

# International Impacts

As the scientific enterprise becomes ever-more global, AAAS is helping to build networks of researchers focused on addressing world challenges. Key goals, according to AAAS Chief International Officer Vaughan Turekian, are to promote multi-national research and sustainable solutions to social, economic, and environmental problems, while working to increase global science capacity. International programs at AAAS also seek to build bridges among scientific communities, to enhance the role of women scientists and engineers, and to apply science in support of human rights. See [www.aaas.org/programs/international](http://www.aaas.org/programs/international).

## Geospatial Imaging and Human Rights

Satellite images captured under a pioneering AAAS program, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, offer powerful evidence that the government of Zimbabwe has destroyed an entire settlement and relocated thousands of residents. The images, analyzed by Lars Bromley of AAAS, show two views of the settlement of Porta Farm, located just west of the Zimbabwean capital of Harare. Between 2002 and 2006, images reveal, Zimbabwe's Porta Farm, home to 6,000 to 10,000 people, was leveled. Images were released as central evidence in a report compiled by Amnesty International in London and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights in Harare.

The AAAS program explores how satellite imagery and other cutting-edge geospatial technologies can be used to assess potential human rights violations and prevent new ones before they develop. "The imaging initiative is an excellent example of how science and technology can be applied to help expose human rights violations," said Mona Younis, director of the Science and Human Rights program at AAAS. "The project is the latest in a 30-year effort by AAAS that has included documenting atrocities from Guatemala to Kosovo, while also working to promote basic human rights worldwide."

## Building Ties with Vietnam

China and India continue to generate headlines, but Vietnam is quietly emerging as a powerhouse of Asian economic development. AAAS, joined by partners in U.S. government and education, is working with high-ranking Vietnamese leaders to promote S&T cooperation between the two countries and to encourage sustainable urban development and improved science education. In May 2006, a high-level delegation from Vietnam's National Assembly visited AAAS to discuss the develop-

ment of a legal framework to encourage S&T growth in their country. In July, AAAS helped to organize a high-level development conference in Hanoi. And, Vice Minister Tran Quoc Thang of Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology paid a visit to AAAS in December.

"Vietnamese leaders have a very clear understanding of the importance of S&T investment," said Vaughan Turekian of AAAS. "They see China, they see Korea, and Japan, and they see that these countries are all investing heavily in science and technology."

## S&T Ministers Address Innovation

Top ministers from Australia and Japan shared strategies for increasing science and innovation during 2006 events at AAAS. Iwao Matsuda, Japan's minister of state for science and technology policy, selected AAAS as the setting for his first-ever U.S. address regarding Japan's innovation strategies. Japan has now entered a period of sustainable expansion and is pursuing a visionary science and technology plan to make the country a global innovation leader, he said. The country is strongly committed to S&T innovation for a number of pressing reasons, he added, including Japan's dependence on other countries for energy. Some 62 strategic S&T priorities include global environment observation technology, medical technology for the early detection of microscopic cancers, and the development of automobiles that do not use petroleum.

Julie Bishop, Australian federal minister for education, science, and training, said her nation has embarked on a multi-billion dollar investment in innovation, with funds devoted to S&T research, talent development, and education. A combination of S&T investments, critical global partnerships, and a commitment to education are central features in Australia's plan to address global challenges in the 21st century, she said.

“We are facing global issues such as climate change, clean energy production, access to water, security, and disease epidemics,” Bishop told reporters convened by AAAS. “It is incumbent upon all of us to work together for the common good.”

### Sustainability Science

Amid rising global interest in sustainability science and related social issues, AAAS’s Center for Science, Innovation, and Sustainability launched an online hub for an international research network. Even in its earliest stages, the site drew thousands of readers from around the world. The site, <http://sustainabilityscience.org>, offers an advanced, one-stop shop for scholars, governments, agencies, and others working to understand how humanity can grow and develop in an environmentally sustainable way. Including a virtual library, discussion forums, commentary, and international listings of events and programs on sustainability, the forum is bringing together researchers from developed and developing countries to focus on some of the key issues linking humans and the natural environment.

### Support for Science Reporting

In December, six young Chinese journalists were named by EurekAlert!, the AAAS science-news service, to receive AAAS Fellowships for Science Reporters in Developing Regions. With support from Elsevier, the fellowships brought science reporters to the AAAS Annual Meeting to cover the latest research and to mingle with colleagues from around the world. Winners in 2006 were Gong Yidong, *China Features*; Wu Chong, *China Daily*; Yanhong Wang, Xinhua News; and Guo Kun, *Beijing Times*, along with honorary fellows Ding Yimin, Xinhua News, and Jia Hepeng, SciDev.net. William Chang of the U.S. National Science Foundation’s Beijing office served as an independent judge.

AAAS efforts to support science reporting worldwide also included an informal, online survey of 614 reporters and 445 public information officers. U.S. reporters listed stem cells and cloning, followed by psychology and neuroscience, technology, and the environment as their readers’ top picks in the survey, which was conducted by EurekAlert!, and released during



Euroscience 2006 in Munich. By comparison, non-U.S. reporters said their audiences were more interested in the environment, climate-change research, natural disasters, and animals. See [www.aaas.org/news/releases/2006/0718euroscience.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2006/0718euroscience.shtml).

### International Press Briefings

The 2 June issue of *Science*, a special issue on the space mission to the Asteroid Itokawa, was a landmark in the journal’s history: The first special issue focusing on original, peer-reviewed research primarily by Japanese scientists. AAAS supported the effort with its first jointly organized press conference in Tokyo related to a forthcoming *Science* paper. The briefing by mission scientists from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency drew more than two dozen journalists from Japan’s top newspapers and broadcast stations — and generated extensive news coverage of the Japanese scientists’ pioneering success in understanding the structure and composition of near-Earth asteroids.

The Japan event was one of a half-dozen international press briefings organized each year by the AAAS Office of Public Programs. In 2006, such efforts also included communicating a new analysis of efforts to combat polio in India.