

**Actual Spoken Words will have Priority Over Written Text**

Closing Session Speech at the 4th Annual Meeting of the  
*STS forum*

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**Koji OMI**

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Founder and Chairman, *STS forum*

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 impressed indeed by how participants took the issues as their own and offered constructive opinions and profound insights on the future of humankind. The major subjects we discussed at this forum were “Harmony with Nature” and “Innovation”. The statement distributed to you which was agreed upon by Council members describes the broad outlines of the discussions we have had.

On climate change, we agreed on the need to establish a new international framework which would replace the Kyoto Protocol, in which all countries, including the U.S., China and India, will participate. The *STS forum* has been advocating this post-Kyoto process since 2004, and we highly value the fact that a consensus is shaping in the international community toward the participation of all countries. We expect further concrete dialogue to be conducted at the G8 summit and other international fora.

We believe it is necessary to make rapid progress in energy efficiency, and to develop a broad range of clean alternative energy sources in view of the expected increase in global energy needs and of environmental concerns. 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 nuclear fusion power for the future.

We shared the view that breakthroughs in nanotechnology have the potential to significantly benefit humankind. However, their possible risks should be analyzed in advance and minimized.

Prevention of major infectious diseases through vaccine development and other means is vital for humankind’s future and requires urgent action. In addition, we need mechanisms for effective vaccine distribution and information exchange, as well as surveillance and preparedness for future pandemics.

Joint research in developing countries should be encouraged with the participation of researchers and scientists from developed countries. A portion of official development assistance should be used for this activity to harness the human potential of developing countries in addition to the financial power of developed countries. We, the *STS forum*, recommend to the G8 countries that they discuss this proposal at their Summit meeting in 2008.

Innovation must be nurtured. It depends on creativity, which is enhanced by educational systems that encourage inquiry and by research that explores unconventional ideas. New ideas emerging in basic and applied research in both private and public institutions should be transformed, wherever possible, into products that benefit society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Science and technology have become so advanced that some are inclined to think that humankind can control nature; however, we should not forget that humankind is part of nature, and that we should live in harmony with nature. While we see the “shadows” of science and technology, we must recognize that there is no solution to these problems without further development of science and technology.

Many people consider bio-fuels a clean alternative energy source. However, during our discussions, it was pointed out that bio-fuels may be a challenge to achieving harmony with nature. I believe that this is an important issue that should be further discussed in next year’s forum.

The forum has been very helpful for deepening ties of friendship and expanding our human network. The presence of distinguished specialists at this meeting also made it possible for participants to learn about the latest developments in science and technology through an exchange of views. All of these achievements, I believe, highlight the significance of having this forum.

I believe this forum is not a mere conference but a movement for leaders in various fields to pave the way for the survival and prosperity of humankind.

We agreed to hold the Fifth Annual Meeting of the STS forum here in Kyoto from Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Please save those dates on your calendar. I look forward for all of us to join again to discuss science and technology from the perspective of the future of humankind.

Thank you very much.