The Fourth Annual Meeting of the Science and Technology in Society forum
Kyoto, October 7-9, 2007

PRESS RELEASE

Kyoto, October 9th, 2007 - The Fourth Annual Meeting of the Science and Technology in Society forum was held in Kyoto from Oct. 7 through 9, 2007, under the overall theme of “Science and Technology: Lights and Shadows.” From 71 countries, regions and international organizations, a total of over 600 leading scientists, including 7 Nobel Laureates, policymakers including 26 ministers, business executives and media leaders attended the program. The main themes for this year’s STS forum were: “Harmony with Nature” and “Innovation.”

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stressed the need to make the transition to a sustainable society empowered by Science & Technology.

Koji Omi, Member of the House of Representatives and Founder & Chairman of the STS forum (Non-Profit Organization), concluded the forum by stressing the following discussion points of the Statement issued at the closing plenary session. The following points are excerpts from the 2007 statement.

Climate Change: We need to act on climate change and to establish a new international framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, in which all countries will participate.

Energy: It is necessary to make rapid progress in energy efficiency, and to further develop a broad range of clean alternative energy sources, in view of the expected increase in global energy needs and of environmental concerns. The use of nuclear fission power, under strict conditions of safety and non-proliferation, must play an increasingly important role. Furthermore, it is essential to invest in developing nuclear fusion power for the future.

Water, whether it is drinking or for agriculture, is now one of the most pressing global issues we must deal with. We recognize that science and technology can contribute more for solutions to this crucial problem facing humankind.

Life sciences: We feel it is desirable to establish international standards that will enable researchers all over the world to conduct research on an equal footing.
Food: With increasing population, richer diets and the demand for biofuels, the food supply is facing a serious crisis. The best of science, including all the possibilities of the new biology, must be brought to bear on increasing agricultural productivity.

Nanotechnology: Breakthroughs in this field have the potential to significantly benefit humankind. However, their possible risks should be analyzed in advance and minimized.

ICT: We reached a consensus that further development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is necessary to build a thriving future for humankind. We endorse the need for an open Internet, and for effective measures and technologies to safeguard personal data.

Infectious diseases: We need mechanisms for effective vaccine distribution and information exchange, as well as surveillance and preparedness for future pandemics.

Recommendation to the G8 Summit: A portion of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) should be used for joint research activity in developing countries, to harness the human potential of developing countries in addition to the financial power of developed countries. The STS forum recommends to the G8 countries that they discuss this proposal at their Summit meeting in 2008.

Intellectual property rights protection is essential to encourage new discoveries and their application.

Universities, whose primary functions are educating students and advancing knowledge, should play an important role in contributing to socio-economic development by promoting innovation through business-academia-government collaboration.

Science and technology have become so advanced that some are inclined to think that humankind can control nature; however, we should not forget that humankind is part of nature, and that we should live in harmony with nature.

Innovation must be nurtured. It depends on creativity, which is enhanced by educational systems that encourage inquiry and research that explores unconventional ideas. New ideas emerging in both private and public institutions should be transformed, whenever possible, into products that benefit society.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the STS forum will convene from October 5 through 7, 2008 in Kyoto, Japan.