

1997 Human and Social Sciences Research Results Presentation

Date: July 17, 1997

Place: International Conference Hall of the United Nations University in Tokyo

The results of Foundation-supported research in the field of the human and social sciences were announced July 17, 1997 at the International Conference Hall of the United Nations University. The ceremony was opened by Jiro Furumoto, chairman of the Foundation, followed by a speech by Professor Akio Morishima of the law department at Sophia University. Professor Morishima, also a member of the selection committee, introduced the Foundation's research assistance program for the human and social sciences. The five grant recipients announced the results of their respective research projects.



Professor Akio Morishima introduces the Foundation's research assistance program for the human and social sciences.



The Effectiveness of Laws in Protecting Biological Diversity
Professor Toyohiro Nomura, Faculty of Law, Gakushuin University

In recent years, the legal framework regarding the conservation of biological diversity has shifted from a focus on individual organisms separate from their environment to overall ecosystems as an integral whole together with the species they contain. Professor Nomura's project evaluated international environmental agreements such as the United Nations Environmental Program's Treaty on Biological Diversity, the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the Ramsar Convention, which was established with the objective of protecting wetlands and waterfowl habitats. The project also compared 1992 Japanese legislation that protects animals and plants in danger of extinction to previous Japanese environmental laws. Professor Nomura found that, for international and domestic treaties to function efficiently, the following four elements were necessary: 1) adequate funding and technology transfers, 2) cooperation between economically advanced and developing nations, 3) the establishment of clear standards and guidelines, and 4) public participation in the selection process for protected species.



Timing the Introduction of Climate Change Prevention Policies
Professor Akihiro Amano, School of Policy Studies, Kwansai Gakuin University

(Proxy) Tsuneyuki Morita, Global Warming Response Team, National Institute for Environmental Studies
Policies to prevent global warming must promote both the development of alternative energy technologies as well as the reduction of fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions. Both goals involve numerous problems and will be very expensive to achieve. The objective of this project was to determine the desirable direction of climate change policies. The researchers developed a quantitative model linking climate change and economic activities to examine the ideal timing for policy implementation. Currently, there are two main opinion camps. One, supported by many U.S. researchers, favors prolonging the implementation of climate change policies as far into the future as possible to avoid affecting present economic conditions. The second favors implementing the policies as soon as possible to avoid burdening future generations. The quantitative models used in this project determined that it would be inappropriate to

prolong the implementation of climate change policies for as long as possible.



Evaluation and Proposals for Recycling PET Bottles
Professor Yasoi Yasuda, Institute of Socioeconomic Planning,
University of Tsukuba
Shungo Fukuda, Masters Program of Environmental Studies,
University of Tsukuba

This project sought to determine ideal recycling methods for polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and the equitable distribution of associated costs. Using social cost benefit analysis methods, research was conducted into costs related to PET bottle recycling systems during 1993 and 1994 in eastern Japan. Although the Law for Recycling of Containers and Packaging was implemented in April 1997, many local governments have yet to implement the legislation because of the collection and transportation costs involved. According to this project's follow-up studies, to implement this law while distributing costs fairly, it will be necessary to 1) set mandatory recycling regulations that will result in a steady volume of PET bottles to be recycled, and 2) increase the amount of public subsidies.



Developing an Environmental Security System in East Asia:
Cross-Border Acid Rain Problems and Technology Transfers
Professor Tsuyoshi Hiromatsu, Graduate School of Arts and
Sciences, University of Tokyo

The environmental problems of the People's Republic of China (PRC) have an immense impact on the whole of East Asia, and Japan in particular must squarely face this problem. As the problem of cross-border acid rain is worsening, this project endeavored to measure the potential economic benefits of cooperation between Japan and the PRC to establish numerical targets for reducing sulfur emissions in the future. Air pollution from sulfur emissions is currently severe in the PRC, but at present cross-border acid rain is not a big problem in Japan. However, Professor Hiromatsu advises that Japan take advance measures before a severe problem develops. His study suggests that, from the viewpoint of economic efficiency, 1) a Sino-Japanese cooperative effort should be formed based on technology transfers from Japan, and 2) the two countries should consider conducting quantitative analysis of acid rain damage.



Recent Trends in Japanese Views on Environmental and
Health Risks
Professor Hirotada Hirose, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Tokyo
Women's Christian University

Professor Hirose argues that nations and cultures differ in the way they regard risk. His project involved an international comparison based on data from researchers in the United States and France on attitudes toward such risks as crime, terrorism, illicit drugs, HIV infection, and environmental changes in 1992 and 1993. Data collected in Japan seems to indicate that people believe their society is coming to hold greater risks. Compared with surveys taken up to 1993, a survey of Tokyo residents in July 1995, after the occurrences of the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the fatal subway gassing incident, indicated that people were much more conscious of risks in their lives. Although the factors which led to this result are not clear, Professor Hirose believes that it is important to assess how Japanese society is currently preparing to face greater risks.