

**Joint Press Release
on the 6th Meeting of the Japan-Finland Joint Committee
on Cooperation in Science and Technology
(Co-chairs' Summary)**

The sixth Japan-Finland Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) on Cooperation in Science and Technology was held in Tokyo on March 9th, 2016 on the occasion of the visit of President Niinistö with participation of high-level representatives from relevant ministries, funding agencies and research institutions of both countries and the Embassy of Finland in Japan,.

Co-chairs, H.E. Mr. Makoto Katsura, Ambassador for Science and Technology Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan, and Mr. Jari Gustafsson, Permanent Vice Minister of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (MEE) of the Republic of Finland, expressed their contentment on the development of scientific and technological cooperation between Japan and Finland based on the regular JCM organized under the bilateral Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology between the Government of Japan and the Government of Finland, which entered into force in 1997.

1. STI Policy and Governance

Both sides shared information on the latest development of their national STI policies. The Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan (CAO) and MEE gave overview of STI policies in the respective governments, expressing their willingness to further promote science and technology cooperation into the direction of greater innovation.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) emphasized the importance of recent research activities and projects of both ministries and related institutions which enhances cooperation in cutting-edge scientific research between the two countries.

2. Clean Technology/Energy

The first thematic session on Clean Technology/Energy was kicked off by the signing ceremony of a revised MoU between National Institute of Advanced Science and Technology (AIST) and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT) by their respective vice presidents, symbolizing the continuation of their substantial cooperation. Both sides emphasized that utilization of Solid Oxide Fuel Cell (SOFC), unused heat and biomass are the essential targets to be focused for deepening cooperation. Both delegations also acknowledged the importance of sharing knowhow in advanced and up-to-date technology such as that of Finnish nuclear waste management. Both delegations confirmed that the improvement of technology in this field to renew traditional industry through innovation by learning from the strengths of each nation is an essential step to contribute to national and global challenges.

3. Arctic Research

Both delegations appreciated continued efforts of National Institute of Polar Research (NIPR) and Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) to strengthen cooperation in the wide range of research areas from basic to applied sciences such as Arctic snow coverage

under the influence of global warming under the new MoU signed at the end of 2015. and satellite simulation applicable for safe Arctic shipping. The Japanese Ambassador in charge of Arctic Affairs, H.E. Ms. Kazuko Shiraishi, introduced Japan's Arctic Policy as a foundation to accelerate Arctic research. Furthermore, to facilitate discussions on future priorities to increase cooperation, MEE with MEXT and NIPR organized a mini-seminar on Arctic research as a side event of the JCM on the same day and successfully brought together various stakeholders in the field.

4. Health

In the area of Health with particular focus in aging society, both sides welcomed the extensive progress of collaboration in ICT-based Medicine aiming to develop comprehensive imaging-based diagnostic technology of whole body organs (National Cerebral and Cardiovascular Center (NCVC) and Turku PET Center), technical innovation in wireless body area network for patient monitoring (Yokohama National University and City of Oulu), and integrated model for the elderly care (AIST and VTT). Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) and Academy of Finland (AF) provided the background on their funding programmes, including joint calls in Medical Science which were decided to continue at the last JCM with The Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation (Tekes), which covers comprehensive projects in this area and thus represents respective national priorities. Both delegations confirmed the high standard of practical research with results to take put into practice in the near future.

5. Bioeconomy

Both sides, Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and VTT presented their concepts and applications in biomass. Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) introduced a research on biomass conversion, which is conducted by AIST, and an on-going collaborative project on biofuel and green chemical conducted by Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE). Thermochemical and biotechnical conversion technologies were presented by Finland (VTT) as tools to add value on biobased products. Both delegations shared insights on the potential of cooperation in this field based on the updates in relevant research policies, statistics and research and regarded high added value bio-based product could be one of the solutions to a growing number of major societal challenges, including climate change mitigation, energy and food security and resource efficiency.

6. Cooperation Framework for STI Cooperation

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and AF expressed their satisfaction on continuous and fruitful research funding collaboration for researcher mobility and international joint programmes based on the MoU signed in 1998.

Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), AF and Tekes were also satisfied to reach consensus on utilizing joint calls under the Strategic International Collaborative Research Program (SICORP) based on MoU signed in 2008 aiming at tackling core issues such as material sciences in the past and ICT for the support of elderly people recently (one of its AIST-VTT project introduced in the Health session of JCM).

Both funding agencies confirmed their intention to proceed cooperation within the current frameworks to foster the mobility of researchers and promote academic cooperation between highly qualified researchers of both countries.

The next Joint Committee Meeting will be held in Finland and its date will be coordinated through diplomatic channels.