

Conference Outline

Shinichi Shogenji

Chair of the Organizing Committee

Professor, Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences,
Nagoya University

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11th March 2011, scientific knowledge has been needed for overcoming a variety of challenges in tackling arduous tasks for recovery. To meet such social demands, Science Council of Japan (SCJ) announced five recommendations to the government in April 2012, and also has continued to deepen its consideration on how reconstruction assist should be from academic point of view.

In addition, the earthquake can be viewed as a serious threat to the sustainability of our society in many aspects such as production, transportation, community life, and regional culture. In this context, the earthquake has required us to check our social system in terms of vulnerability of risk countermeasure.

The theme of this year's conference is "Wisdom for Recovery from Disasters and Risk Control". To make the conference fruitful, exchanging scientific knowledge internationally and drawing lessons from historical experiences are highly important. In order to provide deep insights regarding the earthquake and its aftermath, it is also necessary to facilitate scientific communication among natural, cultural, and social sciences. Accordingly, the conference this year will be made up of the following three sessions.

Session 1

The session seeks to examine the social and economic impacts of huge natural disasters. Catastrophic natural disasters have profound impacts on society and economy including a large number of human casualties and damages to physical capital. From the perspectives of social sciences, speakers of this session discuss how the social and economic systems dealt with catastrophic natural disasters that occurred not only in Japan but also in other parts of the world, including the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

The session consists of three parts. The first part reviews insights from social scientific approaches to assess the social and economic impacts of catastrophic natural disasters. The second part discusses activities for economic recovery and the effective governance of those activities, based on experiences from the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. The third part presents lessons from the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 that caused the most severe economic damages among Japan's recorded natural disasters.

Session 2

This session is designed to provide information on problems in and solutions for the food system and public health in natural disasters. In Tohoku region, the primary sector of the

economy including agriculture and fisheries suffered significant damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Reconstruction of agriculture and fisheries as a sustainable community-food-system with consideration from the angles of sociology, community development, economics, and agricultural and fisheries sciences is in high demand in the region.

The session also deals with effects of disasters on public health. Important roles of public health in disasters are control of potential communicable disease outbreaks after disasters and making decisions regarding management of the health sector's activities in order to reduce the impacts of disasters on the health of populations.

Session 3

The human beings have been suffering from natural disasters since the ancient ages and trying to create the sustainable environment. During this endless process, the so-called cultural landscapes have been created. This session will focus on the restoration planning, techniques and strategies, and will also discuss perspectives towards the sustainability based on cultural landscapes.

The session is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the efforts and the risk managements to large-scale earthquake disaster mitigation in the world. The second part considers historical meaning of the restoration and its effects on cultural landscapes, and discusses the restoration process of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The third part focuses on the sustainability, as the key concept of the conference, in the context of cultural landscapes.