

**Partial Support for the 1999 Open Meeting of the Human
Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Research
Community (APN 99006)**

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Bangladesh, PR China, Fiji, India, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam

Introduction/Background

An increasing number of researchers are interested in the human causes and impacts of global environmental change, as well as recognizing that local and regional scales are critical for their studies. In response to this interest, the International Scientific Planning Committee (ISPC) guided the organization of an international Open Meeting in the Shonan Village of Japan in June, 1999. The meeting follows the successful international meetings of members of the research community held at Duke University in 1995 and at IIASA in 1997. The 1999 Open Meeting aimed to promote exchanges of information on current research and teaching and to encourage networking and community building in this field.

Outline of activities conducted

The meeting was held on June 24, 25 and 26, 1999, co-sponsored by IGES, the Japanese Environment Agency, and the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN). Other sponsors and supporters included: International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP), US National Science Foundation (NSF), and Science Council of Japan (SCJ). It ended successfully with a record number of more than 300 participants from 41 countries, and 180 presentations being made.

The program started with an Opening Ceremony, followed by six sessions, and concluded with the Closing Session held on the third day. Each session consisted of two parts: a Plenary Talk, followed by seven or eight parallel sessions. (Except in the fourth Session, where a Poster Session was held instead of a Plenary Talk.)

Each Plenary Talk consisted of a keynote speech on one of the major themes of the meeting, made by a leading scholar of the field, followed a prepared commentary. The themes of the Plenary Sessions were: 1. Land Use and Land Cover Change; 2. Demographic Change and the Environment; 3. Decision-making Processes in Response to Global Environmental Change; 4. Conflict and the Environment; and 5. Valuation of Ecosystem Services.

A total of 47 parallel sessions were held in eight rooms in Shonan Village Center and Lofos Shonan during the three days of the 99 Open Meeting. Each session comprised two to four presentations on recent research results, and 172 presentations were made in total. There was active discussion among the speakers and with the audience. Themes of the parallel sessions other than the five themes of the Plenary Sessions included: Industrial Transformation, Climate Change and Risk Management, Public Perception/Attitudes/Behavior, Integrated Assessment, Vulnerability and Impact Assessment, El Nino, Institutionalizing Science in Global Environmental Policy, Carbon Management Post-Kyoto, Urbanization, Health, Business and Trade.

Throughout the meeting, posters by eleven authors were exhibited in the lobby of Shonan Village Center, and the authors had a chance to explain their posters on the afternoon of the

second day. A computer demonstration was also conducted at this time. There was a large audience in the lobby during this period, and the authors of each poster answered questions and discussed their work with the audience.

The Closing Session was chaired by Dr. Jill Jaeger, a co-chair of the ISPC. Speeches were given by Prof. Uno Svedin of the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research, and by Dr Eckart Ehlers, the Chair of the Scientific Committee of the IHDP. After the speeches, the chair solicited evaluations of the meeting from the audience, and there was an interesting and useful discussion. The meeting ended with a closing speech by Dr. Shuzo Nishioka, the other co-chair of the ISPC.

Outcomes/Products

The book of abstracts were published and a copy was distributed to all participants at the meeting. Its content is posted at the web site of IGES at <http://www.iges.or.jp>. The publication of the book of reports is scheduled for January 2000. Its content will also be posted at the IGES web site.

Future directions/follow-up work

The result of this Open Meeting was reported at meetings of IHDP and START, and received very good evaluations. In both meetings, it was proposed to the organizers to continue holding similar Open Meetings in the future.

At the Open Meeting this year, it seems that the following points were shown as the direction for future meetings:

- There is an increasing demand for human social dimensional research from the area of policy-making.
- Research results in the area of human dimensions have been accumulated, and networks of researchers of the field is being made.
- Researchers in the IHDP programs are taking the leadership, and the IHDP programs has become the core of the human dimensional research. The tie between the IHDP and the Open Meeting needs to be strengthened in the future.
- As shown in the increase in the number of participants from developing countries, the research capacity of developing countries are increasing, which should be supported further by cooperation from industrialized countries.
- It has become essential for the policy-makers to rely on research that integrate environmental elements of the region. For this, there should be more collaboration with groups like IGBP and WCRP, and supports from APN/IAI/ENRICH should be sought.

Considering these points, the following decisions were made for the next Open Meeting:

1. The next meeting will be hosted by a developing country in the Southern hemisphere. It is planned to be hosted by Brazilian authorities with support from IAI/CIESIN in the autumn of 2001. Members of the International Scientific Planning Committee have already been selected.
2. To strengthen ties with IHDP, the Secretary General of IHDP was selected as the Co-Chair of the ISPC.
3. APN is expected to cover the traveling expense of researchers from developing countries for the next Open Meeting.

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