

Future Earth: for Sustainable Development in Asia

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Future Earth is a global research platform aiming to provide integrated knowledge to support transformations to a sustainable world, by collaboration across scientific disciplines and by active interaction with and engagement of social partners. The main themes of Future Earth are Dynamic Planet, Global Sustainable Development and Transformations towards Sustainability.

In Global Environmental Change (GEC) programmes on earth observation, environmental monitoring and analysis of human societies, current and predicted situation of the Earth have been demonstrated. Future Earth, which is carrying over supporting roles for those activities, has identified 8 major challenges for global sustainability to be tackled by year 2025 as Future Earth Visions. These include, in brief, Food-Water-Energy Nexus, Decarbonization, Natural Assets, Healthy Cities, Rural Sustainability, Health under Climate Change, Sustainable Consumption and Production, and Governance Systems for Social Resilience.

At the past Science Council of Asia Conferences, Future Earth has been taken up as major topics. In 2013, at the 13th Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, there was a panel discussion on Future Earth. In 2014, the theme of the 14th Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was Future Earth: Research for Global Sustainability and Holistic Understanding of Sustainable Development in Asia. At those occasions, participants were discussing actively on how to promote Future Earth in Asia and on the roles of science and scientists for sustainable development in Asia through contributing to Future Earth.

In May 2015, the Future Earth permanent Secretariat started/commenced its full operation. One of 5 Global Hubs and one of 4 Regional Centers are located in Asia. In November, Future Earth major meetings of Science and Engagement Committees and the Governing Council were held in Tokyo, Japan, together with several public events in Tokyo and in Kyoto. In the Tokyo meeting, Future Earth research and implementation plan was outlined and the initial set of Knowledge-Action-Networks (KANs) was identified to serve as platforms for promoting research and stakeholder engagement. During this period, the Asian Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was established. The contribution of Future Earth to Sustainable Development Goals was one of major topics of the year.

In this Session, recent topics related to Future Earth will be introduced by the Secretariat, the Asian challenges and perspectives of Future Earth will be discussed by RAC members, and research examples will be presented by Core Projects members in Asian countries. In-depth dialog and suggestions are expected to be exchanged with the participants for better understanding on Future Earth, on its benefits to Asia and how scientists from the region can contribute towards developing Future Earth as a thriving research community in Asia.