflicted climate crisis of existential proportions. As countries around the world seek to restore economic growth and tackle societal challenges following Covid-19, the world faces a critical choice about whether to double down on old, resource-intensive models of production and consumption, or whether to seize this window of opportunity to help promote a shift to an environmentally and socially sustainable pathway. Science, including both the technical solutions it offers and their effective communication to decision-makers, is key to realizing this shift and thus creating a sustainable and resilient future for all.

Summary of discussion:

Prof. KAJITA Takaaki, President of Science Council of Japan, made the following welcome remarks:

- Civilizations have certainly developed humans and societies. However, civilization is now putting us in an extremely difficult position, such as the COVID-19 epidemic because of its significant influenceable power. Science has

played a central role in the development of civilization and it will be science that will save us from this global crisis.

Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society, gave the following opening remarks:

- Though human beings have always had pandemics, the reason why pandemics today are more serious is that we are much more globally interconnected, socially and economically. We should bring countries together to fight this pandemic.
- We should not waste a crisis. Both economic recovery and public health recovery should be confronted in ways that benefit us all by tackling other equally critical challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

Statements of the academies that participated were as follows:

- We need a sustainability science that really thoroughly integrates natural and human and social sciences in solution. We need to reexamine the SDG targets and to identify priorities that will support an equitable global socioeconomic recovery from COVID 19, as well as continued progress toward the SDGs.
- There is a very important opportunity for us to get engaged as science academies; we do have choices. Societies can either return to the old pathways of high-carbon economies or choose low-carbon socioeconomic paths to protect and promote human health and enhance the prospect for recovery compatible with the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Education plays a crucial role in a knowledge-based society. It is essential that we even in times of crisis, enable schools and universities to fulfill their educational mandate that needs educational systems to be more resilient.
- We have certain common themes, but also very different and diverse situations. We need to really hear local voices; they don't always add up because we have such great diversity among us.
- We have to put all our effort not only toward developing new medicines, but toward the social sciences and others that contribute, and figure out how these various strands of science are interlinked to tackle long-term problems.
- We should not forget that our recovery from COVID-19 will only work with the recoveries in the three major networks: Africa, Asia, and South America. The regional networks we have within IAP and ISC become more and more valuable.
- For post-COVID society, we need new paradigms of a reformulated economic policy based on scientific evidence to reduce inequality, protect biodiversity, water, and land for a truly green economy. We must assure that no one is left

behind in education, and that the benefits of science are accessible to all.

- We are not out of the woods yet. And even when we overcome this COVID-19, there will be many other future crises. One way to become better prepared for them is to develop a scientists' network of fast response to work together internationally, and to prevent politics from overriding science.
- Now, more than ever, is the time to adopt the concept of One Health, which is the intersection of human and animal health issues, as well as environmental factors such as climate change. The concept will allow us to be more resilient and better prepared, together.
- It is a serious role for academies to enable trust in science to fight against misinformation. To promote and develop a scientifically literate society is our responsibility as scientists. Trusting science is a prerequisite to develop scientific proof.

Sir Venki Ramakrishnan summarized by emphasizing the importance of international collaboration to a sustainable recovery, noting the importance of an integrative approach and of recognizing local differences, and the fact that scientists cannot tackle this crisis on their own; it is necessary to take the public and politicians with us. Finally, he pointed out that scientists need to make the case that science is a way forward and it is for the benefit of everyone, quoting that every crisis is an opportunity that we should learn from.

The discussions at the APM were lively and informative. They adequately addressed our academies' tasks and served as an opportunity to pave the way for the future possibilities of multilateral collaborations.