



**International
Science Council**

The global voice for science

Professor Takaaki Kajita

President of the Science Council of
Japan

Cc:

Professor Yukari Takamura

Vice President for International
activities

Paris, 17 November 2020

Dear Professor Takaaki Kajita

Subject: Concern regarding the decision of the Prime Minister of Japan not to approve the appointment of six scholars to the General Assembly of the Science Council of Japan

The International Science Council (ISC) has been monitoring developments in Japan since the announcement that Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has rejected the appointment of six scholars to the General Assembly of the Science Council of Japan.

We note the concerns expressed by the Science Council of Japan about the lack of transparency regarding this decision, and view very seriously the implications this has for scientific freedom in Japan.

The ISC values deeply the membership of the Science Council of Japan, and the opportunity this has afforded us for increased communication and closer co-operation to foster the development of science via international exchange and collaboration.

In the light of our shared vision to promote cutting-edge science to secure effective and equitable solutions to some of the most urgent problems facing the world in the 21st Century, and our shared values for the free and responsible practice of science as being fundamental to scientific advancement and human and environmental well-being, we are

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concerned that the recommendations of the highest independent scientific authority in Japan have been overturned by Prime Minister Suga. It is of fundamental importance that decisions of a scientific nature that are submitted to scientific integrity constraints accepted by the international scientific communities, including those related to the prioritization and scope of scientific activities, should not be subject to political control or pressure.

The International Science Council advocates for the free and responsible practice of science. This includes:

- Free and responsible practice of science as fundamental to scientific advancement and human and environmental wellbeing. Such practice, in all its aspects, requires freedom of movement, association, expression and communication for scientists, as well as equitable access to data, information; and
- Responsibility at all levels to carry out and communicate scientific work with integrity.

It is therefore relevant that the ISC, as the global voice for science, lends its strong support to the Science Council of Japan in its efforts to defend and secure scientific freedom of choice in nominating members for its highest decision-making body.

We look forward to a positive resolution of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Daya Reddy

President, International Science Council
Chair, ISC Committee for Freedom and Responsibility in Science

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