

## Urbanization, IHDP, and Human Geosciences

Yukio Himiyama<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hokkaido University of Education

Urbanization is related with various environmental issues in many different ways, either locally, regionally or globally. For geographers, it is primarily an issue of changes, expansion and concentration of urban land use. For social scientists, it may be an issue of changing lifestyle, value, security and wellbeing of human linked with urban life. IHDP (International Human Dimensions Programme) has been concerned with all those changes, with special interests in the drivers and mechanisms of urbanization, its effect on the environment, and the problems involved in them. It is for these reasons that IHDP (International Human Dimensions Programme) started UGEC (Urbanization and Global Environmental Change) in 2006 as one of its core projects. One of the challenging, and perhaps rewarding, tasks of high priority for UGEC is consolidation of its relation with geosciences, as without it the understanding on the physical environment and its changes, and on the interaction between urbanization and the environment, might be superficial and short-sighted. The Human Geosphere Section of the Japan Geoscience Union can be an ideal meeting place of the IHDP community and the geosciences community, and initiation of the present session might reflect the strong will of the Human Geosphere Section.

The interaction between urbanization and the environment would be recognized most clearly when one looks at environmental hazard, which is the manifestation of the unfavourable or unwanted interactions between urbanization and the environment in populated areas. The presentation therefore focuses on the effect of urbanization on the increase of natural hazards, with particular attention to the coastal lowland areas in Japan, where threat of hazard is increasing more than anywhere else. Its ultimate aim is to convince the geosciences community of the importance of discussing the issues related with environmental aspects of urbanization and with the relationship between urbanization and global environmental change from the broad perspectives of human geosphere sciences, including earth sciences, geography, hazard studies and social sciences.

Keywords: urbanization, IHDP, UGEC, land use change, geoscience, environmental change