

## Summary of the meeting with Professor Miranda Schreurs

### 1. Personal profile

#### (1) Name

Professor Miranda Schreurs

#### (2) Affiliation

Professor of Comparative Politics at the Freie Universität Berlin

Director of the Environmental Policy Research Centre

#### (3) Major professional experiences (only selected ones)

Ph.D. in comparative politics

Associate Professor, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland

Guest Professor, universities in Japan, Norway

Member of the German Advisory Council on the Environment

Member of the German Ethics Committee for a Safe Energy Supply

Member of the Berlin Senate Climate Change Advisory Council

Researching or teaching at a number of universities, such as Harvard University

#### (4) Areas of expertise

Comparative politics; Environmental governance; Climate change policies and politics

### 2. Meeting Specifications

#### (1) Date

November 21, 2012

#### (2) Venue

Special Conference Room, NIES

#### (3) Participants

Professor Miranda Schreurs

Dr. Shinichiro Ohgaki, President

Dr. Akimasa Sumi, Vice President

Mr. Yoshiro Kaburagi, Vice President

Dr. Shogo Murakami, Executive Research Coordinator

Dr. Hideyuki Shimizu, Manager, International Coordination Office

(Below are from Center for Social and Environmental Systems Research)

Dr. Hideo Harasawa, Director

Dr. Yasuko Kameyama, Head, Sustainable Social Systems Section

Dr. Midori Aoyagi, Head, Environmental Planning Section

Dr. Keisuke Matsuhashi, Senior Researcher, Environmental Urban Systems Section

#### (4) Discussion Procedure

To begin, President Ohgaki presented an overview of NIES, and indicated to the advisor the following three general topics as guiding points for discussion:

(A) Distinctive features of NIES in the areas of advisor's specialization

(B) Distinguishing features of NIES as a research institution involved with the environment, and points of expectation

(C) Points which NIES should address and strengthen.

Professor Schreurs was shown around the three facilities with the highest correspondence to her fields of specialty and interests (Center for Social and Environmental Systems Research; Center for Environmental Risk Research; Center for Environmental Biology and Ecosystem Studies), by affiliated researchers, while conducting a frank exchange of opinions with these researchers. Subsequently, Professor Schreurs offered her comments (see below) to President Ohgaki, based on the information provided, followed by wide-ranging discussions between the attendees.

### 3. Comments by Professor Schreurs

(1) The greatest distinctive features of NIES is conducting environmental research in a wide range of fields

After finishing today's visit to NIES what struck me most was that NIES may be unique among institutes engaged in environmental research even on a worldwide scale in terms of the diverse range of fields in which it conducts research. At least in Germany, while there are a number of institutes, which focus largely on designated fields, there are no institutes which cover this many environmental research fields. This particular unique and defining characteristic of NIES is one which should be widely conveyed to the world.

(2) NIES emphasizes the implementation of basic research and has an important role in the development of basic sciences

One feature of NIES is that it emphasizes the implementation of basic research. While there is a current tendency for environmental research institutions in Japan to promote applied, policy-driven research, NIES' role in the development of basic sciences will, I believe, continue to be of importance. In addition to facilitating the progress of basic research, it is essential that the importance of such research continue to be conveyed to the outside. On this point, I would like to see a continuance of such progress.

(3) By establishing defined integrated research themes NIES can enhance interdisciplinary ties

Some aspects of the effort to link researchers in diverse fields may be more successful than others. As such, I believe that the establishment of integrated research themes is of importance for NIES in its capacity as a research institute. For example, for research on sustainability or research that aims to grasp the global situation, it is essential to gather researchers from diverse fields. I think that there is a potential to promote ties among diverse fields by means of the establishment of such research themes.

(4) Interdisciplinary research will also become an increasing necessity at NIES

In Germany, there is a growing tendency for PhD students in environmental studies to be trained by educators from a variety of fields. It is becoming increasingly difficult to receive funding for applications which are not interdisciplinary in scope or based on the work of interdisciplinary teams – meaning that interdisciplinary research is set to become the norm. Also, with the influence of an increasing number of think-tanks in Germany there is a gradual shift towards a more interdisciplinary structure for research. There is a similar movement in the environmental research field in Japan, and as part of this milieu it may be that NIES is required to respond to this movement.

(5) It is important to convey easily-understandable information on research outcomes to the general public, policy-makers and mass media

The conveying of easily-understandable information to the general public, policy-makers and mass media on research outcomes and their relevance is important at both my university and within Germany. For example, the government-appointed Environment Council fulfills this role in Germany. At this council, experts taken from a variety of fields assemble and discuss on issues which have been raised in the course of research, risk, and those research areas which are likely to be of future importance. The results of these discussions are summarized in a report which is submitted to the government once every four years, and which the media then takes up. In addition, several smaller and more focused reports are issued every year. By means of this process, the information reaches the general public through the media. It might also be a good idea for a council which fulfills a similar role to be set up in Japan.

(6) It is also important to continue to convey the importance of the Humanities and Social Sciences as a research community

I believe that the sluggishness being experienced in funding for the Humanities and Social Sciences is a worldwide phenomenon. Anything which falls outside the realms of applicable scientific research tends to be assessed as having little real value, and this is a mistake. It will continue to be important to appeal to the general public on the role and importance of both the Humanities and the Social Sciences as a research community.

(7) The strength and vitality of the NIES campus could be more effectively emphasized with a little effort. The valuable information and data of NIES should be effectively employed and actively conveyed

With little additional effort the strengths and vitality of the NIES campus could be more effectively emphasized and conveyed. For example, there may be a need for a communal space where researchers can get together informally. Also, it might be a good idea to use wall space to introduce and appeal to the research outcomes of NIES so that visitors at the institute can take these in at a glance. I would like to see such efforts so that the valuable information and data which NIES has accumulated is more effectively employed and actively conveyed, and in a manner which is readily understandable.



Professor Miranda Schreurs

シュラーズ教授

Overview of research outcomes  
of the Center for Social and  
Environmental Systems  
Research

社会環境システム研究センター  
での研究説明



Explanation of activities of the NIES  
Microbial Culture Collection

国環研の微生物系統保存に係る活動紹介

Group photograph after the  
conclusion of discussions

会議終了後の集合写真

