**Speech at the Closing Plenary Session "Paving the Way to the Future"**
**Third Annual Meeting of the STS *forum***
**September 12, 2006, Kyoto, Japan**

**Koji Omi**
**Member**
**House of Representatives, Japan**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the members of the STS *forum*, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all of you for your great contributions in making this forum very successful. I was deeply impressed by how participants took the issues as their own and offered constructive opinions and comments on the future of mankind. The statement distributed to you which was agreed upon by Council members describes the broad outlines of the discussions we have had.

It is critical for humankind to achieve sustainable development by striking a good balance between economic activity and environment protection. While we recognized the importance of upholding the Kyoto Protocol, we agreed on the need for a new, practical and effective framework in which all countries, including the United States, China and India, will participate.

We believe it is necessary to make rapid progress in energy efficiency, and to further develop alternative energy sources. We also recognized that 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 and implementing nuclear fusion power for the future.

The life sciences, particularly in the post-genome era, raise many opportunities and challenges related to protection of intellectual property, data sharing and ethics.
We feel it is important to increase funds for basic research and to maintain incentives for academic and private research and to establish common international rules or standards that will enable researchers in all countries to collaborate in their research activities.

We recognized that developing vaccines and medical therapies against infectious diseases such as AIDS, avian flu, malaria and tuberculosis is vital for mankind's future and requires urgent action.
We acknowledged that crop production must be increased to feed the growing human population. Science should be employed to enhance food security and ensure sufficient water supplies.

We reached a consensus that the further development of Information and Communications Technology, or ICT, is necessary to build a thriving future for humankind. We agreed that the current open global network has great value from the standpoint of building a knowledge-based society. Reducing the vulnerabilities of networks and ensuring privacy are also of vital importance. We also believe that access to scientific information is so critical.

Since science and technology is essential for the effective socio-economic advancement of developing countries, we acknowledge the importance of more international science and technology collaboration in the form of joint research and capacity building. Appropriate development assistance resources should be allocated for this purpose.
Many participants also supported the idea of beginning discussions to establish a global, integrated system of intellectual property rights.

Universities, in addition to their primary role of educating students, should play an important role in contributing to economic development by promoting innovation through business-academia collaboration. Therefore, we reached a consensus on the need for improving the research environment and promoting system reforms in universities. We also agreed on the importance of encouraging the full and equal integration of female researchers in the field of science and technology.

We shared the view that new breakthroughs in science and technology, for example nanotechnology, biotechnology, and ICT, will be so significant that they should be used effectively for the benefit of humankind.
We also noted that policy-makers and people working in the media play an important role in encouraging general scientific literacy.

Although these issues are not easy to solve in the short term, we acknowledged that we should not give up our efforts to address these challenges. It is true, however, that science and technology has become so advanced that we are prone to feel as if humankind can control the globe at will. We need to think seriously about what humankind and the globe should be like in 50 or even 100 years from now. Science and technology should not control humankind; humankind should control science and technology. It is important for all people, not only professional scientists but also legislators, business leaders and opinion makers, to think of science and technology issues as their own. We acknowledged that the forum serves as an important venue where people, regardless of race, nationality and culture, exchange views on how to deal with science and technology issues from the long-range perspective of humankind.

The survival of the human race depends on how the means we now have at our disposal can be used most effectively to solve the problems we face.
I believe that science and technology must be developed and used in harmony with the universe, to ensure the survival of humankind.
The forum has also been very helpful for deepening ties of friendship and expanding our human network. All of these achievements, I believe, highlight the significance of having this forum.

We also agreed to hold the next STS *forum* in Kyoto from October 7 to 9, 2007. I look forward to seeing you again next year, not simply for discussions but to be part of the movement for deciding how to exploit and control science and technology for the survival and prosperity of mankind.

Again, I thank all of you for taking part in this three-day conference. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to the sponsors, various organizations and their staffs that have made it possible to hold this forum.
Thank you very much.