

Conclusion

As described above, the progress of an aging society with fewer children is a problem that will affect a variety of aspects of Japan's society in the future. It is a big issue for us to cope with this problem in the midst of increasingly severe international competition. However, as we now face the big transition in the declining population, it could be said that we have the opportunity to be the pioneers of a new society by actively addressing the problems, regarding this to be a challenging opportunity to build the future society.

In order to realize such a challenge, it should be required to review the various social systems that have been established under the growing population, and to realize affluence under the aging society with fewer children, while giving consideration to global environmental problems and resource/energy constraints.

The challenge would be to design a society where we can maintain economic vitality and achieve happiness of the people through self-realization, with each individual working to enhance their skills and capabilities, and to conduct fulfilling activities in the community. In addition, it would be a society where the social burden could be minimized as much as possible with everyone working and supporting each other. It would also be a society where an individual could spend time throughout their life on family activities, personal interests and community activities, while maintaining a balance between work and daily life: in other words, a balanced society offering quality of life.

To realize such a society, it is necessary to make wide-ranging efforts throughout the entire society, since it involves a variety of elements, such as the various social systems and attitudes of people. As the population declines, science and technology becomes the wellspring of the power to maintain and improve the economic vigor that is the foundation of a wealthy society. Science and technology have a significant role to fulfill in this challenge, including the creation of new knowledge resulting from the progress in science and technology, and realization of innovation based on this. Science and technology are also required to address the needs of society in the fields of health, safety and security.

It is also anticipated that science and technology will provide an even greater impact on all facets of society in the future. In order for science and technology to properly meet the demands of society, there must be understanding, sympathy and support from a wide range of people toward science and technology. In such an environment, a wide range of science and technology related human resources can be developed, as well as the nurturing of an attractive research environment where highly qualified personnel from throughout the world can gather and develop under competitive conditions. Furthermore, it is also expected that this will give rise to knowledge and understanding that will contribute to solving common problems shared for all of humanity.

This is the first year of the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan that adopts the basic posture of "S&T to be supported by public and to benefit society," and "Emphasis on fostering human resources and competitive research environments." From now, Japan will aim to be a creative nation based on science and technology, and to steadily implement the Basic Plan while

strategically prioritizing research and development investment through selection and concentration. Through this effort and the promotion of science and technology, it is required to establish an abundant and vital society, as well as to contribute to solving the common problems for all of humanity through the creation and utilization of knowledge.