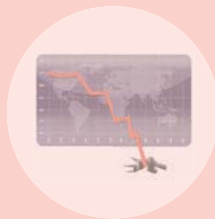


Before discussions begin, it is important to holistically understand the current state of affairs relating to the various issues faced by humanity and the planet, and as such, the Issues outlined in this chapter are pertinent.



1. The necessity of sustainability

The issues faced by humanity and the planet are stemming from globalization-driven homogenization that takes no account of country- or region-specific culture and characteristics and in the pursuit of growth and competition that fails to consider the limits of the planet, resources, the environment, and human knowledge. The contradictions caused by a failure to accept and understand diversity are also becoming increasingly serious.

As a result of finance capitalism and globalization taking over the world, the environmental problems and resource depletion pointed out in "The Limits To Growth" report published by the Club of Rome in 1972 have worsened, and not only has poverty not been eliminated, economic disparity between individuals as well as between states is growing. This provides a breeding ground for terrorism, and conflicts continue with no end in sight. Instead of peaceful coexistence, it must be feared that humanity and the planet are heading, as things stand, down an unsustainable path.

Against a backdrop of political disarray, increased military conflict, increasing uncertainty, frequent economic crises, and breakneck technological development, the essence of our way of life, ethics, and morals have taken a back seat and the ideas such as human happiness and a sustainable, livable earth are fading away. **We now stand at a fork in the road at which we can change from a single-minded approach of progress and development to one of peaceful and sustainable coexistence. Society must change the course it has been taking in our history thus far.**



2. Increasing complexity and uncertainty of issues

In the thirty years since the establishment of IIAS, the state of Japan and the world has changed on a historic scale. Socio-economic problems have become more and more complex and uncertain, as with runaway capitalism, the limits of democracy, an aging society with a declining birthrate, among others.

When considering the future of humanity and the planet overall, **it is important for us not only to pursue socioeconomic value, but to also switch to a set of values that emphasize human happiness and social calm.** Neither developed nor developing countries fully recognize the problems they currently face, and are neglecting to make this change of direction. Developing countries have failed to learn from the bitter legacy left behind by developed countries and are proceeding in the direction of industrialization that lacks sustainability and takes no account of harmful waste, and such countries are attempting to flourish by taking a finance capitalistic path as their populations increase. It is feared that this global imbalance may continue for several decades to come.

As social issues contain within them contradictions and trade-offs, it is not possible to obtain a single answer for each one. **What is required is for us to incrementally take practical action, and switch to a set of values and activities that aim to achieve a sustainable future for humanity and the planet.**

3. The importance of historical views and worldviews

Since the Renaissance, humanity has achieved development through modernization, but the endless pursuit of economic value has diluted consideration for the sustainability of things including humanity, living organisms, resources, and the environment.

Furthermore, under extreme market fundamentalism, evaluation of value has become skewed towards economic value. The adverse effects of having excessively pursued economic rationality are now regularly felt, and the continued existence of humanity and the planet as we know it is facing a crisis. As such, it is necessary to consider investment in fields that contribute to social calm and improvement in quality of life, such as education, academia, science and technology, culture, medical care, security, nature, resources, and landscapes.

Our society must drastically alter the course of these post-renaissance, **post-industrial revolution trends by taking a new view of history and a new world view. We are approaching a time where we must consider what should be done to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all people on this limited earth, and Japan needs to determine and play its role towards this end.**

In terms of global history, it is very rare for unparalleled natural disasters such as the Great Hanshin Earthquake or the Great East Japan Earthquake to occur in a country considered to be an economic powerhouse. Thus, it is very important for Japan to share with the world the significance of overcoming the difficulties caused by these disasters through the creation of a new set of values and soft power for the 21st century. By doing so, the people of Japan can return the kindness in the form of support Japan received from other countries and people during its recovery.

4. Changing our view of progress

We are now approaching an era in which the modern concept of scientific progress and economic development is no longer clear and unambiguous. While keeping the perspective that science and technology should be used for the sustainability and harmony of humanity and the planet, we must be aware that we are in a "trans-science" era in which the problems that humanity and the planet face cannot be solved with science and technology alone, and so collaborate with each other to focus on ethics, thought, philosophy, history, culture, art, and other such areas to solve our problems.



Trans-Science

