

JOINT PRESS RELEASE
ON THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE JAPAN-UK JOINT COMMITTEE
ON CO-OPERATION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

2009/02/16

The seventh meeting of the Japan-United Kingdom Joint Committee on Co-operation on Science and Technology took place in Tokyo on 13 February 2009, under the Agreement between the two governments on co-operation in Science and Technology. The meeting followed a week long series of visits and calls during which Professor Beddington and the UK team visited leading Japanese research organisations, universities and ministries, as well as delivering a lecture on 21st Century Challenges for Science and Technology.

The Joint Committee was co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Seiji KOJIMA, Ambassador for Science and Technology Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Professor John BEDDINGTON CMG FRS, the United Kingdom Government Chief Scientific Adviser and was attended by Dr. Masuo AIZAWA, Executive Member of the Council for Science and Technology Policy of the Cabinet Office of Japan, and a range of other representatives from the Japanese and the UK governments.

The Joint Committee discussed a number of areas, exchanging views on science and technology policy, international collaboration and related issues. The committee also examined a number of specific areas of collaboration, in particular reviewing progress on those areas specified in the Joint Statement agreed by the Prime Ministers of Japan and the UK in January 2007: climate change, sustainable energy technologies and life sciences. A copy of the agenda for the meeting and a full list of participants are attached.

All participants were very pleased with the high level of collaborative research between Japan and the UK and recognized that there was much valuable work to be done. The Committee noted that over the last year a number of agreements had been signed between Japanese and UK research agencies, research institutes and universities which would do much to facilitate future collaboration to the benefit of both countries. The Committee welcomed the opening of an office in London by Kyoto University today and announcements yesterday of agreements between the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology and the UK National Oceanography Centre on marine research; and the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute (Kyoto), the National Institute of Physiological Sciences (Okazaki) and the Institute of Neuroscience at Newcastle University on the brain-machine interface.

Areas for future collaboration were also discussed and both sides expressed a wish to develop the existing work and to expand collaboration into new areas in the life sciences, energy, environment, climate change, information, communication and technology, nanotechnology, physics, space and astronomy.

The Committee agreed to hold the next Joint Committee in the United Kingdom in early 2011.

End

ANNEX

Notes

1. Outline Agenda

Introductions and Welcome

Section 1: Science, Technology and Innovation Policies in Japan and the UK

Presentations by Dr Aizawa (CSTP) and Prof. Beddington

Section 2: Overview and Discussion of UK-Japan Collaboration

Presentations by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the British Council and the Science and Innovation Team at the British Embassy, Tokyo.

Case Studies and Overview of Existing Collaboration Activities. Presentations on:

Life Sciences (RIKEN, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council)

Energy, Environment and Climate Change (Research Councils UK, Ministry of the Environment)

ICT and Nanotechnology: (Research Councils UK, AIST, Japan Science and Technology Agency)

Physics, Space, Astronomy and Large Facilities (RIKEN, J-PARC, JASRI, Science and Technology Facilities Council)

Section 3: Cross-Cutting Discussion

Future of Japan-UK collaboration

Section 4: Conclusion

Agreement of summary of meeting, press release and timing of next meeting

Closing Remarks

2. List of Participants

Japan

United Kingdom

1. Prof John Beddington CMG FRS, UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Government Office of Science
2. Dr Darren Hughes, Private Secretary to Prof Beddington, DIUS
3. Ms Jane Peters, Co-Head, International Science and Innovation Unit, DIUS
4. Mr Steve Flynn, Head of Developed Economies Team, International Science and Innovation Unit, DIUS
5. Dr Sophie Laurie, Research Councils UK Strategy Unit International (representing all Research Councils: www.rcuk.ac.uk)
6. Mr Tim Willis, Head of International Relations Unit, BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council: www.bbsrc.ac.uk)
7. Dr Peter Fletcher, Head of Education, Outreach and International, STFC (Science and Technology Facilities Council: www.stfc.ac.uk)
8. Mr Huw Oliphant, Head of Science, British Council, Tokyo

3. Background on the Joint Committee

The UK-Japan Joint Committee on Science and Technology was established under the article IV of the 1994 UK-Japan (Japan-UK) Science and Technology Agreement between the two governments, stipulating that the Committee meets at mutually agreed times to exchange information and views on scientific and technological policy issues and to review and discuss co-operative activities and accomplish, and provide advices to the two Governments.

4. Prime Ministers' Statement on Science, Technology and Innovation

In January 2007, the Japanese and UK Prime Ministers issued a statement reaffirming their commitment to work together on a range of issues including science, technology and innovation:

- Extract from Japan-UK Joint Statement in 2007: A framework for the Future -

Science, Technology and Innovation

Japan and the UK recognise the importance of science, technology and innovation to economic competitiveness and are committed to continue working together to use science and technology to address the most pressing challenges facing the world today. In addressing these challenges, they also recognise the importance of providing a first-class science education to raise the interest of young people in science and to foster the next generation of scientists, and of engaging with the public in tackling pressing issues such as climate change.

- *Japan and the UK will harness their joint efforts in science, technology and innovation. Japan and the UK will continue to work together to further strengthen their research relationship in the fields of climate change, sustainable energy technologies and life sciences. The UK-Japan Joint Committee on Co-operation in Science and Technology will review progress at its next meeting.*

- *Japan and the UK will work together to share best practice on knowledge transfer, particularly between academic institutions and the private sector.*

5. Outline UK Visit Programme

The visit of Professor Beddington and accompanying officials from the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS), Research Councils UK, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Science and Technology Facilities Council and the British Geological Survey included the following engagements:

- The Foundation for Biomedical Research and Innovation, Kobe
- Kobe Biomedical Cluster
- RIKEN Centre for Developmental Biology
- Kyoto University
- The Research Institute for Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE)

- Osaka University and Institute of Laser Engineering
- Monju Fast Breeder Reactor, Fukui
- Opening address at Brain-Machine Interface Workshop, Tokyo
- Call on Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry (METI)
- Call on Ministry of Education Culture Sports Science and Technology (MEXT)
- Speech at the British Embassy on the 21st Century Challenges for Science and Technology

6. Kyoto University: London Office

Kyoto University announced the opening of the European Representative Office on 13 February 2009 at a ceremony held at the Royal Society in London. The office will act as an overseas operating base for international business-academia activities of Kyoto University, supporting international collaboration and innovation, an activity encouraged and supported by the "Strategic Program for the Promotion of Coordination among Industry, Academia and Government, 2008-2012" of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Representatives of UK and Japanese science and business communities in the UK attended the ceremony

7. Marine Research: Memorandum of Understanding

The first Memorandum of Understanding between the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and the UK National Oceanography Centre in Southampton (NOCS) was signed in 2002 and promoted collaborative research in a range of areas including geology and geophysics, physical and chemical oceanography, marine instrumentation and atmospheric and oceanic simulation. The agreement supported scientific collaboration between JAMSTEC's Institute for Frontier Research on Earth Evolution and NOCS on Sediment-Water Interface Dynamics.

In 2009, JAMSTEC and NOCS agreed to renew the Memorandum of Understanding in order to enhance existing links and underpin the development of new collaborations involving researchers and technologists at these two world-class marine research institutes. The renewal of this agreement was announced at the British Embassy on 12 February 2009.

8. The Brain-Machine Interface: Memorandum of Agreement

A workshop held at the British Embassy on 12 February brought together leading Japanese and British scientists in the field of the brain-machine interface. Technological advances in both brain science and engineering are opening opportunities for direct interaction between the nervous system and physical devices. The field of BMI research includes implants that can be used to restore lost function of the nervous system, non-invasive devices that can be used to assist humans to perform particular functions, and methods for measurement and interpretation of brain signals that can be used to operate devices. Both the UK and Japan have research groups which are working on various aspects of BMI research, supported by funding from various government agencies, charitable organisations, universities and commercial companies.

The Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute in Kyoto, the National Institute of Physiological Sciences in Okazaki and the Institute of Neuroscience at Newcastle University, who are actively fostering the development of BMI research in their respective countries, announced their intention on 12 February 2009 to work together to promote cooperation between groups in the UK and Japan in order to facilitate progress in BMI research. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed to foster increased international cooperation and to build stronger partnerships in BMI research.

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