

Title: Establishing a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development: Emerging opportunities for international collaboration on SDG's (USJI Week Event 1)

Date: Tuesday, February 23rd, 2016 (10:30am-12:00pm)

Host: U.S.-Japan Research Institute, Embassy of Japan, START

Support: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)/ Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) Washington DC Office

Venue: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 2001 L St., NW, Suite 1050, Washington DC 20036

Attendees: XX

Panel Participants:

Moderator:

Hassan Virji, Executive Director, START

Speakers:

Fumiko Kasuga, Visiting Professor, Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science, The University of Tokyo, Global Hub Director, Japan, Future Earth Secretariat

Jon Padgham, Capacity Building Lead, Colorado, Future Earth Secretariat

Maria Uhle, Program Director for International Activities, Directorate for Geosciences, National Science Foundation (NSF)

Abstract:

The following components were presented.

- The cooperation between US and Japan is essential to tackle global environmental challenges, such as Climate change, and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Future Earth is a major international research platform providing the knowledge and support to accelerate our transformation to a sustainable world. Future Earth focuses on development of Knowledge-Action Networks (KANs) on grand challenges related to SDGs.
- Future Earth Global Hub Japan collaborates with many major universities and organizations in Japan and in Asia; and is working closely with START and Future Earth Global Hub in Colorado to implement a program on capacity building of regional systems related to KANs.
- Future Earth Global Hub Colorado and START are close and direct partners on capacity building for Future Earth.
- As funding mechanism, Belmont Forum was established as an alliance of research funding agencies to foster global environmental change research.

In the discussion, the following components were discussed.

- Regarding community involvement, within Japan there is a lot of work on the Satoyama and Satoumi concept aimed at enabling society to be in harmony with nature through conservation and advancement of socio-ecologically productive landscapes and seascapes. In adaptation to climate change, community based adaptation is an urgent imperative.
- Actions on global change and sustainability challenges must engage people of all ages.
- Private sector involvement is essential. Belmont Forum is trying to develop collaboration with some charitable foundations.
- It is important for research communities to learn from various communities such as local communities and the private sector.

Summary:

Katsuichi Uchida, USJI President:

USJI is operated by major nine universities in Japan to aim for promoting for policy related researches between Japan and US. USJI holds seminars regarding collaboration between US and Japan in USJI week twice in a year. Paris Agreement was adopted in last December. And Future Earth was launched as a research platform. We hold this seminar with the Embassy of Japan and START. I hope that this seminar is meaningful for you.

Virji:

START is an organization focusing on global environmental change. My purpose is here to encourage us all to discuss modalities to enhance collaboration between Japanese and US institutions on attaining sustainable development goals. I have the task to moderate this seminar today. I request an opening remark from Mr. Kanji Yamanouchi, Minister of Economic Affairs, the Embassy of Japan.

Kanji Yamanouchi, Minister of Economic Affairs, Embassy of Japan:

I would like to mention this seminar is useful from three points; one is US – Japan cooperation, one is a development issue such as Sustainable Development Goals, and one is a global environmental issue.

2015 was the great year in this decade for the relation between US and Japan. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited US last April. In the Japan –US Summit Meeting, he and Barack H. Obama, President of US shared the view that the importance of global cooperation through Japan and US to address climate change. A development issue and an environmental issue were also put in the cooperation between US and Japan as new frontier cooperation in addition to security issue and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Moreover, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been set in last September. Paris Agreement was adopted in last December. 2015 is a year for agreement. 2016 is a year to start implementation. The implementation is very tough. We have to find a right path to achieve both development and environment. No single country can do it. We need to cooperate with each other. And we also need to cooperation with private sector such as academia and business sector.

Finally I would like to talk about Japanese contribution. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe released “Actions for Cool Earth 2.0 (ACE 2.0)” to support to developing countries. We spend about 13 billion dollar for these issues. We think that this seminar is very useful for government to have insight to achieve these targets.

Virji:

Next, I invite a live video message from Dr. Paul Shrivastava, Executive Director, Future Earth and Dr. Josh Tewksbury, Global Hub Director, Colorado, Future Earth Secretariat.

Paul Shrivastava, Executive Director, Future Earth and Josh Tewksbury, Global Hub Director, Colorado, Future Earth Secretariat (live message):

Future Earth is a major international research platform providing the knowledge and support to accelerate our transformation to a sustainable world, which is supported by UN group and International Council for Science (ICSU). Future Earth has five Global Hubs, in Montreal, Paris, Tokyo, Stockholm and Colorado, and in addition to these, we have regional centers. Future Earth promotes Knowledge-Action Networks (KANs) related to SDGs. There are two points; one is to enhance collaboration between natural science and social science, and the other is to involve stakeholders. Last year we had Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement, and SDGs. In this year, we have Habitat III. Through these processes, the global environmental issues engage among global leaders, business leaders, and civil societies leaders to achieve sustainable development goals. In order to make meaningful contributions in this regards, Future Earth will foster collaboration; Future Earth has just begun its work.

Virji:

I now request a presentation from Prof. Fumiko Kasuga. She is Visiting Professor of the University of Tokyo, and Future Earth Global Hub Director – Japan.

Kasuga:

Future Earth sets eight challenges which all contribute to SDGs. Moreover, Future Earth developed eight KANs to aim to generate the multifaceted knowledge needed to inform solutions for complex societal issues. Four KANs directly link with challenges and other four KANs are broader. Regarding structure of Future Earth, Japan hosts a Secretariat Global Hub and a Secretariat Regional Center of Future Earth. Paul and Josh are establishing a regional center in Africa now.

Future Earth Secretariat in Japan is operated by Japan Consortium in which 17 organizations such as universities take part. Future Earth meetings were held in Japan last November. “Project on Sustainability Transformation beyond 2015” was operated by Keio University. The target of project is to integrate national and local level actions to implement SDGs. Including other demonstrated projects by Tohoku University, Kyushu University, and the University of Tokyo, there are many universities in Japan that have already started research programs that contribute to or related to Future Earth.

Virji:

I now invite a presentation from Dr. Jon Padgham. He is Capacity Building Lead, Colorado, Future Earth Secretariat, and also a staff of START.

Padgham:

I work for Future Earth Colorado and START. Future Earth and START have a partnership regarding capacity building that advances the SDGs. Achieving progress on SDGs requires new kinds of integration and new alliances. Future Earth helps to advance this effort through emphasis on knowledge co-design and co-production that engages various interfaces of research, policy, civil society, and private sector. It is important to broaden engagement activities through action-oriented research that involves co-design, innovative communications, research shaping and synthesis.

Taking on the knowledge action networks, Colorado Hub is leading on three of the key functions of Future Earth: capacity building, research enabling, and communication. Regarding capacity building, START and Future Earth's Colorado hub collaborate with the Japan hub. START has an experience of capacity building for nearly quarter century. The key principles of capacity building are capacity mobilization as an essential component of broader capacity development, ownership shaped by internal demands, and so on. In capacity building there are three level; individual level, organization level, and systems level. Systems level capacity development is our ultimate goal but it requires every level capacity building. Focus of such capacity building will be on individual, organizational as well as regional systems capacity enhancement and mobilization in relation to the KANs

Virji:

I request presentation from Dr. Maria Uhle. She is Program Director for International Activities and Directorate for Geosciences, National Science Foundation. She is a member of Belmont Forum, which is an alliance of funding agencies.

Uhle:

While 17 SDGs are defined, science cannot provide answer for all the challenges posed by SDGs, and neither is technology. Hence, it is important to co-design actions and to foster collaboration between people and organizations and agencies.. It is necessary to mobilize various ways to implement solutions, including financial resources, solutions-oriented research, and partnerships. Basic science and mission-oriented agencies all have their niche. In the US, NSF works with NASA and USAID, and also other agencies of the US Global Change Research Program. We realize that many challenges are beyond the boarder of US. We need an international partnership to find solutions. With Japan, we work with JST, JSPS, MOEJ, JAXA and so on.

Beyond the bilateral partnerships, Belmont Forum was established in 2009 to foster global environmental change research. One of the characteristics of Belmont Forum is to have effective international coordination mechanisms. All countries can join in this alliance. In Belmont Forum, collaborative research actions require co-design methodologies and solutions-oriented research. One of upcoming research calls is on the

food-water-energy nexus in the urban context. Activities of Belmont Forum contribute to activities of Future Earth such as KANs.

Virji:

Sustainable development is the big challenge for the society. Now we have SDGs, Paris Agreement and agreement of biodiversity. We have international scientific programs and funding mechanisms. If we develop knowledge, we must figure out strategies for communicating such knowledge to solve societal challenges related to sustainable development. Hence, it is important to foster communities of practice consisting of academia, practitioners and decision-policy makers. The big outcome of Future Earth will be new knowledge and networks to utilize such knowledge.

I now request comments and questions from audience.

Audience 1:

I am a senior advisor for sustainability and commute to Germany. KANs are useful, but how do we implement concrete actions based on KANs? From the experience of International alliance on Knowledge, Learning, and Societal Change (KLASICA), how do we fill a gap between knowledge and actions?

Audience 2:

I am a retired government person. How might we foster better engagement of government and business communities?

Audience 3:

I used to work in UNESCO. How do we let local communities engage in these global issues? How does Future Earth approach to land degradation?

Audience 4:

I am a university student. Do we have any initiatives to involve local population and local government?

Audience 5:

I am a CEO of private company. How can private sector work with these global environment issues?

Audience 6:

I am a high school student. Is there any support for young generation such as student regarding environmental affairs?

Audience 7:

I work on an organization to focus on fertilizer. How can we mobilize this movement for changing the world?

Virji:

Thank you for the comments and questions. Your questions concern challenges of effective action at local-regional-global scales; need to proactively engage research-academia, private and civil sectors, and decision-maker communities, include people from the public utility sectors, local sectors and national sectors. Land degradation issue is arguably very important in relation to livelihoods and goods and services. Need for sustainable development education for all levels and ages people has been noted as a challenge, as also is mobilizing private sector.

Kasuga:

I would like to address to local community and generation issues. Regarding community involvement, there is a concept of Satoyama and Satoumi. This concept is to realize societies in harmony with nature through conservation and advancement of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes. Furthermore, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Japan (ICLEI Japan) takes part in Japan consortium. Regarding generation issue, it is important to be considered in every topic. Everybody might be a teacher in some fields. We should keep learning.

Padgham:

We learned a lot of things through addressing to adaptation to climate change in these decades. Furthermore, community-based adaptation is effective in local scale. For example, START involves a program of 'Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR),' which aims to improve the understanding of climate change in semi-arid areas in Africa and Asia.

Uhle:

I would like to talk from a funding standpoint. Belmont Forum has not collaborated with private sector until now, but this does not say that we won't do that. We are trying to develop partnership with some foundations. In the Belmont Forum, we require stakeholder engagement. I think that Future Earth can help us make a connection with private sector. Belmont Forum has a good connection to each country. Future Earth and Belmont Forum can work together on the point of capacity building of researchers, which needs to talk with stakeholders. We would like to work the co-design of food, energy and water nexus with Future Earth and START.

Virji: (summarizing)

We have addressed very important grand challenges and noted the importance of engaging and communicating with all stakeholders. Fostering resilience in our society is essential for sustainable development.

I sincerely thank the Embassy of Japan and USJI for co-hosting this seminar. And thank you all for your active participation.