RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (CDB)
2-2-3 Minatojima minamimachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0047, Japan

Japanese Prime Minister visits RIKEN CDB

June 30, 2017– The RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (CDB) hosted a second visit by Mr. Shinzo Abe, the prime minister of Japan, on Saturday, June 24. He last visited the CDB in 2013.

CDB Director Hiroshi Hamada first gave an overview of the research activities carried out that the Center, and also emphasized how basic research in developmental biology and related fields serves as the foundation for applied research in regenerative medicine and drug discovery. The Prime Minister then heard from Prof. Koji Eto, deputy director of the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application (CiRA), Kyoto University, about the activities at CIRA as well as the potential applications of induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells for the development of new drugs.

Prime Minister Abe listening to Dr. Masayo Takahashi's explanation about the samples of RPE cells that he is observing. From left, Prime Minister Abe, Dr. Masayo Takahashi, RIKEN President Hiroshi Matsumoto, and Dr. Yasuo Kurimoto.

Prime Minister Abe next met with Project Leader Masayo Takahashi (Laboratory for Retinal Regeneration) to receive an update on the progress of the clinical research involving the use of iPS cells as a treatment for an eye disease called wet-type age-related macular degeneration, and also took a firsthand look at actual samples of iPS cell-derived retinal pigment epithelial (RPE) cells, suspended in solution, that were used for transplantation. He posed questions on the efforts being made to realize iPS cell-based therapy, and also exchanged views on this topic with Dr. Takahashi and her collaborator Dr. Yasuo Kurimoto, director of the Department of Ophthalmology, Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital. During the roundtable discussion led by RIKEN President Hiroshi Matsumoto, the Prime Minister expressed his desire to see Japan continue to lead the world in iPS cell research in areas of regenerative medicine and drug discovery.

Contact: sciencenews@cdb.riken.jp Fax: +81-78-306-3090
RIKEN CDB, Office for Research Communications