

The Summary of the 8th Science and Technology Ministers' Round Table Meeting

October 2, 2011

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

1. Date and time: October 2, 2011 (Sun.), 16:15–18:00
2. Place: Room A, Kyoto International Conference Center
3. Participants: Ministers of Science and Technology and representatives from 27 countries around the world
4. Theme: “How Science and Technology Can Contribute to the Construction of a Secure and Safe Society?”
5. Summary of the Roundtable discussion:
 - Mr. Motohisa FURUKAWA, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, Japan, served as the co-chair, and the Japanese delegation presented some cases where science and technology contributed to the construction of a secure and safe society. Following that, participating countries presented their experiences and exchanged opinions.
 - In his opening remarks, Minister FURUKAWA expressed Japan's gratitude for the support from all over the world for the Great East Japan Earthquake. Then he presented the following two challenges included in the 4th Science and Technology Basic Plan of Japan, which was decided upon by the Cabinet in August:
 - Recovery and reconstruction of Japan by science, technology and innovation
 - Improvement of science and technology communication to rebuild relationships between science and technology and society.
 - Following that, another co-chair Prof. Annette Schavan, Federal Minister of Education and Research of Germany, gave the opening remarks, stating that science and technology plays an important role in coping with unexpected events and in reconstructing society, and that global cooperation is necessary to tackle the global issues we face.
 - Next, Mr. Akira YOSHIKAWA, Deputy Director General for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, the Cabinet Office of Japan, made a presentation by introducing a number of cases where science and technology

contributed to security, taking into account the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and other activities for recovery and restoration to be made under the 4th Science and Technology Basic Plan of Japan.

- Various countries presented their own experiences, and the participants exchanged opinions. The followings are main points of the discussions:
 - Each country is facing issues that may threaten people’s security, social development, and the sustainable growth of the nation, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters, as well as infectious diseases, and man-made accidents. Taking this into account, it should be reaffirmed that science and technology is essential to enable us to predict and prevent such disasters as well as to reduce damage, and moreover plays an important role in constructing a secure and safe society.
 - In order that science and technology functions effectively against these issues, it is necessary to further improve technology even in peace time by sharing experiences between countries, and strengthening international cooperative research activities on common issues.
 - At the same time, science and technology is also important in that it can be used to scientifically examine and analyze whether existing systems or measures taken in a past crisis were effective or not, and we can take advantage of such lessons in the future.
 - On the other hand, as a gap exists between the “safety” based on scientific knowledge and what people feel “safe,” the participants shared an understanding that efforts should be made from the viewpoints of social science and humanities, in addition to natural science, in order to understand people’s way of thinking in times of disaster.
 - At the same time, it is important to ensure active participation not only by the government but also by a wide variety of parties concerned, such as private companies, local governments and media in crisis-management training, and thereby form the basis for communications in preparation for a crisis.
- In closing the meeting, a suggestion was made by Minister FURUKAWA to compile a collection of the cases concerning the contribution of science and technology to the construction of a secure and safe society, which were presented at the meeting. The participants approved the idea and the meeting was closed.

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