



IAC News No.126

Dr. Kimura's Hopes as the Senior Director of the International Activities Center

I Makoto Kimura was appointed Senior Director of the International Activities Center in August last year. Until the end of March, I taught at the Department of Civil and Earth Resources Engineering as part of the Graduate School of Engineering at Kyoto University, but I retired early and will begin a new challenge in May. Moving on from being a university faculty member, I will work full-time at Bond Engineering, a construction company responsible for the maintenance and management of civil engineering structures, not as a consultant or technical advisor but as a director of the private-sector company. I will help educate the next generation on new ways of working.



Photo by Ryo Kusumoto

Makoto Kimura

(Senior Director of the International Activities Center)

I have spent the last 45 years straight contributing to research, education, and society at Kyoto University. Since 1993, I have been involved in a JICA project to build a university in Kenya, Africa. I have visited 23 countries in Africa, visiting the continent about 100 times to develop the implementation of a social infrastructure that adopts the training of human resources and the outcomes of research. I have also spent a whopping 15 years undertaking international non-profit organization activities (CORE: Community Road Empowerment) rooted in improving unpaved roads using sandbags with the help of local citizens under the theme of reducing poverty.

The International Activities Center of JSCE is led by six groups (Information, International Exchange, Education, International Students, Projects, and International Engineers), and engages in efforts with the following five goals: (1) Promoting activities that should play a leading role in the international community, (2) sharing information on technological trends in advanced countries, etc., (3) promoting the seamless integration of domestic and international activities and supporting the development of young talent, (4) strengthening collaboration between industry, government, and academia in fields where overseas expansion shows promise and publishing relevant information, and (5) building and strengthening a personnel network with overseas stakeholders.

President Ueda's special committee (General Committee to Internationalize Japanese Civil Engineering) of fiscal 2022 carried out activities under the three themes of (1) developing engineers who can work overseas, (2) providing information to help young engineers establish their career map, and (3) creating projects that are attractive to overseas markets and can contribute to the international community. At the International Activities Center, I plan to continue the great work of these activities and spend a great deal of time working with

investigation and research committees, etc. to ensure these activities take root. However, how we will link the three activities of the aforementioned special committee with the existing activities of the six groups within the International Activities Center and promote them permanently is a topic that requires future discussion.

I have always thought in terms of “scrap and build” at various organizations. Universities and academic societies have a tendency to constantly build without scrapping, but I believe that bold scrapping is necessary to provide opportunities for upcoming personnel. I hope to frequently share information on the efforts of the International Activities Center with all members, receive your honest thoughts and opinions, and then use this feedback to help improve our subsequent activities. While digital transformation (DX) has become a buzzword in society, I would like to place an emphasis on the latter word “transformation” to breathe new life into international initiatives. Thank you for your continued support.

【Reported by Makoto Kimura, Senior Director of International Activities Center
(Professor Emeritus, Kyoto University)】

A Message from the JSCE President Japan and the Need of Its Civil Engineering Researchers to Strengthen Their Global Outlook

The previous messages from the JSCE President stated the following. While Japan has mainly rolled out civil engineering technologies overseas through ODA initiatives, in comparison to other major countries, Japan’s percentage of overseas projects is small. Therefore, going forward, it needs to roll out overseas projects without relying on ODA. To make this happen, Japanese civil engineers must also work on the international stage. So what about research and researchers in the field of civil engineering?

Focused mainly on ODA, civil engineering researchers also headed overseas and supervised research at local universities there or supervised research at Japanese universities that took on scholarship students sponsored by the Japanese government. Although the majority of research supervision was taught in English and research results were published in English, a lot of the research was published in Japan. The problem in Japan of Japanese students not staying on in further education to take the doctoral degree



Photographer Rumiko Ito

Tamon Ueda
110th President of the Japan Society
of Civil Engineers

program had been resolved by talented overseas students from abroad continuing their education to attain their doctoral degree. If such students achieved excellent results, it was normal for them to be published in a first-class journal in Japan even if the paper is written in English. The goal of many researchers was to be accredited by winning a JSCE award or the like. It is possible that a reason for this is also the fact that the quality of papers in first-class journals in Japan was seen to be higher than that of overseas journals.

This situation has gradually changed as we entered the 21st century. Being published in a journal with an impact factor has become the goal in civil engineering research too. Papers from Japan as well are now published in overseas international journals that are regarded as being world-class in the civil engineering field. Therefore, some Japanese journals have become journals recognized worldwide as meeting the standard set by international journals and having the impact factor.

So what about the current situation 20-plus years on from entering the 21st century? Although the only data I have is from my specialist field (concrete engineering), it is relatively low that the number of papers from Japan published in first-class international journals is about 1 to 2%, meanwhile papers published from Japan across all science fields is about 4%. My experience at the last university I worked at is that the percentage of international journal papers among all the published papers of the civil engineering faculty was clearly lower than that of other engineering fields.

One of the reasons the number of international journal papers in the civil engineering field is low is thought to be that there is great importance placed on the social contribution of civil engineering compared to other natural science fields. In other words, addressing local issues is required of research in the civil engineering field. However, civil engineering must also address global issues. Society recognizes that the contribution of civil engineering toward the SDGs is large. I believe that civil engineering in Japan, where the research level is fortunately still high, can be expected to contribute over the long term to fundamental research as well as the addressing of global issues and, in particular, issues of developing countries where infrastructure is still to be built.

At present, JSCE has set up a Subcommittee on Internationalization Vision for Academic and Research Activities in Civil Engineering (Chairperson: Kohei Nagai) within the society. The committee calls together young researchers from different fields to check the standing of Japanese civil engineering research in the world and discuss how to make a global contribution. I hope we will see the fruits of these discussions. JSCE will continue to support the development of global researchers.



International Workshop for Young Civil Engineers

International Seminar “Investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation: Transdisciplinary perspectives”

In Jakarta, Indonesia on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, the International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS) at Tohoku University held an international seminar entitled “Investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation: Transdisciplinary perspectives” together with the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Indonesia and the Indonesian Association of Disaster Experts (IABI). This international seminar was held both in-person and online (venue: Le Meridien Jakarta, online: Zoom Webinar), with approximately 80 attendees overall.

The event started with opening speeches by Prof. Fumihiko Imamura, Director of IRIDeS, and Prof. Bagus Takwin, Head of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Indonesia. This was followed by a keynote lecture by Prof. Syamsul Maarif, former Director of the National Disaster Management Agency, who discussed investment in disaster prevention in Indonesia. Next up were research presentations and a debate involving Prof. Hizir Sofyan, former Vice Dean of Syiah Kuala University, and four other panelists. The event went swimmingly, with lots of questions from attendees at the venue as well.

In the discussions that used the city of Banda Aceh as an example, panelists emphasized the need to improve the abilities of the city’s citizens and declared that there is a need for graduate school-level education programs. In response to the observation that the budget for disaster prevention assigned by the national government is insufficient in Indonesia, a discussion was held about what mechanisms are necessary, using case studies in Japan as a basis for exploring the topic. There were also discussions on how the rationality of public funding for disaster prevention should be judged, considering the current situation in Indonesia where issues such as poverty must also be tackled. Furthermore, while private investment is seen as an important issue, it was pointed out that there are few cases where its use has been effective.

Today, with the growth of populations and further urbanization, more people are exposed to the risk of disasters, especially in developing countries. Also, climate change means that existing risks are becoming increasingly severe while also bringing about new risks. In order to build resilience against disasters in such circumstances,



Keynote Lecture by Prof. Syamsul Maarif, Former Director of the National Disaster Management Agency



Panel Discussion

even more investment is required to address disaster prevention and climate change issues. I would like to continue to clarify the issues in increasing investment and propose government policies and innovative approaches that contribute to the realization of a resilient and sustainable society.

This international seminar was held with financial assistance from the JSCE International Scientific Exchange Fund. I would also like to take this opportunity to say thanks to the JSCE International Scientific Exchange Fund as well.



Panelists

【Reported by Daisuke Sasaki, International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS),
Tohoku University】

Updates



◆ JSCE Feedback Web Form 「多門に多聞&多問」
<https://committees.jsce.or.jp/chair/node/59>

◆ The International Infrastructure Archives
– A Compilation of Japan’s Greatest Projects in Transfer of Civil Engineering Technology in Service –
<http://www.jsce.or.jp/e/archive/>



- ◆ IAC “News Pick Up!!” on the JSCE Japanese website
https://committees.jsce.or.jp/kokusai/iac_dayori_2023
- ◆ Summary of featured articles in JSCE Magazine Vol. 108, No.4, April 2023
<http://www.jsce-int.org/pub/magazine>
- ◆ Journal of JSCE
<https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/journalofjsce>
- ◆ 5th JSCE Concrete Committee Webinar “Frontiers of Concrete Technology”
<https://www.jsce-int.org/node/814>
- ◆ International Symposium on Extreme Precipitation and Floods
<https://committees.jsce.or.jp/hydraulic/node/225>
- ◆ PIARC International Workshop on Inspection, management and rehabilitation of Road Bridges -25th Anniversary of the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge-
<https://www.piarc.org/ressources/documents/source/ANNOUNCEMENT-INTERNATIONALS-SEMINARS/International-Workshop-Technical-Committee-42-Kobe-May-2023/ec55ae1-40674-Announcement-International-Workshop-Inspection-management-rehabilitation-of-Road-Bridges-Kobe-Japan-May-2023.pdf>
- ◆ The 4th Asian Concrete Federation (ACF) Symposium on Emerging Technologies for Structural Longevity (ACF2022_ETSL): <https://acf2022.aconf.org/index.html>
- ◆ Breakwaters 2023
<https://www.ice.org.uk/events/conferences/breakwaters-2023/>
- ◆ CECAR10 : <http://www.cecar10.org/>
- ◆ IABSE Symposium Istanbul 2023
<https://iabse.org/Istanbul2023>
- ◆ ASCE 2023 CONVENTION, CHICAGO (October, 18-21)
<https://convention.asce.org/>
- ◆ KSCE 2023 CONVENTION (October, 18-20)
<https://eng.ksce.or.kr/activities/act01.asp?id=60&page=1&sfld=>xt=&byy=&gbns=1&ctop=MN0335&htop=MN0323&ptop=MN0323&smm=&btype=&bgbn=R>

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§ IAC Facebook §

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