

Short Remarks
at the Science and Technology Diplomatic Circle
Joint New Year Reception

Your Excellency Mr. Hans Dietmar Schweisgut, Ambassador of the European Union to Japan

Ms. Barbara Rhode, Head of Science and Technology (S&T) Section of European Union Delegation to Japan and Dr. Chadaram Sivaji of the Indian Embassy for the S&T Diplomatic Circle

Mr. Sadayuki Tsuchiya, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (MEXT)

Mr. Masahiro Yoshizaki, Vice Minister for Policy Coordination of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)

Your Excellency Mr. Makoto Katsura, Ambassador for Science and Technology Cooperation

Distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted and honored to have this opportunity to celebrate the New Year and your health and prosperity during this year.

Looking back the year past for a while, I was quite happy to have various occasions in which I met Ms. Barbara Rhode and many friends of mine in EU Delegation: I joined Europe/Japan Career Day in May and met Mr. Malcolm Harbour, European Parliament, at Kyoto in October.

These opportunities gave me deeper understandings that the world and Japan are tied closely in Science and Technology and this tie must be strengthened further with our efforts.

Science Council of Japan has also strong connection with science academies in the world, and actually I personally talked with the representatives of many academies last year in various occasions.

Through these meetings, I understand academies in the world and Science Council of Japan commonly recognize that Science and Technology plays very important role in modern society not only for economic development but also for better social life. Therefore, I share with these academies the strong motivation of cooperating each other to promote further scientific exchange for the mutual benefit.

As you may know, the Government of Japan launched two Science, Technology and Innovation policies recently:

One is called SIP, standing for Cross-Ministerial Strategic Innovation Promotion Program.

The aim of this policy is to make government research policies more effective through integrating research projects so far separately conducted by different ministries.

Another program is called ImPACT, standing for Impulsing Paradigm Change through Disruptive Technologies

This program is explained to promote high risk/high return research development programs.

Obviously, the present Government takes the innovation of society through the application of Science and Technology importantly. Of course,

we welcome these policies and do our effort too to develop Science and Technology with research integrity.

On the other hand, it is true that some people are wondering whether basic research is treated lightly whereas the applied research is treated importantly. In fact, these worries came to the anxiety that increasing research funds in applied research may affect negatively the funds allocated to the basic research. We could actually avoid severe reduction of budget allocation to the basic research for the next fiscal year thanks to Mr. Tsuchiya and MEXT, but it is not sure whether we can keep the same level towards the future.

Here, I am proposing that we shouldn't use simple dichotomy between basic and applied researches. Of course, the both of them are important: the basic research without any perspective of the application may gradually lose the support of society for funding, and the applied research without basic research to support it cannot develop further because it does not have endogenous engine for its development. Therefore, it is important to find stronger connection and even integration between basic and applied researches not only in research subjects but also research organizations and budgets through constructing firm bridges connecting basic and applied researches.

Universities are often seen as places for basic research, but there are many university researchers who are interested in the application of their research results. On the other hand, there are many researchers of private companies who are engaged in basic research subjects. The important point is not dividing researches into basic and applied ones simply by the places where they are working, but classifying researches by whether research proposals are spontaneously proposed based on

researchers' own ideas or research topics are proposed by program directors so that those topics constitute the entire program.

Most probably, a researcher has two aspects, he/she must have its own research themes based on his/her scientific curiosity, and at the same time he/she may be motivated to contribute to large scale research framework as an important component. In this way, a researcher can obtain plural ways to develop its research ideas in basic and applied researches.

So far, I was talking about this subject focusing on the role of university researchers, especially changing their roles from researchers in an ivory tower to researchers in society who are always considering how to make their research results useful for the people and society. The reason why I am concerned about universities is very simple, because I am supposed to serve as president of one of the national universities from April this year. Therefore, I am strongly concerned about the direction of education and research conducted in universities. I would like to learn a lot more personally from European experiences in higher education.

I believe that we can open new stage of Science and Technology through introducing research style combining basic and applied researches in the same body.

Thank you for your attention.

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Delegation of the European Union to Japan
President, Science Council of Japan
Takashi ONISHI