

The 18th Conference of Science Council of Asia (SCA)
“Role of Science for Society: Strategies towards SDGs in Asia”
Declaration

“Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was unanimously adopted at the UN General Assembly in 2015. Under a common principle of “no one left behind” among the nearly 7.4 billion world population, the 2030 Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to achieve within 15 years from 2016.

About 200 scientists from research institutions and universities, including representatives of SCA’s member academies, participated in the 18th Tokyo Conference of the Science Council of Asia held between 5 and 7 December 2018 and intensively discussed how science and technology could contribute to attain the SDGs. Different perspectives on various issues and rich approaches were presented, taking into account Asia’s current situation. The SCA 2018 conference participants reached a common understanding that to attain the SDGs, the initiatives taken in Asia, which accounts for more than half of the world’s population, are critical and that science and technology play a significant role.

The SCA hereby declares that it will promote five strategies in which science and technology can play an important role towards achieving SDGs in the region.

1. Realizing A Society in Which Everyone Has Access to Equal Opportunities and Plays an Active Role

For sustainable development “with no one left behind,” society must enable everyone to have access to equal opportunities and to play an active role. In the 2018 SCA conference, topics related to fostering female leaders in higher education, issues on poverty, employing and educating the people with disabilities, and invigorating rural areas with information technology were discussed. It was recognized that support to vulnerable people is necessary to provide them with equal opportunities to access better educational, employment, information and public services.

SCA will contribute to realizing a society in which everyone has access to equal social opportunities and plays an active role.

2. Creating Sustainable Cities with Resilient Infrastructure

Urbanization in Asia is progressing at a very rapid pace. According to the UN, it is predicted that the share of urban population in Asia will increase from 48% in 2014 to 64% in 2050. The issues and challenges faced by swelling Asian cities are diverse, and this is evident in topics presented in the Conference: (a) building resilient mega cities to prepare them for major earthquakes, (b) risk reduction from natural disasters and global warming, (c) urban planning to reconstruct from wars, and (d) securing a living space that is both comfortable and sustainable. Participants recognize that creating cities with resilient infrastructure will improve readiness for natural disasters and adaptation to global warming.

SCA will support the creation of resilient and sustainable cities to prepare for natural disasters and global warming.

3. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

For SDGs in Asia, the sustainable use of natural resources, particularly the conservation and appropriate use of terrestrial resources like diverse forest fauna, flora and microorganisms as well as aquatic resources is crucial for development. The SCA participants acknowledge that improving agricultural technologies and securing healthy water are vital in order to ensure that “no one is left behind” in benefiting from a safe and stable water supply.

SCA will exert efforts in laying out systems to protect, conserve and sustainably use the diverse but limited natural resources in Asia.

4. Realizing Healthy Longevity Society in Asia

In Asia, the rise in infectious diseases and increasing chronic diseases, the construction of health care systems and residential environments suitable to a rapidly aging society and changing lifestyles, and the promotion of basic researches on people’s longevity are becoming major concerns. It is important to facilitate health and medical care systems and residential environments appropriate to the conditions in the Asian countries to make people, including children, women, the elderly and those with disability, lead a healthy life.

SCA will help support efforts in constructing accessible health and medical care systems so that “no one will be left behind.”

5. Strengthening Communities of Scientists in Asia for Contributing to Social Needs

The scientists who participated in this conference discussed various issues and concerns that beset Asian countries. The participants recognize the importance of sharing each country's experiences with others. It is beneficial for scientists from different countries to build networks and to undertake joint projects in the areas of environment, energy, and disaster prevention. Furthermore, it is important for SCA to build communication channels with international organizations such as ISC-ROAP and Future Earth to strengthen the capacity of science practitioners to influence the policy making process.

SCA will promote the strengthening of scientific communities in Asia for more effective contribution in responding to social needs.