

Report on the United Nations High-Level  
Political Forum 2020: Japan's Role in  
Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic  
and Achievement of the SDGs

September 30, 2020

## Panel Discussion

Exploring synergies between actions on SDGs and efforts to address climate change,  
biodiversity and disaster prevention, with advanced efforts from Japan

United Nations University, Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability  
YAMAGUCHI Shinobu



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# HLPF2020

## Events that UNU participated

### ① Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) special event

- Date: July 8 and 15
- Organizers: UNESCO, UNU-IAS etc.

### ② Online meeting to support the UN “Decade of Action”

- Date: July 9 and 10
- Organizer: Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) with support from Rockefeller Foundation and Columbia University

### ③ Managing “Stranded” Assets Risks and Opportunities

- Date: July 10
- Organizers: UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) in Ghana, UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Germany, UNU-IAS

### ④ The Satoyama Initiative for Societies in Harmony with Nature: An Inclusive Approach for Communities, Landscapes and Seascapes

- Date: July 16
- Organizers: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Ministry of the Environment Japan, Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNU-IAS



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## ① Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) special event

Organizers: UNDESA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNU-IAS etc

- Introduced impacts of COVID-19 on higher education
- Discussed the restructuring of higher education for sustainable development and recovery from COVID-19
- UNU-IAS's Message: Presented a survey on COVID-19 responses by universities participating in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Project/Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research (ProSPER.Net).

## ② Online meeting to support the UN “Decade of Action”

Organizer: Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) with support from Rockefeller Foundation and Columbia University

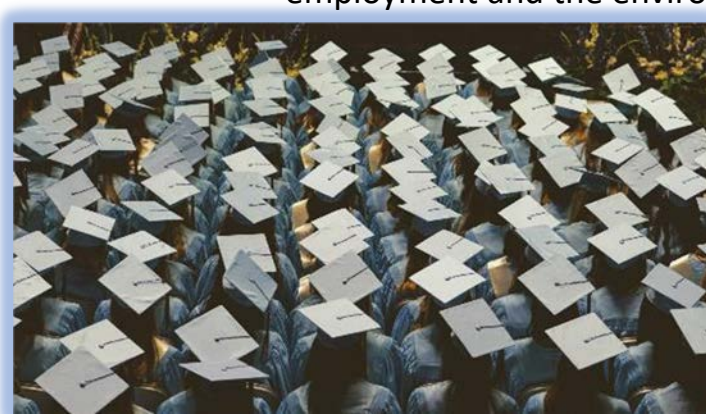
- Participated by UN Secretary-General Guterres, Professor Jeffery Sachs, and more than 200 university presidents and leaders of UN agencies from over 65 countries
- Concerns expressed that the expansion of COVID-19 would affect particularly vulnerable populations and undo progress made to date towards the SDGs. The role of universities has become even more important.
- UNU-IAS's message:
  - ✓ It is important to break down silos between sectors to build sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies, and to incorporate long-term environmental policies into economic recovery policies.
  - ✓ Academia need to take the lead in evidence-based policy making and educating future generations for green recovery, taking into consideration interconnectedness of communicable diseases, the economy, employment and the environment.



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### ③ Managing “Stranded” Assets Risks and Opportunities

Organizers: UNU-INRA, UNU-EHS, UNU-IAS with support from UNDESA and UNECA

#### UNU-INRA HLPF 2020 SIDE EVENT

## Managing “Stranded” Assets Risks and Opportunities

July 10, 2020 | 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm EDT



His Excellency Shinjiro  
Koizumi  
Minister for Environment  
- Japan



Dr. Fatima Denton  
Director - UNU-INRA,



Dr. Zita Sebesvari  
Director - UNU-EHS



Professor Shinobu Yume  
Yamuguchi  
Director - UNU IAS



Chair  
Dr. Jean Paul Adam  
Director - UN ECA  
Technology, Climate  
Change and Natural  
Resources Management



Keynote Speaker  
Osagyefuo Amoatia  
Ofori Panin Okyenhene  
King of Akyem  
Abuakwa of Ghana



Dr. James Murombedzi  
Coordinator - UN ECA  
(ACPC)



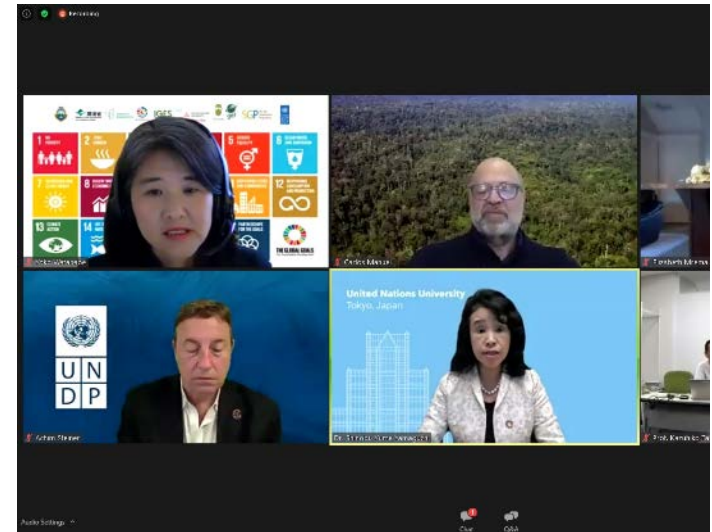
Dr. Minoru Takada  
Team Lead - UN DESA,

- Discussed the socio-economic impacts of Africa's transition away from fossil fuels and toward a "decarbonized economy," as well as resource diversification and sustainable development in Africa.
- Minister Koizumi's message: Japan will not support developing countries to build coal-fired power plants and instead support decarbonization. Decarbonization should be viewed as a means to bring social and economic value, not as a cost.
- UNU-IAS's Message:
  - ✓ Achievement of goals under Paris Agreement requires incorporating policies that contribute to the achievement of SDGs, such as decarbonization, biodiversity conservation, poverty eradication, and gender equality, into the green recovery process.
  - ✓ In Africa where population and demand for energy are expected to grow, it is important to promote investment in renewable energy from a long-term and SDG perspective to increase the social and economic value of the region.

#### ④ The Satoyama Initiative for Societies in Harmony with Nature: An Inclusive Approach for Communities, Landscapes and Seascapes

Organizers: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Ministry of the Environment Japan, Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UNU-IAS

- Discussed how Satoyama Initiative and landscape approach can contribute to recovery from COVID-19
- UNU-IAS's message:
  - ✓ Conducted over 200 case studies through 10 years of activities under the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative
  - ✓ Collected and disseminated knowledge on the conservation of biodiversity and the socio-economic benefits of the landscape approach to the world through IPSI
  - ✓ Will contribute to the implementation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework.



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# UNU-IAS's contribution to strengthening SDG synergies

- Developing strategies and implementing organizational reform to scale up environmental conservation and economic and social impacts by enhancing synergies across all UNU-IAS programmes and through multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- Began working with the Ministry of Environment Japan to develop a mechanism to incorporate impact assessment relevant to all SDG goals into the PDCA cycle for government projects.
- Outreaching the knowledge produced from UNU-IAS programmes and impact assessments on the SDGs for the discussion on the monitoring and evaluation systems of the Paris Agreement and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.
- Contributing to development of policy frameworks to strengthen synergies among the SDGs through participation in the GOJ's SDG Promotion Headquarters and SDG Promotion Roundtable.
- Established the United Nations University SDG Universities Platform (SDG-UP) in August 2020. Aiming to enhance the presence of Japanese universities in the international community by strengthening collaboration among Japanese universities centered around the SDGs and by working with universities and stakeholders that promote the SDGs.