

Joint Declaration of Fukushima Symposium Participants

JSPE

To the victims of the East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and those who have suffered damage from the accident at the TEPCO Fukushima Nuclear Reactor #1! To our fellow Japanese and fellow citizens of the world!

Here in the city of Fukushima, which still now lives under the threat of radioactive pollution, in March 2012, almost a year to the day since the earthquake and nuclear accident, we the members of five organizations of professional economists have convened this joint meeting. We have done so out of our desire to recover our original conviction that Social science is not only a matter of treating abstract models but also springs from the travail and concerns of real, living people.

On our first day, we heard the appeals of the mayor of a local city, of an activist of farmers' movement battling with radiation damage, of a musician launching a new citizens' movement, and from scholars acting on the basis of their local ties. Having done so, we have renewed our understanding that initiatives for reconstruction are emerging from the residents and local governments of affected regions, scholars with local ties, and citizens elsewhere acting in solidarity with them. However, there were also statements by the Fukushima residents in attendance that the trust among them in science and scientists was being lost. We take these points with utmost seriousness.

This morning, we welcomed Professor Hirowatari Seigo, former President of the Japan Science Council, and he was joined by representatives of four of our organizations in a discussion of how social scientists ought to be engaged with the issues raised by this unprecedented disaster. We were unanimous in agreeing that social science has the duty to strive for the sustainability of local livelihoods and the natural environment, and to contribute to the formulation of recovery policies and an economic system that respects residents' local autonomy and sovereignty over issues affecting their daily life and livelihood. We also affirmed that for this purpose, the further development and deepening of social science is essential.

In the afternoon, thanks to the presence of Suzuki Hiroshi, who has devoted himself to establishing Fukushima Prefecture's Vision for Reconstruction; of Shimizu Shuji, who organized a group from Fukushima Prefecture and elsewhere for a study of conditions at Chernobyl; and of Miranda Schreurs, who has played a major role in reestablishing the policy of denuclearization in Germany, we saw clearly how local movements link up with global movements.

Through our two days of discussion, we have recognized the following 3 points as urgent tasks in dealing with the earthquake and nuclear accident:

1. achieving a reconstruction policy based on local residents that safeguards local self-government and autonomy
2. clarifying responsibility for the nuclear accident and the accompanying radiation, and providing prompt and fair compensation of victims, in particular sparing no expense to safeguard the health of children, on whom the future depends

3. moving toward a regional policy and environmental/energy policy based on safety of life and livelihood, in particular moving rapidly away from sources of electric power that rely on highly dangerous atomic energy, and engaging with the task of reconstructing the basis of the regional economy that accompanies this shift

We believe that the pursuit of these urgent tasks is connected to the following 3 broader and longer-term challenges:

1. constructing a sustainable economic system that sets an appropriate public framework for the profit-driven market economy
2. reconstructing local government and national sovereignty in terms other than that of control of localities and domination of their residents through policies set by the central government
3. building up a moral sense of mutual cooperation and solidarity at the regional, national and global levels

In the belief that the urgent and longer-term tasks described above demand the further development and deepening of Japanese social science, we pledge to fulfill our responsibility as scholars by carrying out our research activities in solidarity with the victims of the earthquake and nuclear accident, who are striving amid their sufferings to overcome the difficulties they face.

March 25, 2012 Fukushima Symposium on the Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster, in Unanimity

Note: This symposium was organized by the joint committee of the following four academic associations, The Japan Society of Political Economy/The Japan Association of Economic Geographers/The Japan Association for Regional Economic Studies/The Institute for Fundamental Political Economy, and supported by the following academic institutions, Political Economy and Economic History Society/The Union of National Economic Association of Japan/Fukushima Future Center for Regional Revitalization/Fukushima University.