

Intervention by Prof. Kazuhiko TAKEUCHI, President of IGES

High-level Political Forum “Protecting the Planet and Building Resilience”

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Thank you for inviting me to discuss “Protecting the Planet and Building Resilience.” This theme is timely, considering that COVID-19 stems from increasingly unsustainable interactions with natural systems, intensified by rapid globalization, which exposes humanity to a cascade of risks. But we can mitigate these risks... by re-establishing a harmonious relationship with nature. Here are some examples from my country.

Since 2010, Japan has helped to implement the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI). IPSI has facilitated dozens of local community initiatives worldwide in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS). They exemplify how we can benefit from nature’s various goods and services, while nurturing traditions.

More recently, Japan has begun focusing more broadly on an approach we call the “circulating and ecological sphere” (CES). CES calls for decentralized, integrated management of resources at appropriate geographical scales. It has three visions: decarbonized society, resource circulating society, and society in harmony with nature. CES is helping local governments in Japan, and beyond, to localize the SDGs and thus re-establish connections between people and nature.

Also critical to harnessing nature’s multiple benefits, while living within planetary boundaries, are multi-level, nested systems of governance. Through collaboration between levels of government, resources can be more effectively managed. This principle can also be applied to integrating international processes, for example aligning with the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, and the SDGs. Indeed, this is what Japan is in the process of doing.

Co-existing harmoniously with nature is fundamental to sustainable and resilient recovery from adversity. These are some of the approaches we consider to be leading in the right direction, and we hope to learn additional insights from other countries. In that way, we expect not only to “build back better”, but to “move forward together”.

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