On the special inaugural issue of the *Japan Social Innovation Journal*

Masayoshi KIYOHARA*  

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Institute for Policy Analysis and Social Innovation for their efforts in launching the first issue of the online journal, the *Japan Social Innovation Journal* (JSIJ). It is my hope that this journal will make a central contribution to significant progress in the Institute’s research activity by facilitating wide-ranging collaboration beyond the academic world encompassing entities such as local governments, private-sector enterprises and local communities.

According to the Institute for Policy Studies and Social Innovation director Prof. Yoshimasa Katoh, “Today, with advancing globalization, innovation in regional societies requires a diverse and complex response; and local enterprises are adding an international perspective to their activities. The era where regional economic activity has a close connection with the outside world demands corresponding changes in the style of conducting business. I look forward to seeing the Institute produce research which will contribute to creative innovation related to production and consumption, as well as building linkages between various regions in Japan and the rest of the world.

Globalization has a wide-ranging impact on regional societies within Japan. The development of an internationalized advanced industrial society promotes the rapid advance of urbanization; at the same time, changes in the demographic composition and in attitudes to everyday life has produced societies with low birth rates and aging population. The problems of childrearing in urban areas and adequate provision of welfare and nursing care for the elderly are among the pressing issues of contemporary Japanese society. Moreover, the advance of urbanization, which has been sustained for many decades, has also been associated with the depopulation of provincial areas. The revitalization of agricultural and rural communities is a task to be tackled not only by the directly affected regions but also by society as a whole.

Innovation of the kind mentioned above in regional economies cannot be achieved by basic theoretical research alone, but becomes possible only when specialists in different fields join in collaborative cross-disciplinary activities to create an embracing science of social innovation. I am confident that the *Japan Social Innovation Journal* (JSIJ) will contribute to progress in research of this nature.

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*Professor Masayoshi Kiyohara is the President of the University of Hyogo in Kobe, Japan.*