

# Japan turns 60 in OECD: Future plans, leading universities

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level in 2014 when he was the foreign affairs minister. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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# JAPAN AND THE OECD

## Japan aims to extend efforts for a free and fair world

**Fumio Kishida**  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In this significant year, it is a great honor for Japan to chair the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) for the third time since joining the organization.

As we navigate through challenging times, grappling with complex and interconnected issues such as climate change, challenges to digitalization and threats to the rule of law, it is imperative now more than ever to reaffirm our commitment to strong and effective multilateralism. Given this context, Japan has chosen as the theme for this year's MCM "Co-creating the Flow of Change: Leading Global Discussions with Objective and Reliable Approaches Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth."

As the chair, Japan is determined to lead global discussions aimed at promoting a rules-based, free and fair international economic order, leveraging the OECD's contribution to policymaking through its abundant data and evidence-based analysis. In this regard, Japan has great expectations for the OECD to lead international efforts in addressing challenges to emerging technologies. Following the accomplishments of the Group of Seven's Hiroshima summit, it is critical to advance the implementation of outcomes in the digital sphere, particularly focusing on generative AI and DFFT (data free flow with trust). Regarding generative AI, our goal is to facilitate discussions on the international governance of advanced AI systems, building on the successful outcome of the "Hiroshima AI Process." This initiative aims to create further momentum toward promoting safe, secure and trustworthy AI. Regarding cli-



mate change, it is pivotal for all countries to work toward a common goal of achieving net-zero emissions using diverse pathways. The OECD's Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA) contributes to global emissions-reduction efforts through better sharing of data and information, evidence-based mutual learning and inclusive multilateral dialogue. Japan will co-host with the OECD the first ministerial dialogue on the role of the IFCMA, stressing the importance of reaching a common goal of net-zero in 2050 while simultaneously realizing economic growth and energy security.

We must also underscore that the traditional mission of the OECD is gaining importance. Free and open trade and investment form the bedrock of stable economic growth worldwide. It has become more crucial that we discuss ways to uphold and strengthen our multilateral trading system, complementing the role of the WTO. We can fully utilize the OECD's structure, in which member countries with shared values come together to freely discuss

common challenges. In line with this, drawing on our experience as the G7 summit chair last year, we emphasize the increasing importance of enhancing cooperation on economic resilience and security. This involves reducing economic vulnerabilities and countering malicious practices, including economic coercion and nonmarket policies and practices. We also need to collaborate on addressing key related issues such as protecting critical and emerging technologies, enhancing security and resiliency in critical infrastructure and countering malicious practices in the digital sphere. The OECD is well-positioned to conduct objective analysis and evaluation of the relevant policies and practices in each country, contributing to better policy decisions by member countries.

However, rules and standards set by the OECD hold less significance if they are only followed by member countries. These rules

become more impactful when adopted universally by countries worldwide. In this context, Japan places great importance on the OECD's outreach to the Indo-Pacific region, with its great economic potential. We are encouraged by recent developments, including the OECD's consensus on opening the accession review process for Indonesia and Thailand's expressed intention to join the OECD. To further enhance the OECD's outreach activities in this region, we will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP), initiated by Japan at the 2014 MCM, and further promote the OECD's increased engagement with Southeast Asia.

With this in mind, I hope that the 2024 MCM will offer a valuable opportunity for addressing our shared challenges and exploring solutions, paving the way for a sustainable and prosperous future for all.



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida meets secretary-general of the OECD Mathias Cormann. CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

## Why is the OECD relevant for the prosperity of Southeast Asia?

**Yoko Kamikawa**  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, it is a great privilege for Japan to chair this year's OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM). The meeting will include the participation of Laos (ASEAN chair), Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the ASEAN Secretariat. As the most senior member from Asia, Japan's primary focus at the MCM is to emphasize the significance of the OECD's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, aiming to strengthen a rules-based, free, and fair international economic order.

For over half a century, the OECD has indeed played a pivotal role in developing rules and standards in areas such as trade, freedom of capital movement, international taxation and



corporate governance. However, the organization must evolve to sustain its relevance and impact in the global economy especially as emerging nonmember countries come to exert greater economic influence. Rules only fulfill their purpose when major stakeholders are actively involved in their formulation and implementation. Today,

it is evident that countries in Southeast Asia, as the world's most dynamic growth center, are key stakeholders in this context.

Southeast Asia can also benefit from leveraging the OECD's increased presence in the region. While the region experiences remarkable economic development, there remains a financing gap that must be addressed to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, a reassessment of funding strategies is essential. It is time to shift away from over-reliance on increasingly limited governmental funding and transition towards attracting dynamic private investment. In this vein, to encourage private investment and reduce dependence on government funding, it is important to recognize that meeting OECD standards is a critical factor on which global investors base their decisions on investment destinations. Promoting OECD standards in Southeast Asia would aid in overcoming the middle-income trap and establish the right conditions for sustainable growth, given the OECD's impressive

track record in analytical work and policy proposals across diverse social and economic issues, ranging from education to industrial policies.

In this regard, we have observed significant developments this year in the relationship between the OECD and Southeast Asia. In February, the OECD decided to initiate the accession review process for Indonesia, and Thailand also expressed its intention to join the OECD.

During this momentous occasion, Japan's strong position as a bridge between the OECD and Southeast Asia will create conducive conditions for sustainable global growth.

As the chair, Japan will also include cross-cutting topics such as gender equality and climate change in MCM agendas to support the achievement of the U.N.'s sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Southeast Asia. Most importantly, we will use this year's MCM as an opportunity to further strengthen a rules-based, free, and fair international economic order by deepening engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.

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# GEOPOLITICAL ACTION

## The OECD, Southeast Asia and a new global economic order

**Ken Saito**  
MINISTER OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

In the historic year 2024, which marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, Japan will chair the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) under the theme "Co-creating the Flow of Change." I will be there, along with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, to discuss economic resilience and promoting free trade and investment to accelerate sound economic growth, among other issues, with the countries concerned.

Sharing common values such as liberalism, respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, the OECD serves as a global standard-setter for the formation of international rules. During Japan's G7 presidency last year, the content and outcomes of discussions in the areas of trade; climate, energy and environment; and digital and technology had significant synergy with the OECD, and we often referred to OECD analysis and research in those discussions. For example, in the area of trade, the OECD provided the basis for the discussions on ensuring a level playing field and on digital trade. Moreover, in the G7 trade ministers' meeting in Osaka-Sakai, Secretary-General Mathias Cormann shared the OECD's views and analysis on supply chain resilience and on trade and sustainable development, which contributed to proactive discussion among G7 ministers.

Today, the international economic order is undergoing major transformations. While the importance of global trade and investment has not diminished, we must face the reality that geopolitical risks, market-distortive measures and weaponization of eco-



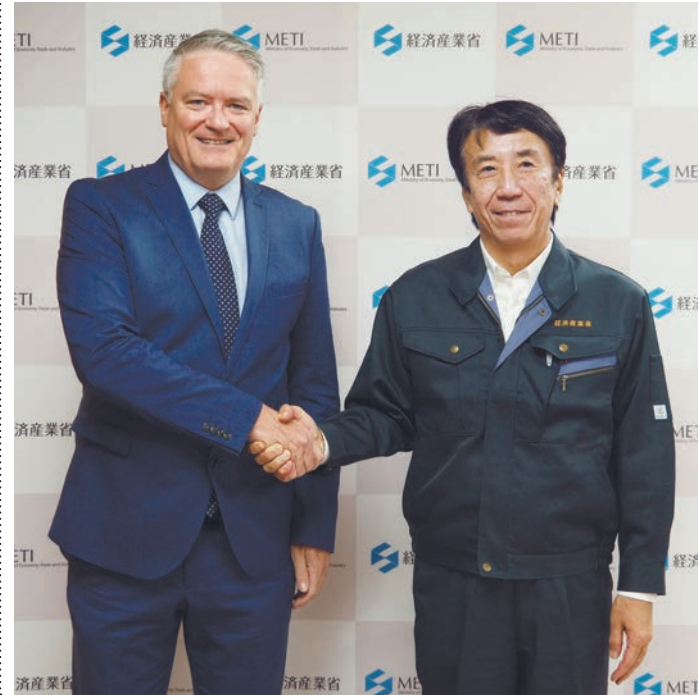
conomic dependencies by some countries, among other factors, are creating a negative spiral that is encouraging protectionism among countries. In addition to maintaining and developing a rules-based global trading system, we must pursue a "new way" of designing a global market based on common principles by promoting coordination of industrial policies with other countries. As minister of economy, trade and industry, I would like to discuss these issues and boldly tackle the challenges at the OECD Ministerial Council.

The OECD also contributes to ensuring a level playing field by disseminating OECD standards to emerging economies through outreach to international forums such as the Group of 20 and APEC. For example, in digitization, which is one of the most pressing issues, Japan worked proactively to create a common understanding on digital trade rules and establish principles on government access in the OECD to realize the concept of "data free flow with trust" (DFFT). At last year's G7 digital and tech ministers'

meeting in Japan, the ministers agreed to establish the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership (IAP) for the operationalization of DFFT at the OECD, and future efforts of the partnership will be discussed at this year's MCM.

In particular, we believe that the OECD's outreach to Southeast Asia, the world's pre-eminent growth center, is important for Japan and the world to realize "co-creation," in which countries with common values create the future together. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, an international organization established under Japan's leadership to conduct practi-

cal policy research and recommendations to promote East Asian economic integration, provides expert knowledge on the Southeast Asian region to the OECD under a memorandum of understanding with the OECD. The institute also assists Indonesia in coordinating its accession to the OECD. The OECD accession process involves many domestic challenges, but Japan has been able to promote many domestic reforms that have led to its rapid growth since joining the OECD. For the sake of Southeast Asian countries, I will continue to actively contribute to the discussions on their accession to the OECD.



METI Minister Ken Saito and OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann meet on Jan. 10. METI

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## DATA GOVERNANCE

## International cooperation necessary to address data governance

Taro Kono

MINISTER FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In today's digital-driven economic and social environment, having stable and reliable access to both domestic and international data is essential for the growth of Japan's economy.

The Japanese government has taken the initiative to address the challenges faced by companies, such as fragmentation of data regulations and data localization requirements. The establishment of the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership (IAP) was endorsed by the G7, the group of leading industrialized nations, during the Japanese presidency in 2023. The IAP, which is under the umbrella of the OECD, aims to promote international coordination to address issues related to cross-border flows of data. Various projects will be undertaken by the IAP to promote international data governance.

Due to the significance of data, many governments are introducing regulations to safeguard sensitive data. For instance, the U.S. has issued a presidential decree on sensitive data, and Congress is currently debating legislation that would prohibit certain types of applications from collecting personal data. The EU has implemented the General Data Protection Regulation, which essentially bars the transfer of personal data outside of the European Economic Area.

Keidanren and other industrial groups have emphasized the importance of legal transparency and regulatory and policy coordination for cross-border data flow among nations. This is essential as the number of laws, rules and regulations and implementation guidelines on data is on the rise in most countries, and there will not be unified global codes on data, raising the cost of compliance.

Certain countries impose arbitrary and unpredictable restrictions on the transfer of data collected within their borders to other countries. Known as data localization, this can hinder the development of products and services that rely on the immediate use of data.

For example, Komatsu, a leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, has products that can be monitored remotely. Through internet-connected sensors installed on their vehicles and equipment at work sites, customers and distributors can visualize information such as operating status, maintenance needs, fuel consumption, carbon dioxide emissions and more. By collecting and analyzing this information, Komatsu can offer advice to customers on when to service the equipment, change parts or how to use the machine more efficiently, improving its business value. There are other companies and industries that offer similar services, however, data localization could prevent all of them from providing such services in a country that imposes restrictions on data collection.



The introduction of international regulations could be a data-related issue. The International Sustainability Standards Board has finalized standards for disclosing sustainability risks, including climate change. The working group under the Financial Services Agency's Financial System Council is currently reviewing the scope of the standards, which may affect about 1,650 Japan Exchange Group Prime-listed companies and their business partners. However, many Japanese industries have not yet developed an infrastructure for aggregating data across supply chains. Therefore, there is an urgent need to establish rules and systems to facilitate this process.

The EU has been quick to develop a data-sharing infrastructure, known as data spaces, for companies to share data with each other. While it is essential for Japanese companies to comply with local regulations, they may still face many challenges. If Japanese corporations are required by the regulations to transfer data from factory production lines to prove regulatory compliance as a condition for EU market access, they may be forced to release information containing key technologies unless they take appropriate measures.

Addressing issues related to data governance requires international cooperation, as no single government can solve these challenges alone. While different visions and approaches to data and privacy protection should be respected, it is important to increase interoperability among nations with different data regimes.

The Japanese government, while addressing concerns related to privacy, security and intellectual property, strongly promoted and supported Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) in various international forums, such as the G7 and G20.

The G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting in Takasaki last April and the Hiroshima summit last May endorsed the establishment of the IAP, which was being developed under the OECD. The direction and road map for the IAP will be discussed at the upcoming annual OECD Ministerial Council Meeting.



Digital Transformation Minister Taro Kono receives a warm welcome from OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann. DIGITAL AGENCY



Kono attends a G7 session in Italy. DIGITAL AGENCY

The IAP is a mechanism that facilitates multistakeholder, public-private and inter-organizational cooperation to seek realistic and effective solutions to data governance issues.

The expected outcomes may range from developing guidelines, principles, reports and technical cooperation to proposing that member states comply with OECD recommendations. The IAP also intends to take up projects on emerging technologies.

The use of privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) may be required when dealing with personal data or trade secrets. PETs can be used to keep such data anonymous during analysis. Their actual use, however, requires understanding of both the technology and the privacy regulations of all the countries involved. This can be achieved through a multilateral "regulatory sandbox."

In addition, Japan will support collaborative projects with non-OECD countries, especially those in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Digital Agency recently proposed collaboration with the IAP to ASEAN's digital ministers, and the proposal was met

with considerable enthusiasm and support.

The proposed collaboration aims to increase transparency on regulations on cross-border data flows in both ASEAN and OECD countries. The joint initiative will lead to the creation of a common repository with state-of-the-art technology to provide up-to-date information and transparency on national data regulations. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia is expected to lead the project.

The OECD can profit immensely from collaborating with Asia, a major driver of global economic growth, and we hope to establish a positive precedent for international data governance development.

Sharing data across countries and regions is essential for our future prosperity. However, no other organization is working on international data issues among so many countries but the OECD. Working closely with the OECD, Japan is committed to representing the voices of stakeholders in shaping international data governance. This will be one of the top priorities for Japan's digital strategy.





# SAFEGUARDING CONTENT

## OP: Japan's initiative to ensure the authenticity of internet content

Tatsuya Kurosaka  
SECRETARY-GENERAL, ORIGINATOR PROFILE CIP

**O**riginator Profile, a new digital technology that discloses the origin of information in cyberspace and ensures its authenticity, is being proposed as an important measure to regain trust in the internet.

Authenticity in this context refers to a state in which the preservation of the identity of an article or advertisement is supported by identification of the organization or person responsible for its content, preventing falsification, alteration, erasure and confusion.

Nobody doubts that every article or advertisement has a person, organization or institution that originally produced it. We consider these entities "originators" and aim to make it possible for all stakeholders, including readers and advertisers, to immediately verify these entities upon request. OP is, so to speak, a label that clarifies the manufacturer and ingredients to provide fair information for consumers.

To achieve these requirements, OP will issue a third-party authenticated identifier to reveal the operator of a webpage, using digital signing technology to prevent modification in the process. This means that when an article is viewed or distributed outside of the original publisher's site, the originator is still identifiable, confirming its credibility. The source of the content must be verifiable at all times, no matter what state the article or advertisement is in.

OP is being developed by the OP Colla-

borative Innovation Partnership, a group formed by newspapers, broadcasters, publishers, advertising agencies and tech companies under the supervision of Keio University in Japan. In 2023, a demonstration experiment to verify the authenticity of articles published by newspapers and broadcasters through the internet was successfully conducted. By the end of this year, some of the publishers leading the deployment plan to begin using OP in their ordinary operations. Also, as early as summer, some internet users will be able to recognize that OP is active.

Although developing a means of verifying authenticity – as OP aims to do – is technically challenging, the concept itself is simple. For this reason, it is expected that if OP becomes more widely used, it will contribute to solving various issues. First, it will become easier to distinguish between entities that publish high-quality articles in the first place and those that do not. Considering that most publishers of disinformation would like to hide their identities, it should be obvious that this distinction alone would be a powerful means of avoiding a great deal of disinformation.

Moreover, even if the information is not maliciously and artificially disseminated like disinformation, its quality can often be confirmed by verifying its authenticity. Especially in the digital advertising market, companies are constantly at risk of ad fraud and brand damage resulting from accidental or deliberate misplacement of ads beyond their control. This also negatively affects the participants who are expected to play roles and carry out their responsibilities toward maintaining the health of the market. To realize a healthier business environment in the trade of digital



advertising, it is effective for information distribution to be verifiable on demand, and OP will contribute to achieving this.

Before practical deployment, based on the lessons learned from the Noto Peninsula quake, which triggered a flood of misinformation and disinformation on the internet, we are proposing to showcase countermeasures for untrusted information in disaster-affected areas in collaboration with media companies, governments, and providers of public services. The OP CIP members plan to use OP on their own websites in cooperation with governments in the Noto Peninsula region, media companies covering earthquake issues, and telecommunications firms to create an ideal model that allows OP to be recognized as a signature icon that certifies the authenticity of information transmission in that area. If such a

system is proven feasible, Japan will be able to introduce it to the world as a completely new approach to discipline in the fight against misinformation and disinformation distribution that causes social unrest.

Once these measures are taken and the usefulness of OP is understood by society, the movement toward full-scale social implementation of digital technologies that prove authenticity online, such as OP, must accelerate. The final hurdle for deployment will be the creation of an environment in which anyone can easily use these technologies without any special mechanisms. We will create a worldview in which the authenticity of information displayed on screen is guaranteed with a single click of a button on all internet browsers as a default setting. Toward the realization of this goal, we are simultaneously working toward the adoption of OP as a standard through the World Wide Web Consortium, the standardization organization for the web, and are making step-by-step progress toward our goal.

Disinformation, misinformation and ad fraud are systemic problems that involve complex relationships among article publishers, advertisers and consumers. In some cases, all may be jointly and severally liable in some way.

In particular, the Made for Advertising website, which is made up of malicious articles created solely for the purpose of ad revenue, has become a byproduct of generative AI and could end up threatening not only industry, but also democracy. While OP cannot solve all problems, it is our responsibility for the future to address systemic problems with this system to the best of our ability.

OP has finally shifted from the experimental phase to the implementation phase. It's time for us to take a first step. We would like to realize a healthy and safe internet space in Japan and set a precedent for the rest of the world – this is the wish of our OP colleagues who are aiming for trustable communications for all.

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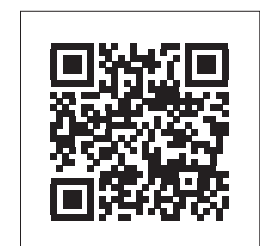
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OP CIP

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# SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

## Japan is a driving force in major OECD efforts

**Mathias Cormann**  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OECD

This year we are marking the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the OECD, a milestone that transformed the OECD into a truly global organization by adding its first member from Asia. It is a legacy we continue to build on today. Joining the OECD was also a milestone for Japan and part of a policy agenda that laid the foundations for Japan's innovative and globally connected economy of today.

Since that time, the OECD has supported key economic reforms in Japan, for example the liberalization of capital flows, while in turn benefiting from Japan's massive contributions to productive dialogue, to shared policy ambition and to the OECD's global reach.

Japan's economic journey over the last 60 years is a source of both inspiration and policy insights for countries around the world. This journey was enabled by economic policy tools that have stood the test of time and remain core to the OECD's mission: fostering a supportive environment for private investment and innovation, building human capital, leveraging open global trade, making sound infrastructure investments and supporting a sound approach to development. The OECD's comparative data analysis, best-practice policy advice and multilateral dialogue draw on Japan's experiences in these areas while benefiting from Japan's leadership as chair of key OECD committees covering corporate governance, digital policy, insurance and private pensions, and trade, among others.

Since becoming a member, Japan has been an advocate for broadening the global reach and impact of our work, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, as a strategic priority



for the organization, and for which Japan helped develop the new OECD Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific last year to further strengthen our engagement. In line with the framework's implementation plan to be adopted at this year's OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM), this mutually beneficial cooperation will further enhance the organization's role as an international hub for knowledge-sharing and standard-setting while strengthening the region's voices in policy dialogue and decision-making.

Toward this, Japan was a major driving force behind establishing the OECD's Southeast Asia Regional Programme, which is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. The program, launched in 2014 by then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has successfully supported the reform agenda of countries across the region, including more effective anti-corruption frameworks, new competition laws and the establishment of new competi-

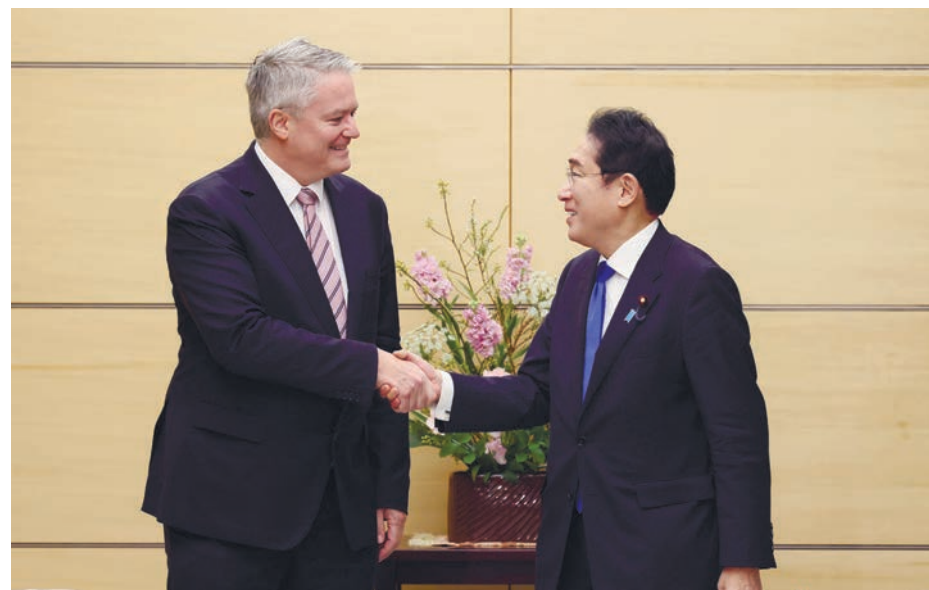
and more effective public governance frameworks. These efforts to support policymakers in moving closer to OECD standards and instruments have made remarkable strides, leading to the historic decision to open accession discussions with Indonesia and to consider Thailand's request to join.

Indeed, Japan, as chair of this year's MCM under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's leadership, is set to continue its role in supporting OECD efforts to find multilateral solutions to the shared global challenges of our time. The meeting provides an opportunity to reflect on and shape the direction of our forward-looking agenda, to advance policy dialogue and to guide our global engagement. Together with the vice chairs, the Netherlands and Mexico, they formed the theme "Leading Global

Discussions with Objective and Reliable Approaches Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth," focused on the long-term structural transformations of our economies and societies.

A key part of this agenda will be working together to keep improving globalization so it can continue to deliver benefits for people around the world in an environmentally sustainable, fair and inclusive way. This will mean improving resilience and addressing risks in supply chains, building on the Japanese Group of Seven presidency's work to address concentration in supply chains for green energy and electric vehicles without compromising globalization's ability to drive growth and reduce poverty. The OECD will continue to

*Continued on page 7 →*



Cormann meets Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the Prime Minister's Office. CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

# GENKI: The fun and surefire way to master elementary Japanese

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# SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann opens the first meeting of the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches in February 2023. OECD



OECD Week 2014: The ceremony for the formal launch of the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme. OECD

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contribute through our data and analysis on economic resilience, our support for WTO negotiations and our instruments to address the social and environmental impacts of trade.

Japan's role as chair is also an opportunity to build on the country's leadership on digital policy cooperation, to seize the opportunities of the digital transformation for our economies and societies while better managing some of the associated risks. The OECD was pleased to contribute to the Hiroshima Process, initiated under Japan's G7 presidency, to develop guiding principles for organizations developing AI systems. We will draw on this successful initiative in the process of updating our pioneering AI principles – the first intergovernmental standard on AI – to reflect the latest developments. We also look forward to benefiting from Japan's expertise and experience on improving digital privacy and consumer protection, expanding digital connectivity and incentivizing research and development investments.

The OECD is also well-placed to help countries work together to tackle climate change – to optimize the global effectiveness of emis-

sions-reduction efforts in countries around the world while adapting to the effects of climate change. Japan has been an active contributor to the OECD's Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA), with a dedicated ministerial dialogue on this flagship initiative planned as a side event at the MCM to help optimize emissions-reduction efforts around the world through better data and information-sharing, evidence-based mutual learning and inclusive multilateral dialogue. The OECD will continue to advance the technical work of the forum and broaden its membership in support of the work of the U.N. Framework on Climate Change and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

In parallel, this year's MCM will advance new work on other core dimensions of environmental policy, namely protecting biodiversity and tackling pollution. We will also develop a new strategy for supporting sustainable development, which will include support for climate adaptation given the vulnerability of many emerging and developing economies to the consequences of climate change and extreme weather events.

Finally, Japan's policy experiences will con-

tinue to guide OECD work on identifying effective policy approaches to respond to the economic and social impacts of population aging. This includes ensuring employability across working lives, avoiding labor and skill shortages and boosting productivity and growth. Japan's impressive level of educational performance, above the OECD average for mathematics, reading and science as measured in our latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, will be a key asset in equipping stu-

dents to navigate these evolving labor markets and lifelong learning.

At the OECD, we are committed to supporting policymakers around the world in developing sound and well-coordinated policy responses to each of the structural shifts in front of us, grounded in our shared values of democracy, the protection of human rights, the rule of law and market-based economic principles. We look forward to continuing to work together to support better policies for better lives.

The OECD headquarters in Paris OECD



the japan times

## Destination Restaurants

AUTHENTIC JAPAN SELECTION 2021-2024



A list of the best restaurants in Japan, selected by Japanese experts with international diners in mind.

In 2021, The Japan Times created the Destination Restaurants list around the idea of Japanese experts uncovering top local restaurants for people around the world — hidden gems that not only offer unique culinary experiences but also contribute to community revitalization, sustainable food and the promotion of natural resources. We aim to differentiate ourselves from other selections by bringing countryside talent proper recognition.

This book, marking the fourth anniversary of the Destination Restaurants project, is a compilation of the finest restaurants we have selected so far.

Estimated price (without tax): ¥4,200  
Circulation: limited to 2,000 copies

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The University of  
Electro-Communications

## Making global efforts to realize 'Society 5.0'

**Mariko Muraoka**  
Contributing writer

The University of Electro-Communications (UEC) is known for its broad range of education and research, from basic science and engineering to applications including physical engineering, materials science, the life sciences, optical science, electronics, robotics, mechanical engineering and media. It has attracted global attention in recent years for snake-like robots developed by professors Motoyasu Tanaka of the Department of Mechanical and Intelligent Systems Engineering. The robots were used to take pictures of debris inside radiologically contaminated areas in the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, hit by a huge tsunami in 2011. In addition, professor Kaoru Minoshima of the Department of Engineering Science is conducting research on an "intelligent optical synthesizer" that makes maximum use of light. A wide range of applications are progressing, including instantaneous 3D imaging that can rapidly acquire high-precision 3D images at the nanometer level of a meter-size target, which has high applicability spanning fields from industry to medicine.

Having its roots in the Technical Institute for Wireless-Communications, founded in 1918 by the Wireless Association to train engineers, UEC was established as a national university in 1949. "Given our name and the purpose of foundation, you may think we specialize only in the fields of electricity and communications, but we have been evolving and expanding to meet the needs of the changing society to cover wider areas of expertise," UEC President Shunichi Tano said in a recent interview with The Japan Times.

The university's undergraduate school has three clusters with different focuses. Cluster I is informatics and computer engineering, which has five programs for students to choose from starting in their third year: media science and engineering, management science and social informatics, mathematical information science, computer science, and design thinking and data science. Cluster II is emerging multi-interdisciplinary engineering, with five programs: information security engineering, information and communication engineering, electronics and information engineering, measurement and control systems, and advanced robotics. Cluster III is fundamental science and engineering, which also offers five programs: mechanical systems, electronic engineering, optical science and engineering, applied physics, and chemistry and biotechnology. The graduate school also offers a broad range of research possibilities in practical science and technology.

### 'Society 5.0' and the UEC Vision

"Among all that we offer, the areas that we are especially good at and which are attracting attention from academia and society are fields related to artificial intelligence, networks, robotics, and optical and quantum technologies," Tano said. This is because these are fields that will contribute to the realization of the "Society 5.0" that the



**Shunichi Tano, president of the University of Electro-Communications UEC**

Japanese government has been advocating as the future society that will succeed the current information society.

However, explanations of Society 5.0 have tended to be abstract and obscure, with the Internet of Things often cited as one driver of improvements for society. But what exactly needs to be done? Tano stressed the need for clearer, more detailed explanations to help steer society toward achieving its aims.

This is why the university's UEC Vision - Beyond 2020, defining the future society under the Society 5.0 concept, said it aims for a "smart society based on co-creation and evolution." To realize this, it wants to become a "supersustainable platform" that facilitates the autonomous circulation of data, its analysis and the social implementation of new findings.

"First things first: Data and functions need to be openly connected via networks," Tano said. "When this is achieved, the amount of data handled by various functions in society will be so vast that it will be impossible for humans to watch over everything, so artificial intelligence, acting as a partner to humans, will supervise and suggest a lot of hypotheses that will be reviewed and made into new rules by humans to implement in society." This will enable society to constantly improve itself based on real-time data fed into open networks.

"Our university is good at all three key points in this framework: first, networking data and functions, second, facilitating collaborations between artificial intelligence and humans, and third, control and security in social applications," Tano said.

### Three-pronged strategy

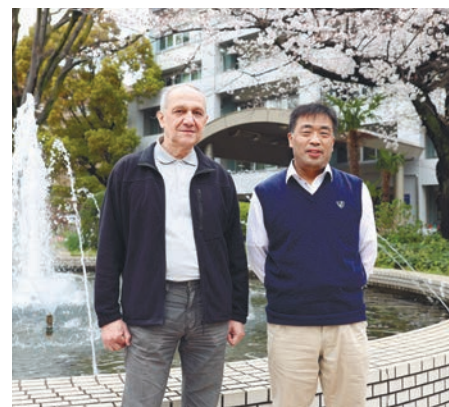
In the UEC Vision, the university says it will implement a "D. C. & I. strategy" of diversity, communication and innovation in every field — it will continuously create "sustainable innovation" through respect for and expansion of "pluralistic diversity" and broad collaboration and cooperation as well as "deep communication." It lists dozens of items in its action plan to clarify what it will do to achieve its vision from the perspectives of education, globalization, research, innovation, connection with society and its own organization



The campus of the  
University of Electro-  
Communications UEC

and environment.

Based on the vision, various departments, research groups, professors and their students have been conducting diverse research with partners from around the world to contribute to addressing regional issues or meeting specific needs of the global community.



**Alexander Shvets (left), a world-class researcher on radio propagation at the O.Ya. Usikov Institute for Radio Physics and Electronics, and professor Yasuhide Hobara from the University of Electro-Communications UEC**

One such effort is joint research led by professor Yasuhide Hobara of the Graduate School of Informatics and Engineering together with the LPC2E: Laboratory of Physics and Chemistry of the Environment and Space at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the University of Orleans related to the circumterrestrial and space electromagnetic environment using data acquired from space-related organizations in France and Europe. The project recently began joint observations of gamma-

ray emissions from lightning using a cutting-edge gamma-ray spectrometer developed by a team led by professor Sebastien Celestin at the University of Orleans.

Hobara's laboratory is also collaborating with professor Stylianos Potirakis' team at the University of West Attica in Greece in research on the identification of anomalies in electromagnetic signals related to seismic activities, using advanced signal processing technology. "These kinds of research projects will contribute to the monitoring and prediction of natural disasters and extreme weather," Tano explained.

Hobara is also leading a global-scale electromagnetic observation network. This project involves analysis by humans and artificial intelligence of data from sensors installed by UEC across Japan plus data collected from abroad. The ongoing, real-time observation and analysis will also be used to make various kinds of predictions possible, such as space weather, extreme weather and even earthquakes. The university invited Alexander Shvets, a joint researcher on the project, and his wife from Kharkiv in Ukraine in mid-2022 so he can continue his researches in a safe environment.

### Better self-driving vehicles

Another notable joint research effort that UEC engages in involves 15 researchers, including professor Celimuge Wu from UEC as well as professors from the National Institute of Informatics and Nagoya University in Japan and the University of Technology, the University of Auckland and the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

This research, funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science since 2023, aims to fuse technologies for wireless networks and computers in order to establish collaborative control technologies that will allow self-driving vehicles to overcome problems of how to react to unexpected situations and achieve 100% prevention of accidents, plus determine the trustworthiness of information transmitted from other vehicles and efficiently share information while being conscious of privacy and network limitations.

### High-tech blueberries

One of the most recent projects is an agricultural project in Uzbekistan in partnership with Tashkent State Agrarian University and Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology. Against the background of severe salt damage in western Uzbekistan due to depletion of the Aral Sea during Soviet times, a joint team that includes professor Kayoko Yamamoto and project/specially appointed professor Yo Ishigaki from UEC has been developing water-saving and high-value-added agricultural methods to grow

Continued on page 9 →



A meeting between the University of Electro-Communications and the University of Auckland. UEC



After the meeting, representatives from the University of Electro-Communications and the University of Auckland took a commemorative photo UEC



## ELECTRO-COMMUNICATIONS

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medicinal herbs, vegetables and fruits in the area. One of the products that the project currently is focusing on is blueberries.

"Blueberries are high-value and can be grown using pot cultivation system," Tano said. He explained that the cultivation know-how provided by Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUAT) and Technology, together with technologies provided by UEC on digital twins, artificial intelligence, remote sensing and geographical information systems, will enable remote supervision, simulation and instruction by experts in Japan. The project has the potential to be applied to other developing countries and regions and other types of crops to enhance agricultural productivity.

Tano pointed out that due to climate and environmental changes, methods that work today will not necessarily work tomorrow. "That is why we plan our projects from a long-term perspective, making sure that what we do fits the situation, and try to help society continue improving itself autonomously, as is expressed in our vision," he said.

The project in Uzbekistan also has the participation of the Joint Doctoral Program for Sustainability Research, an integrated program involving the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology and UEC. "Its aim is to bring together expertise of different types of highly professional universities to nurture human resources that can contribute to solving global issues in diverse areas such as poverty, conflicts, food, resources, energy, environment, life and health," Tano said. All the classes are held in English, and about half of the current students and graduates are non-Japanese.

"Since this program was established in 2019, we already have alumni both in Japan and abroad. There are plans for the current students and alumni to conduct collaborative projects," Tano said.

### Students from abroad

Starting last October, the program has also started to accept Ph.D. students from abroad as part of the SDGs Global Leader program under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The first student who was accepted into the joint doctoral program is from Kenya, working on research in the field of energy.

Foreign students are widely accepted in other departments as well, in undergraduate and graduate schools alike. As part of the government's efforts to increase the number of foreign students who come to study in



An older version of the snake-shaped robot, capable of climbing fairways and scale meter-high barriers. UEC

Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has been leading an initiative that accredits various programs offered by Japanese universities and sponsors foreign students who have been recommended by universities to enroll in those programs.

So far, the university has been accredited for four programs, including two programs where new recruitments have ended. Seven master's students and 35 doctoral students belonged to the two UEC programs as of March.

The university also has partnerships with three universities in France, Mexico and China to offer bilateral double-degree study abroad programs. A student from one of the three universities who is admitted to this program can earn a degree at his or her university as well as at UEC at almost the same time. "Such partnerships are expected to expand in other areas because there are other universities, especially in Asia, that are showing an interest," Tano said. So far, the university has received more students than it has sent, but the number of applicants from UEC may increase as more and more Japanese students start to seek career opportunities overseas.

Foreign students who come on a short-term government exchange program named Japanese University Studies in Science and Technology (JUSST) generally stay for a year and take specialized courses held in English on subjects that help them acquire basic academic skills such as writing research papers and making presentations. "The unique thing about our university is that we also have teachers who can teach Japanese language and culture, so foreign students can receive both language training and specialized education on campus," Tano said.

The number of short-term exchange students whom the university accepted through this program was 17 in 2023, on the rise again after the coronavirus pandemic. "We have so far accepted students from various partner universities across the world, such as the University of Bremen in Germany, the National Polytechnic Institute in Mexico and Tamkang University in Taiwan. International students can live in our dormitories. There are three dormitories, including UEC Port — a new dormitory offering two types of rooms, individual and shared, that was opened in 2017, commemorating the university's 100th anniversary. In the shared-type rooms, international students mix and live with Japanese students, enjoying and learning from day-to-day cultural exchanges," Tano said. Students meeting certain academic criteria can also receive a scholarship from the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO).

### More Japanese overseas

A similar setup is available for Japanese students who wish to study abroad for a short time, and applicants who meet criteria set by the university can receive aid from the university's own fund. There are internship opportunities for UEC students as well. The university has dispatched students to companies and research institutions in the United States, Italy and other countries. Those who participate in over 90 hours of internship are granted two credits.

One of the new programs launched to give UEC students international experience is a summer program at the University of Chicago. The two universities signed a partnership agreement in 2022, and the first group of students from UEC will engage in research activities at Chicago's Department of Computer Science for eight weeks this summer.

There are 60 partner universities and

research institutions, and UEC aims to further diversify and deepen its collaborations with them. In addition to joint research projects and student exchange programs, UEC also cooperates with its partner universities in organizing international conferences and events.

Last September, the 10th UEC Seminar in ASEAN was held at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok, with the participation of 110 students and researchers from universities as well as government officials and corporate leaders in the ASEAN region. Since 2019, the ASEAN-UEC Workshop on Informatics and Engineering has been held in parallel, with students and faculty members of participating universities giving research presentations.

Last December, UEC and the University of Auckland jointly hosted the "Trans-Pacific Symposium on Advanced Science and Engineering 2023," which gathered about 50 participants from the two universities.

### Cooperation on AI, robots

The Artificial Intelligence eXploration Research Center of UEC and the University of Auckland's nonprofit company for turning "research into impact," UniServices, aim to strengthen their relationship of mutual cooperation — especially in the fields of artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things and speech and language processing — and to engage more universities from New Zealand and other parts of Oceania in the symposium from this year on.

UEC has been building close relationships with Asian universities too. Students from China comprise 60% of all foreign students at UEC. There are many examples of joint research and student exchange with universities in Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia.

"We also signed a partnership agreement with a university in Greece in March and started a discussion with a university in Milan in Italy for a new partnership," Tano said. The school has also been accepting many students from African countries such as South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi and Gabon as well as from South Asian countries like Pakistan and India. "We aim to continue enhancing our international collaborations with universities and research institutions in all regions of the world," Tano said.

Page 8 and page 9 are sponsored by UEC

Salt damage in a field at the Karakalpakstan Institute of Agriculture and Agrotechnology in Uzbekistan  
UEC



The groundbreaking Occlu-Tab device that UEC developed enables remote eye care services in rural India and has been successful in addressing the high prevalence of amblyopia ("lazy eye") among children there.  
UEC AND DIVYAJYOTI TRUST, INDIA

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**KANSAI UNIVERSITY**

## Transcending borders toward a new era

**Mariko Muraoka**  
Contributing writer

**K**ansai University has a centurylong history as the first private university in Osaka Prefecture, founded as Kansai Law School and centered on the Senriyama Campus in the city of Suita. Its motto, “*Gaku no Jitsuge*” (“Harmony Between Academia and Society”), was proposed in 1922 by Juntaro Yamaoka – who had contributed greatly to the school’s establishment and was then its general trustee and president – when Kansai Law School acquired university status and became Kansai University.

The university’s current president, Yutaka Maeda, said the motto’s significance lies in the fact that it has been advocated for 100 years now: “We have seen changes in the world of academia in the last few decades, but before that, there were gaps between research and society. As far back as 100 years ago, our motto indicated that things should not be that way, and suggested that universities should benefit society by meeting its changing needs and that society should in return pay attention to the achievements of academia.”

In keeping with its motto, the university has been growing and advancing together with society to become one of the most prestigious multidisciplinary private universities in the Kansai area. It has close to 30,000 students across 13 undergraduate faculties and 13 graduate schools, as well as two professional graduate schools: the School of Law and the School of Accountancy.

There are about 1,500 international students on campus, and about 1,200 of the Japanese students are studying abroad, primarily through the diverse programs offered via the university’s partnerships with 212 universities across the world as of April. To meet the increasing demands for accepting students from overseas and for enhancing Japanese students’ opportunities to have international experiences on campus, the university opened its fifth international dormitory at the new Suita Mirai Campus, 2.2 kilometers northeast of its main campus, last month. The dormitory, Kansai University Global House (KU G-House), has 244 private rooms for men and women on two separate floors, as well as an “all-gender unit.” It is open to both foreign and domestic students and encourages immersion in an international environment where cultural exchanges



**Yutaka Maeda, president of Kansai University**  
YUICO TAIYA

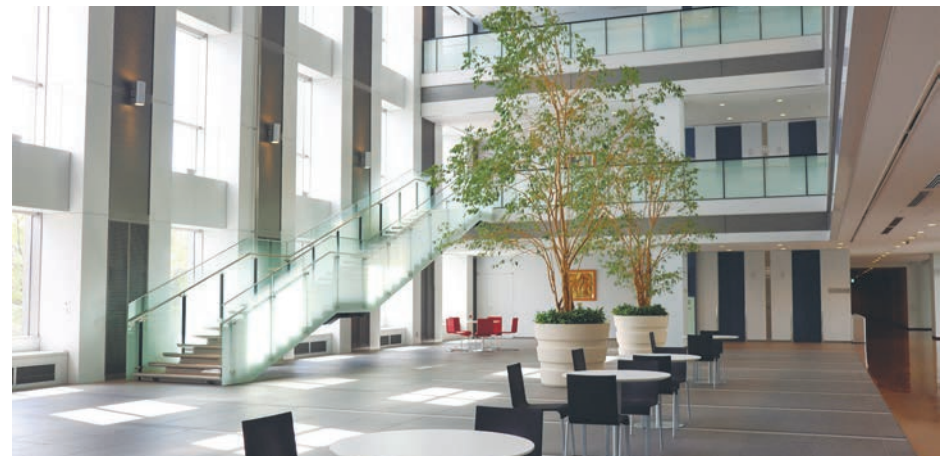
among people with different backgrounds and values take place in everyday life.

In addition to its six university campuses clustered in the Kansai area, the university also has the Minami-Senri International Plaza, which lies just 15 minutes by bicycle from the Senriyama Campus. The plaza houses the facility for the Japanese Language and Culture Program Preparatory Course, called “Bekka” for short, and a dormitory for international students.

### Online and international

To nurture human resources who can thrive in and contribute to a globalized society, language education has been one of the pillars of the university’s motto since a century ago. To further advance this idea, Kansai University became one of the first universities in Japan to introduce collaborative online international learning (COIL), a cost-effective method of teaching between two or more countries that was developed by the State University of New York’s COIL Center.

Since 2014, Kansai University has been collaborating with its partner universities around the world to increase the number of programs that can be taken by their students through using digital technologies. The university established the Institute for Innovative Global Education (IIGE), funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in 2018. As a forerunner of COIL in Japan, the IIGE serves as the international secretariat of the Japan-COIL Association, which comprises 58 domestic universities, 11 supporting members and seven international



The Suita Mirai Campus will be home to the Faculty of Business Data Science, which is scheduled to open in April next year. KANSAI UNIVERSITY

chapter members as well as partner universities and institutions from around the world.

The number of programs offered under the COIL initiative has exceeded 60. “These programs are not just lecture-based. Many take a PBL (project/problem-based learning) approach whereby students from different universities team up and communicate with each other to research or create something and give a presentation together,” Maeda said. He also noted that such programs help develop relationships among faculty members across universities, providing a basis for further collaboration such as joint research.

The advantages of COIL-type education were reconfirmed by the coronavirus pandemic, when the mobility of people virtually stopped. “We were not able to accept any students from outside Japan, and we could not dispatch any from Japan either. But programs provided under the COIL initiative received no impact at all. This made us aware that there is a way to continue international exchanges even in an unexpected situation like the pandemic,” Maeda said.

Even in normal times, the COIL programs have proved effective not only in providing multicultural experiences on campus but also in motivating students to seek opportunities to engage in real international exchanges by studying abroad and building networks and connections. “Experiencing COIL programs before studying abroad helps

students better prepare for and make the most of their time abroad. The programs can also be used to follow up on their learning after they come back to Japan. It works the same way for foreign students who come to Japan,” he said.

Maeda referred to an education ministry target of accepting 400,000 foreign students at Japanese universities and dispatching 500,000 Japanese students to universities abroad by 2033 and said Kansai University will continue its efforts to contribute to the government’s policy.

Last year, the university launched JIGE, the Japan hub for Innovative Global Education, with Tohoku University and Chiba University, supported by the ministry. This is a platform aimed at developing new models of next-generation global education based on “blended mobility,” a combination of online interactions and on-site experiences. Through these ongoing efforts, Kansai University is continuing to lead the advancement of online international education in Asia and the Pacific.

### Cutting-edge technology

Another area that the Japanese government requests academia to commit to is the development of human resources in the field of cutting-edge information technologies like artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and big data. Among such new technologies, data science is one of the fields that are attracting special attention. “The education ministry has been calling for university efforts to provide education in data science for a total of 500,000 students annually, and we have been offering various subjects in this field across different faculties,” Maeda said, adding that the need for data science in the field of business is so great that it was impossible to incorporate everything into the existing Faculty of Business and Commerce.

That is why Kansai University is preparing to launch the tentatively named Faculty of Business Data Science in April 2025 on the new Suita Mirai Campus. Its highly professional active-learning programs will teach business, accounting and finance while providing systematic learning in the fields of artificial intelligence, data science and data engineering. Students will be able to train their conceptual powers and analytical abilities as well as their communication and problem-solving skills and ability to adapt and



A demonstration class using collaborative online international learning (COIL)  
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The new international student dormitory KU G-House opened in April. KANSAI UNIVERSITY



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# KANSAI UNIVERSITY

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improve their skills to keep up with changes in society.

This is perfectly in line with the university's motto of pursuing harmony between academia and society. "We aim to meet pressing needs of society. If society is facing a lack of certain kinds of human resources, we try to provide education that can nurture such human resources," Maeda said.

## Sustainability efforts

In a bid to build closer ties with various stakeholders in society and address immediate larger social challenges, in 2021 the university established the SDGs Partner System, which supports joint activities with like-minded companies, municipalities, organizations and other educational institutions toward the U.N.'s sustainable development goals based on sharing human and intellectual resources. It is part of a larger framework that engages the entire university to make sustainability efforts called the Kandai for SDGs Promotion Project, launched in 2018.

The number of partners has exceeded 70, and many unique projects have taken place, are underway or are being planned. One was an "upcycling" workshop held on campus last November. It was part of a collaborative event organized by students at Kansai University and Tokyo's Hosei University named Kandai X Hosei SDGs Weeks 2023, held from Nov. 20 to Dec. 2. Two companies — Axe Yamazaki Co. Ltd., a long-established sewing machine manufacturer in Osaka, and Sanyo Leather Co. Ltd., a leading tannery and leather manufacturer in Hyogo Prefecture — cooperated with the students to offer sewing experience using leather scraps. Participants enjoyed making small items such as card holders and charms. Students from the two universities also worked together to organize a variety of other events such as talk sessions related to designs for children, people's well-being, responsible procurement of cacao beans and diversity, as well as the SDGs Action Plan Contest, in which 10 student groups from the two universities participated.

Other collaborations engage particular departments and seminars. The students in a seminar conducted by professor Kohei Yoshinaga of the Economic Policy Course in the Faculty of Economics participated in a project to plan environmental study tours in Kochi Prefecture in 2022 and 2023. The project was launched by Nikkan Sports News West Japan and the prefecture's government. Last year's program consisted of a workshop prior to a three-day trip to the Kochi towns of Yusu-hara, Shimanto and Tsuno in November, and a workshop afterward for giving feedback.

An SDGs partner exchange meeting  
KANSAI UNIVERSITY



A scene from a field trip to a logging site  
KANSAI UNIVERSITY



Students from the Kandai Banpakubu KANSAI UNIVERSITY

In the previous workshop, the students learned the characteristics of the area as well as its challenges from a group of residents of Shimanto. During the three-day trip, the students visited a wood pellet plant, a sawmill and a logging site and participated in reforestation work by planting saplings to learn how the area's forest resources are used and maintained in a sustainable way. They also experienced harvesting vegetables and various other activities to feel the blessings of nature. In the workshop after the trip, the students shared their feedback with the local people and organizations that participated in the project and discussed how the tour could be improved to better contribute to the realization of the SDGs.

In order to deepen ties with its partners in the SDGs Partner System and to facilitate collaboration among them, the university organized a get-together on March 1 this year, with about 100 people attending. The first half of the event consisted of lectures by professors and some invited guest speakers plus presentations by students, and the latter half was a workshop-style session where participants exchanged ideas about regional revitalization. The same kind of event has been held twice a year, resulting in new collaborations among some of the partners.

"We are committed to the achievement of the SDGs through research and development

of new technologies, and we also have research institutes, such as the Carbon Neutrality Research Center, that can contribute to our commitment. At the same time, engaging students in our efforts and handing down this tradition to younger generations is also an important role that the university should play," Maeda said.

## Expo 2025

Kansai University is welcoming and supporting Osaka's Expo 2025 as another perfect opportunity for the university to advance its efforts to create a better future through collaborations between academia and industries. Kansai University was the only educational institution to be selected as one of the 26 companies and organizations participating in the Reborn Challenge, a project run by a committee managed by the Osaka Business Development Agency and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in cooperation with the Osaka city and prefectural governments. The project supports selected small and medium-size businesses and organizations in exhibiting their technologies and achievements at the expo's Osaka Healthcare Pavilion.

The university selected nine small and medium-size companies and startups developing technologies, products and services that can contribute in the areas of the environment, society, culture or health care. Through the exhibition, the university aims to present examples of successful fusion of academic and corporate resources and disseminate to the world Japanese companies' potential and diversity.

The university is also supporting the Team Expo 2025, a co-creation platform bringing together ideas, projects and activities aimed at building a better future, as well as partners interested in supporting such efforts. As a co-creation partner, the university is supporting a number of projects, such as a clean-up campaign by student groups at three universities, including Kansai University; the recycling of discarded clothes and contact lens blister packs; and the introduction of an umbrella-sharing service on campus.

There are also projects related to the expo that the university's students are taking the initiative on. The university student expo team, Kandai Banpakubu, is producing a number of unique projects, including the Emojication Project — Emojication being a communication tool that they are developing to deliver messages using emoji created in Japan instead of languages. The project evolved from the students' idea of sending

invitation letters for the expo to various countries without using any particular language. The team aims to spread this tool to the world to help people overcome language barriers and build friendships, in the belief that being able to communicate while bypassing differences of culture and background will bring about a peaceful future based on kindness and equal relationships.



## Beyond boundaries

This concept of transcending all borders is in line with what Maeda thinks will be the most important aspect of living in the coming era. He emphasized the importance of going beyond disciplinary boundaries and noted that acquiring methods and skills for learning is more fundamental than the actual absorption of the knowledge itself. "In the modern world, which is filled with information and knowledge, it is virtually impossible to master everything, even in one academic discipline in just several years at university and graduate school," he said. "That is why the concept of 'meta-knowledge' (knowledge about knowledge) is crucial."

He added that the same is true for culture and values. "There are different cultures and values, and looking at them from a higher perspective will give you the ability to capture their essences and create new values. That is the kind of education and training we aim to provide at Kansai University," Maeda said.

Working from a solid base established over the course of a century, Kansai University continues to connect with society and nurture talented people who have the passion and the abilities required to meet the changing needs of the era of diversification.

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## School information

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Democrat vs. Republican

America vs. China

White vs. Black

Economy vs. Ecology

Wealth vs. Health

Urban vs. Rural

Government vs. People

Dogs vs. Cats

Coffee vs. Tea

Man vs. Woman

Monopoly vs. Share

Privacy vs. Surveillance

Politics vs. Science

Think vs. Do

Reject vs. Embrace

You vs. Me

Argument vs. Dialogue

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# KINDAI UNIVERSITY

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## Pioneer in aquaculture and cancer therapies

**Mariko Muraoka**  
Contributing writer

**K**indai University in Higashiosaka, a city known for high technology and manufacturing, offers 49 departments in 15 faculties that are full of ideas and tools to enable its students to be creative in their own field as well as across multiple disciplines.

President Itaru Matsumura, appointed in April, said: "The university will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year, and my mission is to get a strong start for its next century. We aim to enhance our university's recognition and evaluation from a global perspective based on international standards."

As one of its educational principles states, Kindai is committed to providing "learning for the real world" and helps students become caring, trustworthy and respectable people who contribute to society.

An ongoing reconstruction project of some of the buildings on the 471,530-square-meter campus embodies this principle. Planned in commemoration of the university's 100th anniversary, the entire project will be completed soon. One of the most iconic facilities that has already been completed is the Academic Theater, comprising six futuristic glass-walled buildings that house a library, cafe, study room and other spaces. One of them, a facility called The Garage, is used not only by students, faculty and staff members, but also companies — mostly local ones headquartered in Osaka that have signed up as members — are able to use its various machines and tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters.

Since its opening in 2021, more than 80 companies have signed up, generating positive interactions with students. "There are various ways and fields in which students and companies can collaborate. For example, a research group at the Faculty of Science and Engineering developed a tiny, palm-size satellite with a company in Osaka that was successfully launched by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. An experiment on automated delivery (by self-driving robots) was conducted jointly by a startup in Miyazaki Prefecture and one of the seminars at the Faculty of Business Administration," Matsumura said. He also touched on a collabora-



**Itaru Matsumura, president of Kindai University**  
HARUO MOTOHASHI

tion with three Higashiosaka companies and the Japan Blind Football Association to solve various challenges in blind soccer. "The first product that was developed through this project was a new side fence that is lighter and easier to carry and set up than the existing one," he said.

The university also supports student entrepreneurs. A business incubation facility named Kincuba Basecamp was established in 2022 right outside the west gate of the university. It has co-working, meeting and event spaces where student startups and those who are preparing to start a business can meet and collaborate to accelerate their businesses. The building has facial recognition security and is available for use 24 hours a day.

The university set an initial target of helping to launch 100 companies by 2025. Since the establishment of the facility, entrepreneurship has accelerated and many companies have been founded, primarily by student members of the Kincuba Basecamp. As a result, 97 companies have been established to date. One of them develops and sells products using insect-derived ingredients. There is also a research-based startup that provides a cultivation system using TPX film. One of the entrepreneurs using Kincuba, Takaaki Yasumoto, who develops human resource training programs using artificial intelligence and provides consulting related to the use of

artificial intelligence in the workforce, said he signed up to be a member of the facility as soon as it opened, and established his company a year ago. "It was a natural choice for me because my dream had been to become an entrepreneur since I saw Steve Jobs make a speech when I was in grade school," he said.

The university has also started to offer a master's degree program in the new Transdisciplinary Graduate School of Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, established in April 2023. The program is open to students with an undergraduate degree in any field. Many other research projects and collaborations at Kindai have contributed to society. The university has been especially known in recent years for its achievements in aquaculture research, but actually has a long history in that area. "In the postwar era of

giant grouper, and yellowtail and yellowtail amberjack. "We want to make these achievements better known to the world," Matsumura said. To do that, the research institute runs three restaurants, one in Osaka and the other two in Tokyo, that serve fish grown by the institute. Students are involved in making the menu and tableware.

"In the world exposition held in Osaka in 1970, the fish that were swimming in the aquarium of the Kikkoman Aqua Restaurant were fish farmed by Kindai. Thanks to the opportunity to present the future of aquaculture, the domestic consumption of red sea bream started to increase drastically after that," Matsumura said, expressing his hope that the coming Expo 2025 in Osaka will serve as a gateway for the university to disseminate its name to the world.



**The Academic Theater is an innovative six-building complex for collaborative learning and problem-solving across disciplines.** KINDAI UNIVERSITY

food shortages and new restrictions on land and sea territory, Koichi Seko, the founder of our university, advocated that we should not just take from the sea, but cultivate it. Based on this idea, an aquaculture research center was established in 1948, the predecessor of the Aquaculture Research Institute and the Aquaculture Technology and Production Center. The research center developed a net cage farming system to increase efficiency over the conventional method of aquaculture in larger preserves. That made us a world pioneer in aquaculture," Matsumura said.

He pointed out that one challenge that today's fishing industry faces is the difficulty of maintaining a stable supply due to the depletion of marine resources. As one solution to the problem, Kindai has been engaging in the complete farming of various kinds of fish. "Complete" means establishing the full cycle of taking eggs from farm-raised fish, raising the offspring and taking their eggs when they grow and spawn. Some successful examples of complete aquaculture are bluefin tuna in 2002 and Japanese eels in 2023. "To overcome the low survival rate of artificially produced hatchlings, we have been using a compound feed that we have developed since 2018, which enhanced growth and survivability. We also conduct selective breeding of strong and fast-growing specimens of some kinds of fish," Matsumura explained.

Another project that the research institute has been carrying out is creating new kinds of fish by crossbreeding different varieties to combine the best traits of each variety. It has produced many kinds of new fish, including crosses between Japanese parrotfish and spotted parrotfish, longtooth grouper and

Kindai is also known for its medical achievements, especially in both basic and clinical areas of various cancers. It has a university hospital, and its Faculty of Medicine is going to move to a brand-new facility in 2025. "In a global ranking by Clarivate Analytics, Kindai ranked first in the category of clinical medicine among all private universities in Japan. Two of our professors have been selected as highly cited researchers (HCR) by the same company for three and five years consecutively, becoming the only researchers in Japan's university medical departments and hospitals chosen in the category of clinical medicine. There are about 6,800 HCRs worldwide, and about 90 of them belong to Japanese institutions," Matsumura said.

"Our number of clinical trials ranks at the top among all the hospitals in the Kansai region. In combination with the genomic medicine we are strong at, we will continue to provide medical treatments that other general hospitals are not able to offer," Matsumura said. He added that the hospital and the faculty are creating an environment where everyone can cooperate with each other beyond the boundaries of disciplines.

Across the diverse faculties and programs offered, the university is aiming to accept more students from abroad. "We have scholarships, career support and a system in which Japanese students help students from foreign countries with their life in Japan," Matsumura said, expressing hope that more students will come to Kindai, which boasts the greatest number of university applicants in Japan for 11 years in a row.

*This page is sponsored by Kindai University*

Kindai University offers exchange students opportunities to experience several *budō* martial arts.  
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**Some of Kindai's completely farm-raised bluefin tuna** KINDAI UNIVERSITY

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SOPHIA U

## Global One Campus working for better learning

Emi Maeda  
Contributing writer

Since its founding, Sophia University has nurtured graduates who bridge cultural, linguistic, generational and academic divides within its global campus environment. It boasts a campus that offers a global educational environment and a wide range of opportunities to study abroad. The university refers to this unique environment as the Global One Campus. The university's Yotsuya Campus serves as a hub for all nine faculties and 29 departments, 10 graduate schools and 27 research institutions, spanning both liberal arts and the sciences, creating a vibrant and diverse academic community.

The campus currently attracts international students from over 90 countries, fostering a rich tapestry of cultures, languages and perspectives. It serves as a microcosm of the international community, providing students with an immersive experience that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Sophia University, situated in the heart of Tokyo, is a renowned Catholic university with a rich history. The name "Sophia" is derived from the Greek word meaning wisdom or knowledge. The name reflects the university's commitment to providing students with the highest wisdom to elevate them into desirable individuals.

Within this esteemed institution, students from diverse areas of study — including the humanities, human sciences, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering — all come together in pursuit of this highest wisdom. The university boasts an international campus where students engage with global issues and work toward fostering mutual understanding across cultural and religious boundaries. Through their studies and interactions, students strive to become well-rounded individuals equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to make a positive impact on the world.

Sophia University, founded in 1913 as a Catholic Jesuit institution, has steadily evolved into a world-class university rooted in the Catholic educational tradition. Guided by its educational spirit of "For Others, With Others," the university is dedicated to nurturing individuals who possess a strong sense of service to others and society as a whole.

"The core philosophy of Sophia University's education has remained steadfast since its founding," said Yoshiaki Terumichi, president of Sophia University. "It is crucial for us to articulate the university's philosophy in a manner that resonates with each generation and to thoughtfully integrate it into our academic programs." He emphasizes the importance of staying true to the university's foundational values while adapting their expression and implementation to the needs and challenges of the contemporary world.

Since its establishment, Sophia University has cultivated an educational approach rooted in Christian humanism that transcends

Yoshiaki Terumichi, president of Sophia University  
COSUFI

national, linguistic and academic boundaries. The concept of Christian humanism is based on the belief that utilizing one's talents and knowledge for the benefit of others will lead to personal growth and development.

"The term 'others' in our educational spirit refers to those who find themselves in challenging circumstances and require our support and understanding," Terumichi said. "To embody this spirit, Sophia University strives to cultivate 'servant leaders.' The concept of leadership, in this context, extends beyond the traditional notion of corporate or organizational leadership. Our aim is to nurture leaders who possess the empathy, compassion and awareness necessary to recognize and attend to the needs of those who are in vulnerable positions within society." The university is dedicated to cultivating human resources who embody the spirit of service and compassion, working toward the betterment of society and creating a sustainable future.

**Diverse campus, global vision**

Terumichi emphasized the important role that universities play in laying the foundation for students' lifelong learning and personal development. "In terms of the school system, the university is the last place for formal education. Considering the fact that students continue to learn and grow after graduation in today's society, we believe that the four years spent at the university are pivotal in building a strong foundation for their future," he said.

"When we envision the ideal environment for building a solid foundation, we need a diverse campus — a campus that serves as a microcosm of the world," he said. "That's precisely what we have here at Sophia University's Yotsuya Campus, which we call the Global One Campus."

Understanding language and culture is essential to addressing global issues. Terumichi highlighted the significance of language learning in the context of understanding different cultures and global issues. "It is not merely a matter of knowing or speaking more than one language; the use of a lan-



Sophia's main gate faces the beautiful cherry blossom-lined moat of Edo Castle. SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

guage leads to an understanding of the culture itself, which is tied to that language," he said. "It is essential to have an environment where you can contemplate ideas and exchange your perspectives with others within the context of diverse global outlooks and value systems." He emphasized the importance of the university's Global One Campus environment, where students are immersed in a diverse array of languages and cultures.

By bringing together students from diverse backgrounds, each with their unique specialties, native language and cultural heritage, Sophia University creates an environment that encourages cross-cultural understanding, collaboration and personal growth.

The term "Global One Campus" also carries another meaning: It signifies that Sophia University provides its students with opportunities to study in various locations around the world. In addition to the diverse and inclusive learning environment on its Yotsuya Campus, the university offers its students the opportunity to pursue their studies in numerous locations worldwide. It has established partnerships with more than 400 universities across the world, enabling students to undertake their studies in over 330 universities in virtually every corner of the globe except Antarctica.

Moreover, the university's collaboration with international organizations further enhances the global learning experience for its students. These partnerships allow students to interact with professionals from diverse fields and backgrounds, providing them with unique insights into the workings of the international community. Through internships and other professional development opportunities, students can apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings, contributing to the work of these organizations while gaining valuable practical experience.

The concept of a global campus extends beyond just having partnerships around the world and opportunities to study abroad. It

also involves collaborating with international organizations, which allows students to interact with professionals operating in truly global arenas. Establishing worldwide partners is crucial for providing this well-rounded global experience.

"At Sophia, students can study abroad at partner universities, engaging with peers from diverse backgrounds. If they reach out, students can also intern at international organizations, working alongside seasoned professionals and gaining firsthand exposure to how global issues are tackled. This enables students to not only share their perspectives but learn from the professional approaches taken by those on the front lines," Terumichi said. "We have multiple avenues in place for facilitating these types of immersive, multinational encounters and learning opportunities."

As part of its efforts to provide global opportunities, Sophia University has signed an agreement on cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The IDB is an international development finance institution established in 1959, dedicated to promoting economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. This collaboration has deepened through the organization of symposiums and seminars as well as the hosting of internships at the IDB's Asia Office. Additionally, internships at the IDB headquarters, agreed upon this year, provide students with valuable opportunities to explore potential careers in international organizations.

**Fostering a global perspective**

Sophia University aims to deepen understanding among its diverse student body beyond language barriers. It strives to cultivate individuals who combine expertise with an appreciation for diversity and practical skills.

The Global One Campus serves as a hub for students from diverse backgrounds to come together and deepen their understanding of one another, transcending language barriers and cultural differences.

Sophia University's English-taught programs are created to foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Offered across six of the university's nine faculties, these programs bring together students from various countries and cultural backgrounds, creating a truly multinational educational experience.

The programs not only attract top-tier international students but also encourage Japanese students to pursue their studies in English. This approach promotes cross-cultural understanding and collaboration as students from different backgrounds learn alongside one another and engage in meaningful exchanges.

Terumichi said: "Language serves as a crucial tool for mutual understanding. By pursuing their degrees in English, students can delve deeper into one another's personalities, values and perspectives, moving beyond the confines of language barriers. This immersive experience allows students to appreciate the diversity of thought and approach that stems from their varied cultural

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Sophia's verdant campus in the heart of the city SOPHIA UNIVERSITY



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(Sponsored content)

→ Continued from page 14

backgrounds. Through the experience of communicating with people from different parts of the world and sharing their opinions, students acquire a global perspective and practical skills."

## Collaboration in Africa

Sophia University's commitment to providing its students with global learning opportunities extends far beyond the boundaries of its Tokyo campuses. Terumichi said, "The university actively seeks to create avenues for its students to immerse themselves in diverse cultures and gain valuable experiences worldwide." One such region that Sophia University has focused on is Africa.

The university recognizes the growing importance of the African region in the global economy and the need to prepare its students for the opportunities and challenges that this dynamic region presents. With Africa experiencing rapid economic growth and being viewed as the "last market," the university has taken proactive steps to provide its students with meaningful opportunities to engage with and develop their perspectives on the African region.

One notable initiative is the short-term social engagement program that Sophia University offers to all undergraduate students twice a year. This program is designed to give students hands-on experience and exposure to the diverse cultures, economies and societies of African countries. By participating in these programs, students gain valuable insights into the unique dynamics of the region and develop a deeper understanding of the role they can play in shaping its future.

By offering a range of activities and opportunities for engagement, the university aims to equip its students with the knowledge, skills and perspectives necessary to navigate and contribute to the dynamic changes taking place in the region. While the main destinations of the program have been Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon and South Africa, the university has also sent students to other countries such as the Benin in the past.

The program aims to immerse students in African countries for about two weeks, allowing them to learn about the present situation in Africa, where the social economy is undergoing significant changes. Participants achieve this through attending lectures at local universities, visiting international cooperation organizations, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), and engaging in civic activities deeply connected to the local community.



Students visit an elementary school in Cameroon as part of the social engagement program "Learn from Africa." SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

"Through collaborations with universities and international organizations in these African regions, students gain valuable opportunities to learn about present-day Africa and witness firsthand the efforts being made to support vulnerable populations and tackle global issues," Terumichi said.

## Sweden-Japan MIRAI project

Sophia University is also actively engaged in a further initiative known as MIRAI, a research collaboration jointly conducted by Swedish and Japanese universities. This joint initiative aims to contribute to long-term research collaboration and to promote Sweden and Japan as nations of world-leading large-scale research infrastructure.

The MIRAI project was launched in 2016. Following its success, numerous joint research projects and programs were initiated under the second phase, starting in 2020. The third-phase MIRAI project is set to commence in 2024, building upon the achievements of its predecessors. Sophia University has been a founding institutional member since its establishment and is currently engaged in a wide range of collaborative research endeavors.

Japan and Sweden share many similarities, despite the differences in their populations. Both nations boast robust technological capabilities, and the Japanese hold Swedish

science and engineering universities in high regard for their exceptional standards. "The MIRAI project presents a unique opportunity for universities in both countries to advance collaborative partnerships and engage in joint research initiatives, capitalizing on their respective strengths," Terumichi remarked.

The collaboration between Japan and Sweden, two nations with differences in populations, has thrived in their scientific and technological research communities and promises to be a significant endeavor that will foster mutual growth and development.

The MIRAI project serves as an excellent illustration of international collaborative research that harnesses the unique strengths of universities in both Japan and Sweden, contributing to the development of a global research network. By actively participating in this initiative, Sophia University will advance its partnerships with Swedish universities, thereby enhancing its research capabilities and expanding its international reach.

## Global research network

Sophia University advances the internationalization of research activities by fostering research exchange and joint research among its researchers and graduate students through its research activity network with overseas universities. Its active membership in the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU) represents one of its ongoing collaborative research efforts. SACRU is a global network of Catholic research universities established to foster research, education and worldwide collaboration in the spirit of the Catholic faith. At present, the alliance consists of eight member universities, with Sophia University representing Asia. The mission of SACRU is to foster global cooperation among the partners with the goal of advancing world-leading knowledge and higher education for the common good in this age of social transformation, technological disruption and environmental hazard. The alliance aims to achieve several objectives through a diverse range of global academic activities and initiatives. These goals include strengthening the connection between progress and reason in the digital age, enhancing research for trade, promoting global education, facilitating digital transformation, advancing student participation in education and research, and contributing to the wave of knowledge creation and technology transfer.

"For instance, the alliance occasionally focuses on themes that address papal encyclicals, such as environmental concerns, support for socially vulnerable populations and

the importance of respecting diversity," Terumichi said. "Researchers from each member university convene to present their research findings on a shared theme. The foundation of shared values of participating universities in the Catholic spirit provides a unified perspective on how to approach and explore research topics."

Sophia University's engagement extends beyond collaboration with Catholic universities, as it actively participates in the broader international university network to promote advanced research and create an enriched learning environment. This involvement includes its active role in the International Association of Universities.

The IAU is the most globally representative association of higher education institutions and their associations, founded under the auspices of UNESCO in 1950. It is a membership-based organization serving the global higher education community through trend and expertise analysis, publications and portals, advisory services, peer-to-peer learning, events and global advocacy.

From Nov. 22 to 24 this year, Sophia University will host the IAU 2024 International Conference. This event will provide a platform for participants to engage in discussions about the current state of higher education and other relevant global issues. Terumichi believes that engaging with various institutions of higher education will provide an opportunity for Sophia University to gain new insights and understanding, potentially leading to a fresh perspective on its own educational and research environment.

"I encourage students to embrace challenges throughout their time at Sophia University," Terumichi said. He encourages students to push themselves to reach their full potential by embarking on three types of challenges. "First, they should pursue challenges that are within their grasp. Second, they should attempt a challenge that might seem unattainable. Finally, I want them to embrace an experience that they haven't even considered yet. By engaging in a balanced mix of these three challenges, students will develop greater self-confidence. The experience gained from taking on challenges creates a person's unique charm. That distinctive charm can prove invaluable in building trust with others."

Within its diverse global environment, Sophia University continues to nurture students to build robust academic and personal foundations, shaping them into world-class "servant leaders."

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Cultural exchange at the Language Learning Commons (LLC)  
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The campus is filled with opportunities for learning beyond the classroom through extracurricular activities.  
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