4. Canada-Japan Relations

In 1986 Canada and Japan signed a bilateral agreement on S&T Co-operation that greatly facilitates the interactions of our two countries, especially for the Japanese side with respect to their being able to access funding for joint activity. This government-to-government agreement has been an excellent tool in establishing and promoting strong bilateral linkages across a huge spectrum of areas of specialisation. Canada's science-based departments and agencies signalled their strong support for such bilateral interactions in the form of the size of the attendance at the last meeting in support of this agreement. Twenty delegates from 11 organisations attended the sessions in Tokyo, in June, 1997. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Ottawa in about three months' time. The Japanese side believes that the bilateral relationship with Canada is one that both sides have been making excellent use of, in assisting our respective scientific communities. As this Agreement is updated and renewed on a regular basis, the relationship is strengthened increasingly, and the ties deepen. Two speciality panels exist under this agreement: the 'Space Panel' and the 'Panel on Earth Sciences and Environment in the North Pacific'. These panels meet on a regular basis and report to the biennial Canada-Japan Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

Many other interactions exist, some of which fall directly under the umbrella of the CJJC S&T Agreement. For example, there is an active Canada-Japan Neuroscience Partnership which has been in effect for four years. This relationship has served in a very real way as a prototype for the Canadian Institutes for Health Research to use to assist it in the development of International Activities as part of its mandate. This Partnership Initiative, promoted by the Medical Research Council but participated in by other government agencies (National Research Council) and universities, has spawned numerous collaborations that otherwise would never have happened and has produced research papers that now number in the dozens and scientific research that has had major impact across numerous categories of neuroscience research.

There is also a third bilateral meeting being held (in March 2000) in Kyoto dealing with Advanced Composite Materials. This showcases advances made in Canada and in collaboration with the Japanese who are leaders in this field in many subsectors. Investigations into new materials studies including ceramics and other innovations have brought together scientists from both public and private sectors in this heating-up field of research.

As well, there is active co-operation between the Japan Marine Science and Technology Centre (JAMSTEC) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), including scientist exchanges, ships visits (e.g. the Japanese ship Mirai going to Victoria in August, 2000), and PICES (North Pacific Marine Science Organisation) interactions which often involve Japan and Canada on special projects of mutual issues (e.g., salmon stock research).

President Evans of the Canadian Space Agency and President Uchida of the National Space Development Agency of Japan signed an MOU in September 1999 with regards to personnel exchange, and an additional recent communique was also signed by PMs Obuchi and Chretien on Arctic Science, dealing in part with a central focus on climate change issues.

As well, there is a growing circle of research activity surrounding the biomedical use of new technologies and therapies dealing with Women's Reproductive Health, spearheaded by medical