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On receipt of the report on the second investigation of the STAP cell papers

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President

I have just received the report of the second investigative committee set up on September 3 to re-investigate the papers. The report states that there is a high probability that the STAP phenomenon was the result of contamination by ES cells, and that Dr. Haruko Obokata committed two more acts of research misconduct in addition to the two instances reported on March 31, 2014, by the first investigative committee. The report also points out that Dr. Teruhiko Wakayama, who headed the lab to which Dr. Obokata was formerly affiliated, and Dr. Yoshiki Sasai, who played a major part in compiling the papers, both bear major responsibility. Although the two STAP cell papers published in Nature at the beginning of this year were retracted on July 2, it is highly regrettable that RIKEN scientists were involved in publishing these papers and I would like to express once again my sincere apologies for the loss of trust in the scientific community that has resulted.

The second investigative committee was set up to look into allegations made after the first investigative committee had released its report, and its members are all experts selected from outside of RIKEN. We have made every effort to cooperate in the committee's investigation by carrying out and reporting on our own scientific attempts to analyze cell lines and other materials preserved from the original experiments. I am grateful to committee chair, Dr. Isao Katsura, and to the other members of the committee for their most careful investigation carried out over the past four months. We will now proceed as required by our regulations, and the disciplinary committee will resume its deliberations.

Since transparency is of paramount importance to RIKEN's basic research, we consider it important to guarantee the right of the individual researcher to pursue their original ideas and freely publish the results of their research

activities. At the same time, RIKEN has a responsibility as a research organization to ensure the soundness of the scientific community by doing everything we can to guarantee the quality of our researchers and establish and maintain high ethical standards. To this end, we are diligently implementing an *Action Plan for Maintaining High Standards and Preventing Research Misconduct* launched on August 27, 2014, and are reporting on our progress to the Management and Reform Monitoring Committee of external experts headed by Dr. Tamotsu Nomakuchi. This committee will evaluate our efforts as we continue to implement the Action Plan to reform RIKEN and restore public trust in our activities.