



24 July 2018

Professor Takashi Onishi
President of the Science Council of Japan

cc:

Professor Keisuke Hanaki, Vice-President in charge of international activities

Professor Akio Komorida, Chairperson Section 1 (the Humanities and Social Sciences)

Professor Yasuhiko Saito, University Research Center, Nihon University
Executive committee member, International Social Science Council.

Dear Professor Takashi Onishi

The International Social Science Council values deeply the membership of the Science Council of Japan, and the opportunity this has afforded us for increased communication and closer co-operation to foster the development of science via individual international and institutional international exchange.

In the light of our shared vision to promote cutting-edge science to secure effective and equitable solutions to some of the most urgent problems of facing the world in the 21st Century, we note with concern the June 2015 notice from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for national universities to reduce humanities and social science courses (hereafter referred to as HSS).

We wish to add our support to the Science Council of Japan in the Council's efforts to promote and strengthen HSS. We strongly endorse the Statement of the Executive Board of the Science Council of Japan, released on July 23, 2015, emphasizing the importance of HSS and expressing great concern for the future of HSS in Japan.

The ISSC is an international, membership-based NGO and the primary body representing the social (incl. economic and behavioural) sciences at an international level. Through our members and programmes, the ISSC reaches hundreds of thousands of individual social scientists working across a wide range of disciplines and representing all parts of the world.

Resources invested in HSS play an important role in critically thinking about and assessing the human condition and for the understanding, foresight and governance of contemporary societies. We believe that diminishing HSS studies will weaken academic excellence of the scholarly tradition of Japan.

Innovations arising from HSS studies and from multiple disciplinary scientific research are critical to solving global priority problems. In this light we wish to highlight the recent International symposium on social transformations in Japan, a collaboration hosted by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) between JST-ISSC-NRF, at the United Nations University in Tokyo on 29 January 2015. The event was supported by the Science Council of Japan to encourage Japanese social scientists and humanities scholars to participate more actively in the global networks and activities of the Transformations to Sustainability Programme and Future Earth.

At the ISSC's World Social Science Forum in Durban South Africa, 13-16 September 2015, the third in our series of global fora, the three global science councils associated to UNESCO (CIPSH, ISSC and ICSU) will be launching the International Year of Global Understanding. This is a strong signal of the need for an integrated approach among the sciences and the humanities to mobilise scientific evidence to support decision-making that promotes sustainability.

The possibility of holding the 4th World Social Science Forum in Japan will help strengthen the presence and relevance of the social sciences in Japan and provide rich opportunities for international scientific collaboration, especially with the scientific community throughout Asia.

In this context, please let me know if the ISSC can assist you in any way, to preserve and reinforce the HSS studies and research in Japan.

With best regards



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