

The 3rd Annual Meeting of STS forum
Chair of Plenary Session: “Summaries from Concurrent Sessions”

12th September 2006, Kyoto, Japan

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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Good Morning. Welcome to the Plenary Session: Summaries from Concurrent Sessions.

Before I start, I would like to join others in thanking Mr. Omi for his tremendous efforts in organizing this important STS forum in Kyoto.

My name is Yuan Tseh Lee. I am President of Academia Sinica, a prestigious Academy in Taiwan, which is comprised of 25 research institutes and five research centers, covering the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. At present, the Academy has 230 members.

When I left Berkeley and took up my position in 1994, the position was a lifetime appointment; in other words, I could continue to work as President until my death, as many of my predecessors had done. But, I thought that this was a very bad idea, and so seven years ago I went to the parliament and successfully lobbied for a change to the by-laws of the Academy, making the presidential appointment a five-year term, and setting a limit of two terms. So, I am happy to say that I am stepping down next month, and will not have to die in my office.

During the last twelve years, working in a developing country—which might belong to the group of newly industrialized countries—I found that we had a lot to learn from developed countries. I also observed, not surprisingly, the strong aspirations of peoples in developing countries to improve their international competitiveness, sustain economic development, and increase per capita income to catch up with the more developed countries. Unfortunately, if you examine the damage done to the living environment, Taiwan, like many other

developing or newly industrialized countries, is “overdeveloped”. There are always conflicts between forces that would sustain economic development without sufficient regard for the environmental consequences and those that strive to meet the more difficult-to-meet standards of sustainable development. At present, finding a solution to this dilemma is especially difficult for developing countries because the developed countries—to which we would like to catch up—are not, themselves, following trajectories of “ideal sustainable development”, particularly with respect to the emission of green house gases.

When we speak of developed countries helping developing countries to build capacity through “Education, Education, Education,” or “Innovation, Innovation, Innovation,” we should keep in mind that it is not for developing countries to follow in the unsustainable footsteps of developed countries; instead, it is quite clear that we need to find new, sustainable routes of social and economic development, paying special attention to harmonizing the relationship between humanity and nature, and re-examine what “development” really means.

Two years ago, when Mr. Omi invited me to attend the first STS forum, I was extremely excited. I believed that it offered us an opportunity to begin to discover new, sustainable means to further the development of human society. Over the course of the last couple of years, we have come to an understanding of what it is that we want, and gradually built up the consensus as to how to do it, but, of course, the most important part—the proof—is in the implementation and results.

Last year, at the 2nd Annual Meeting of STS, the twelve main points of the discussions included issues covering Energy and Environment, Biotechnology, ICT, Education, global collaboration, and the Lights and Shadows of Science and Technology. Some of the same items appeared on this year’s agenda, in addition to many new themes, and have been discussed during the concurrent sessions this year. We are all eager to learn from the theme Chairs what they learned, and their opinions on these issues.

It really is a great honor to chair a session with so many truly outstanding theme Chairs.