

***Science Advisors' Roundtable 2023 on
"The Role of Science and Technology Advisors/Advice
in the Era of Changing World"***

***organized by the Center for Research and Development Strategy (CRDS),
Saturday, 30th September 2023, 16:30-17:50 Kyoto International Conference Center***

~discussion summary~

Participants (alphabetical order):

CARROZZA, Maria	President, National Research Council (CNR), Italy
HASHIMOTO, Kazuhito	Science and Technology Advisor to the Cabinet; President, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)
KISHI, Teruo	Former Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
KOTANI, Motoko	Science and Technology Co-Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs; Executive Vice President for Research, Tohoku University
KOYASU, Shigeo	Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); President, National Institute for Quantum Science and Technology (QST)
MATSUMOTO, Yoichiro	Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
MCLEAN, Angela	Government Chief Scientific Adviser, UK
MOHD AZZMAN, Tengku	Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Advisor to the Prime Minister & Nation; President of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM)
QUEST, Stephen	Director-General of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
QUIRION, Remi	Chief Scientist of Québec, President of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice (INGSA)
SCHWIER, Allison	Acting Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State

Moderation and Secretariat:

ARIMOTO, Tateo, the Senior Advisor to the President of JST (Moderator)

ASANO, Kana, Fellow, Center for Research and Development Strategy (Moderator)

KURAMOCHI, Takao, Deputy Director General, Center for Research and Development Strategy

KOBAYASHI Osamu, Director, Department of International Affairs

Date and Venue: Saturday, 30th September 2023, Kyoto International Conference Center

Agenda:

16:30-16:40 Opening and Keynote speech by
Dr. HASHIMOTO Kazuhito,
Science and Technology Advisor
to the Cabinet of JAPAN



16:40-17:25 Comments from participants

17:25-17:45 Discussion

17:45-17:50 Closing



Discussion Summary:

JST held a roundtable discussion on the occasion of the 20th Annual Meeting of the Science and Technology in Society (STS) forum (<http://www.stsforum.org/>), bringing together those who are playing scientific advisory roles in various ways to discuss common interests and concerns.

Participants agreed that the role of S&T advisors and scientific advice is becoming more important than ever. With the rapid advancement of emerging technologies like AI, quantum technology, and biotechnology, combined with shifts in global geopolitics, the significance of scientific advice is being re-evaluated. For instance, the outcome of the G20 Chief Scientific Advisors' Roundtable, which encourages to establish a global science advice mechanism using science diplomacy, was adopted as an annex of G20 Summit meeting outcomes in September 2023. In this context, participants shared best practices and challenges in each country/region and engaged in frank discussions on the roles and initiatives expected of science and technology advisors/advice. Specifically, they have acknowledged the following:

- Providing scientific advice to policy makers and politicians is not always easy. This is because it is not always easy to speak truth to power. We have to give fair advice about what we know and what we don't know. There are no “textbooks for science advisors”. That is why it is beneficial for all of us to share our respective processes and efforts.
- Convergence of knowledge and cross-disciplinary approaches are essential for fair scientific advice. For this purpose, various networks are needed. First, extremely strong networks with academia, industry, and others outside of government are needed. At the same time, it is necessary to break down stove-piped silos within government and encourage collaboration among relevant sectors. In addition, a network of international advisors and scientific consultants would be very useful. Scientific advisors cannot necessarily function most effectively in isolation, and it is necessary to build an ecosystem that includes a support system.

- Recognizing that society has become globalized and borderless, governments and nations must also consider that they are part of the international community. In addition, there are various phases of scientific advice - global, regional, national, and local - that require different responses. In this context, science diplomacy is extremely important. In particular, we shared some examples, recognizing that important and emerging technologies are an significant part of the diplomacy agenda and that diplomats need to work on improving their scientific literacy.
- It is important to understand what the public thinks about science and scientific advice, to gain public understanding, and to engage the public. Fostering trust in science will also be important in confronting fake news and disinformation. In a world where values are not always shared equally, scientific advice has a major role to play.

In conclusion, participants agreed that it is very critical for science advisors and those who are playing the role of science advice to meet and exchange ideas. They also agreed to actively create such occasion in the future and recognized networking organizations of scientific advice and science advisors such as INGSA (International Network for Governmental Science Advice), FMSTAN (Foreign Minister Science and Technology Advisors' Network), ESAF (European Science Advisors Forum) and STS *forum*.

Note:

This meeting was held under Chatham House Rule.

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