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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للترقية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Natural Sciences Sector Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences

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Ref: SC/EES/EGR/18/534

Subject: **Revalidation of the Oki Islands UNESCO Global Geopark**

Dear Colleague,

From 16 to 17 September 2017, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council held its second meeting at the Zhijindong UNESCO Global Geopark, China. Among the items on the agenda was the revalidation of the Oki Islands as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Following the review of Oki (Japan) revalidation report, the UNESCO Global Geopark Council decided to renew your status as a UNESCO Global Geopark for four more years (the so-called "**GREEN**" card) with the following recommendations:

a. The UNESCO Global Geopark has a museum (Oki Nature Museum) which at the present is just about the geology, geological heritage, nature and biodiversity, without the part of local culture, as well as the links with geological heritage. A new UNESCO Global Geopark facility will be completed in next two years and it is recommended that the local cultural aspects should be integrated into the new Geopark museum.

b. The Geopark is overlapped by the National Park areas and it is recommended that the UNESCO Global Geopark formulates the related regulations and codes for visiting the geological sites and other sites in the Geopark, and set up warning signs in the main entrance of each area and by important geosites.

c. Visibility is generally good in the UNESCO Global Geopark but there is no directional road signage leading the visitors without guides to the different geosites. This is very important for the individual visitors to know they are in a UNESCO Global Geopark and provides an easy way to find different sites.

d. Most of geosites are interpreted in different ways but they are just explaining the phenomena, and commonly lack explanations on the origin and geological background. There are still many geosites that are not interpreted, especially the sites for educational purposes. The existing panels need to be improved and updated, and add new panels to other geosites.

e. The educational programmes in the Geopark are mainly delivered by the National Park staff. These focus very much on natural heritage with little or no inclusion of geological heritage. It is recommended that more effort is taken to provide geological heritage education for all ages, both within the formal school environment and amongst local communities and the general public.

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f. The UNESCO Global Geopark encourages promoting the links among different aspects of heritage, especially in the main motto of the Oki Islands. This is rarely conveyed on interpretative panels so better linkages should be developed and communicated on site for all visitors.

g. The UNESCO Global Geopark currently does not have a formal agreement with the Ministry of the Environment despite the fact that many of the most important geosites are within the National Park area. In order to ensure the long-term future and security of the Geopark, it is recommended that some form of formal agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding is pursued.

h. Strengthen the involvement in the activities of the Global Geoparks Network and the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network promoting the International value of the territory through the partnership with Global Geoparks under the umbrella of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks for your interest in UNESCO Global Geoparks.



Patrick J. Mc Keever
Secretary, International Geosciences and
Geoparks Programme
Chief, Earth Science and Geohazard Risk
Reduction

cc: Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO
Japanese National Commission for UNESCO
Chairperson of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council
National Geopark Committee