Summary of Science and Technology Ministers' Luncheon Reception

September 12,2005

Taking advantage of the 2nd STS forum, which enjoyed the participation of science and technology ministers from many nations, a luncheon meeting was hosted by the Japanese Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, Yasufumi Tanahashi at the Kyoto State Guest House on September 12th. The meeting was attended by the science and technology ministers of 16 countries (list of participants is attached).

Minister Tanahashi prefaced his remarks by explaining why the formulation of the 3rd Science and Technology Basic Plan placed an emphasis on science and technology that is supported by society and the people and that contributes to the people in a visible and concrete manner, and on capacity building. The ministers present then gave their opinions and views, of which the following is a summary.

<Science and Technology policy>

- Science and technology is important not only for economic and social development but also for solving environmental and other global issues; in order to promote such science and technology related activities, knowledge of scientists as well as the leadership of politicians are necessary.

- The development of science and technology will require mutual collaboration among governments, the scientific community, the business world and the financial sector.

- The STS forum, which looks at the relationship between science and technology and society, is a very significant event. The role of policy makers is to solve the various environmental problems caused by global warming and natural disasters, and to lead public. It is vital that they initiate and promote dialogue with the business community and scientists.

- Developing science and technology requires an expansion in R&D investment, and some countries have set targets for investment as a proportion of GDP. Other important items include prioritizing R&D investments with a clear concept of R&D investment strategy. In this connection, attention should be paid to the devision of the labour

between the public and private sector, and public investment in higher education.

・Laying down the rules is another vital role for governments in the field of science and technology, as is selecting the fields into which research investment should be focused. Some countries have established strategic plans for concerted investment and prioritization.

・Systematic reforms to link up basic research results with innovation are important; the scope of science and technology policy should be wide enough to provide a holistic focus that includes innovation, not just support for academic research. It is vital that the impact of R&D investment on the resultant innovation is clarified using systemic analysis.

・In some countries, academia, universities, research institutions and private businesses compete for investment funding, but if they were to cooperate more the financial resources could be put to further effective and efficient use.

<Capacity building>

・Adequate R&D investment is needed in order to properly train personnel. In many countries, strategies are being drawn up that emphasize capacity building or prioritized support.

・It is also important to create an environment in which young scientists are brought up to be independent researchers. The inherent chasm between the senior figures and the younger personnel in the academies of the former socialist countries needs to be bridged.

<International cooperation>

・Developing nations do not enjoy the benefits of science and technology to the extent that the developed world does; they seek a significant improvement in international cooperation. They are involved in efforts not just north-south cooperation but between south-south cooperation, and within Asia.

・Some countries would like to make science and technology the key to free them from the chains of poverty. African development is a problem, a challenge, a test for Africa itself. There are some countries that spent 20

years moving from being a centrally controlled economy towards a member of the world economy, and science and technology is the engine that has driven them to an annual growth rate of 7.5%. It has also helped to relieve food shortages.

・It is good that Japanese science is open not just to Asia but also to the rest of the world. Japan can help Africa and South-East Asia. They sincerely hope that the minister pays them an official visit.

・Some countries have discovered what the common issues in international society are at the STS forum, and they hope to link these to the development of international cooperation.

<Public support for Science and Technology>

・The management of ethical issues is a vital part of winning public support for science and technology.

・Some countries are using events such as the Einstein Year to educate the general public.

(attachment)

Luncheon Reception for Science and Technology Ministers
Participant List

(September 12, 2005)

	Country	Participants
1	Japan	Mr. Yasufumi Tanahashi Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy
2	U.S.	Dr. Arden L. Bement, Jr. Director, National Science Foundation
3	Canada	Dr. Arthur Carty Science Advisor to the Prime Minister
4	Germany	Prof. Dr. Frieder Meyer-Krahmer Permanent State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and Research
5	Thailand	Dr. Pravich Rattanapian Minister of Science and Technology
6	Singapore	Mr. Philip Yeo Chairman, Agency for Science & Technology and Research (A*STAR)
7	Malaysia	Dr. Mohd. Ruddin Ab. Ghani Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
8	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Dinh Tien Vice Minister of Science and Technology
9	Hungry	Dr. Miklós Boda President, National Office of Research and Technology
10	Switzerland	Dr. Charles Kleiber Director / State Secretary, State Secretariat for Education and Research
11	Romania	Prof. Anton Anton President of the National Authority for Scientific Research Secretary of State for research activity
12	Lithuania	Dr. Remigijus Motuzas Minister of Education and Science
13	Sudan	Prof. El-Zubier Bashir Taha Minister of Science and Technology
14	Rwanda	Prof. Romain Murenzi Minister of Education, Science , Technology and Scientific Research
15	Malawi	Mr. John Khumbo Chirwa Minister of Industry, Science and Technology
16	South Africa	Mr. Derek Andre Hanekom Vice Minister of Science & Technology