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*One of the highlights last year was that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe assumed the post of Honorary Chairman of STS forum. In his opening speech, he put emphasis on the role of STS forum.*

## H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe

Prime Minister  
Government of Japan



It is my greatest pleasure to be meeting you, and a tremendous honor to speak with you. This is the third time for me to join you as Prime Minister. I have never failed to make it while in office. This is because I admire Chairman Omi, and all of you pushing innovation forward. It is also because innovation holds the key for Japan to grow, and for the entire world to tackle some of the hardest issues.

I feel happy and honored that you have appointed me honorary chairman. I hope this new title has no term limit because it is honorary.

## Messages from Regular Participants

*Since its start in 2004, STS forum has been supported by a lot of global leaders. In order to mark this inaugural issue, three of pivotal members who are regular attendants of the forum contributed their messages.*

*To start with, here is Prof. Jerome Isaac Friedman, who has participated and supported STS forum for the last eleven years.*



### Prof. Jerome Isaac Friedman

Institute Professor and Professor of Physics Emeritus  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
Nobel Laureate

### For the First STS Newsletter

The STS *forum* is needed more than ever, and probably will be needed even more so in 100 years from now. Our objective is to make the STS *forum* a permanent force in humankind's efforts to achieve the sustainability of our biosphere, which is under great threat.

Since the beginning of the industrial age we have been seriously degrading the environment and polluting the atmosphere with carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are creating climate change. Global warming is already having a destructive impact on populations across the world and is threatening to cause havoc in the latter half of this century and beyond. As it is having damaging effects on food production, human health, and the availability of fresh water in many parts of the world, as well as intensifying natural disasters, there is a special urgency in dealing with this problem. This will require a vast technological transformation in human society, based on developing innovative new technologies. This will necessitate a large investment by both government and the private sector. Fundamental research must also be generously supported, because history has shown that it has provided the foundation for our most innovative technologies.

The ultimate severity of global warming will depend on how effectively the international community can curb atmospheric pollution. Because it is already happening, emphasis is also being placed on planning for local adaptation to global warming. The STS *forum* is providing a greatly needed platform for addressing these serious challenges, among many others.

## Messages from Regular Participants

*Dr. Sadayuki Sakakibara has regularly participated in the STS forum meetings since 2009. In 2014, Dr. Sakakibara became the Chairman of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), a broad-based business organization with a membership of more than 1,300 leading Japanese companies. The following is an excerpt from his speech at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of STS forum in Kyoto on October 5, 2014.*



### **Dr. Sadayuki Sakakibara**

Chairman, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), and  
Chairman, Toray Industries Inc.

The STS *forum* provides an extremely valuable and meaningful opportunity for leading experts from around the world to engage in an open exchange of views on various global issues, guided by the concept of “Science and Technology in Society”. Ten years since its inception, the STS *forum* has become an event in the science and technology area which can be likened to the World Economic Forum in Davos, and I take pride in the fact that Japan has been its host ever since the beginning.

*Sir Richard Roberts shares this intriguing narrative related to the STS forum.*



## Sir Richard Roberts

Chief Scientific Officer, New England Biolabs  
Nobel Laureate

### **Networking at the STS *forum***

When I was first invited to attend the STS *forum* many years ago, I instinctively turned it down, thinking it would just be another one of those junket meetings that Nobel Prize winners get invited to. After several years of invitations though and a couple of candid conversations with regulars, I decided to give it a try. It was very stimulating and very different from the specious meeting I had imagined! I have been back every year since and now serve on the Council.

The change of heart resulted from the very high quality of the individuals attending the forum and the myriad scientific topics that get discussed including many that are of the utmost important to the future of humankind. In addition to the usual “suspects” comprising high-profile scientists, both academic and governmental, a surprising number of top-notch industrialists, diplomats, politicians and others interested in the future of humankind from the perspective of energy use, climate change, pollution etc. As a biologist I am especially interested in environmental issues, which of course, means I am interested in most everything that has the potential to disturb the environment.

In recent years my focus has been on the oceans, on health and on the food supply. Being greatly concerned about the antipathy to genetically modified foods and their use as a political tool by Greenpeace and other organizations considering themselves to be “Green” and “good” stewards of the environment, I take every opportunity to talk with the thought leaders of the STS *forum* who are in a position to make political decisions about the value of GM foods. To me, the issue is clear; almost every food we eat has been genetically modified since agriculture began five thousand years ago using techniques of plant breeding, mutagenesis and very coarse approaches that lack the precision of modern technologies. In contrast, the modern technique labelled as GMOs are likely to be safer than the traditional ones and more importantly have a much firmer basis in science than the older so-called “natural” approaches. There is really nothing natural about most traditional plant breeding and it must be remembered that it is the product, not the method of producing that is key to its utility and its acceptance. However, for me a key issue is that much of the world needs better crops that can only be produced by GM techniques if we are to avoid starving a significant percentage of the world’s population. It is issues like this and the possibility to discuss them at the very highest levels of government and industry that draw me to the STS *forum* every year. I would recommend you give it a try!

## --- Profiles of Council Members

*STS forum is led by 82 Council Members from 29 countries and regions. For those who are not familiar with them, we take great pleasure in introducing Members.*



**Prof. Zakri Abdul Hamid**

Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia  
Malaysian Government  
Malaysia

Dr. Zakri is a prominent Malaysian biologist who was named as the first Chair of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). In Sep. 2013, he was appointed by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board to the UN Secretary General. Educated in Malaysia and the United States, where he specialized in plant genetics, Dr. Zakri has long experience of negotiations in international biodiversity governance. Recently, his achievements at international level have been recognized by being awarded one of the world's most prestigious environment prizes, the Zayed International Prize for the Environment 2014 for Scientific and Technological Achievement. (excerpt from the 2014 STS *forum* guidebook)

**Dr. Florence Muringi Wambugu**

Chief Executive Officer  
Africa Harvest Biotech Foundation International (AHBFI)  
Kenya



Ph.D. in Virology and Biotechnology, University of Bath, England 1991, Post-Doctoral Research Associate in genetic engineering-Biotechnology, life Science company, USA. Authored/co-authored over 100 papers and publications in local and international journals and written a book *Modifying Africa: How Biotechnology can benefit the Poor and the Hungry* (2001), second edition, 2004. Recipient of several awards and honors from local and international institutions in recognition of her outstanding work. In June 2005 provided leadership for Africa Harvest (and consortium organizations) to be awarded US\$ 21 million global competitive grant from BMGF - Grand Challenges for Global Health (GCGH) to develop nutritionally enhanced sorghum. Previous member of DuPont Biotech Advisory Panel-USA, UN Millennium Development Goals Hunger Task Force, member of GCGH Science Board, and Council member, Science and Technology in Society Japan. (excerpt from the 2013 STS *forum* guidebook)



## Council Meetings, Board Meetings, Workshops

- **Liaison Conference** --- On Dec. 16, 2014, STS *forum* held a liaison conference with Japanese institutions and organizations in Tokyo. The meeting attracted 47 participants from 26 public and private organizations including sponsors for the 2014 meeting.
- **Council/Board Meetings held in Washington D.C.** --- At the National Academy of Science building, a Council Meeting was held on Jan. 15, 2015 followed by a Board Meeting next day. Please see the commemorative photo below. There were enthusiastic discussions about the future direction of the STS *forum*.  
The next Council Meeting will be held on April 24, 2015, in Berlin, Germany.



- **Workshop --- ASEAN-Japan Workshop for Innovation, Science & Technology Cooperation in Malaysia** will be held on June 11, 2015. In collaboration with Office of Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia (OSA), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT), STS *forum* is co-hosting the second workshop of its kind in Kuala Lumpur (the first one was held in Singapore in 2014).

## --- Where did he go? Whom did he meet?

*For the last eleven years since he established STS forum in 2004, Mr. Koji Omi, Founder & Chairman of STS forum, has been well known for his globe-hopping business trips. In order to promote the forum and find new participants and sponsors, he visited 39 cities in 2014 alone. This year, Chairman Omi has been even busier in his travels abroad. Here is a brief overview of his activity since the last annual meeting.*

**Oct.25-29, 2014** : Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Muscat, Oman.  
Chairman Omi met **H.E.Suhail Mohamed Faraj Al Mazrouei**, Minister of Energy of UAE.

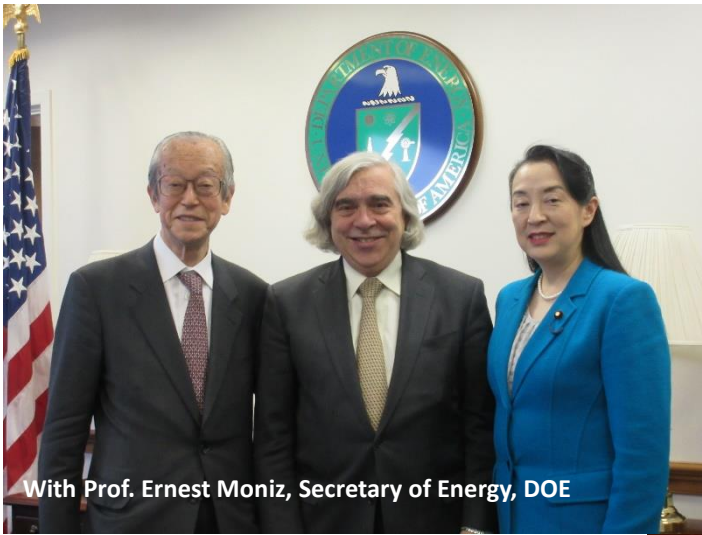
**Nov.8-13, 2014** : Berlin, Germany, Milan and Rome, Italy.  
Chairman Omi attended the Falling Walls Conference in Berlin and met numbers of world leaders including **Dr. Angela Merkel**, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. In Milan, he inspected National Museum of Science and Technology Leonardo da Vinci, a window to MILAN EXPO 2015.



With Dr. Fiorenzo Marco Galli,  
Director-General, National Museum of  
Science and Technology Leonardo da Vinci

**Nov.16-22, 2014** : Doha, Qatar and New Delhi, India. Chairman Omi gave the opening remarks at the Global Innovation and Technology Alliance Platform 2014 in New Delhi. In addition, **H.E. Dr. Ashwani Kumar**, Member of Parliament of India, hosted a dinner in honor of Mr. Omi with prominent Indian business leaders.

--- Where did he go? Whom did he meet?



With Prof. Ernest Moniz, Secretary of Energy, DOE



With Dr. France A. Córdoba, Director, National Science Foundation (NSF)



With Prof. John Holdren  
Director of Office of Science and  
Technology Policy (OSTP),

**Jan.11-25, 2015** : *New York and Washington D.C., U.S., Santiago in Chile, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, and Sao Paulo, Brazil.*

In the U.S., Chairman Omi met important dignitaries such as **Prof. John Holdren**, Director of Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), **Dr. France A. Córdoba**, Director of National Science Foundation (NSF), and **Prof. Ernest Moniz**, Secretary of Energy, DOE. After STS *forum* Council/Board Meetings in Washington D.C., Chairman Omi extended his trip to South America to meet some top leaders including **H.E.Dr. Lino Barañao**, Minister of Science and Technology and Productive Innovation of Argentina.

**Feb.8-19, 2015** : *Calgary and Edmonton, Canada, Seattle, San Francisco and San Jose, U.S.* During his trip, Chairman Omi visited various leading institutions such as Microsoft, PACCAR, Salesforce and Cisco. Although he couldn't meet the CEO of CTI BioPharma this time, the company decided to become a Member of STS *forum*. In Seattle, Chairman Omi had a candid talk with **Mr. Craig Mundie**, Member of President Barack Obama's Council of Advisors on S&T (PCAST). In San Jose, he attended the AAAS Annual Meeting under the new CEO of AAAS, **Dr. Rush Holt**.

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