

Foreword

This year marks the fourth year since the adoption of the Second Science and Technology Basic Plan, in which Japan's basic policies for science and technology are articulated. This is an important juncture for thinking about how to proceed with Japan's science and technology policy, as we exert greater efforts for the promotion of science and technology to firmly ensure that the Basic Plan produces results, and move toward implementation of the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan.

Today, developments in science and technology have brought prosperity to our lives and have vastly expanded the possibilities for human activities, with the result that science and technology is now deeply connected to all parts of our life. On the other hand, global environmental problems, bioethics issues, and other societal issues have also been revealed. Moreover, the relationship between science and technology, and society, will become even closer in the future, and people's thinking about science and technology can be expected to become more diverse.

In this situation, it is important that we obtain the thoughts of all our people about what the course for science and technology should be in the future. As a result, the theme explored in this year's White Paper on Science and Technology is "The Future of Science and Technology and Society," and it contains analysis from a variety of viewpoints of the issues and policies for building the optimum relationship between science and technology, and society.

An optimum relationship between science and technology, and society, cannot be achieved by the government alone, but can be achieved through active cooperation among members of the science community, the world of industry, and all other people in the community. In this regard, it is important for scientists and technologists, as members of society, to engage in exchanges with the people, so as to strengthen mutual trust, and to encourage the people to treat science and technology as issues of personal importance.

It is hoped that this white paper will be utilized by the people as an opportunity to think about and discuss science and technology. The government, as well, will be using this white paper as a guideline for the future promotion of science and technology.

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