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The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) is a next-generation optical-infrared telescope with a 30meter aperture, offering unprecedented resolution and sensitivity that will far surpass existing large telescopes. It is expected to become an essential facility for advancing astronomy in the 2030s and beyond. The scientific targets of TMT extend well beyond the field of opticalinfrared astronomy, encompassing a wide range of fields including broader astronomy, physics, planetary science, and astrobiology. It is anticipated to lead to many groundbreaking discoveries across disciplines. It is our understanding that the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ) has positioned the TMT project as the highest priority and has been working very closely with the Japanese research community to realize the project.

In the process of formulating the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT) "Roadmap 2023 for Large Scientific Research Projects," the Astronomical Society of Japan issued a letter of support for the TMT project, recognizing that it would not only drive major advances in the natural sciences, but also contribute to strengthening Japan's research capabilities, enhancing its international presence, and fostering globally competitive human resources. As a result of careful consideration of its scientific significance, feasibility, and current status, the TMT project was listed on the Roadmap 2023.

In the United States, TMT has been pursued as part of the U.S. Extremely Large Telescope (US-ELT) program, alongside the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT). However, on May 30 (US local time), the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) submitted its FY2026 budget request to the U.S. Congress, in which it proposed advancing GMT to the Final Design Phase while not doing the same for TMT, and indicated that no additional commitment of funds from NSF would be made for TMT at this stage.

The TMT project brings together the advanced technological capabilities of its international partners—the United States, Canada, India, and Japan—to achieve extremely high resolution

and sensitivity. Having already overcome major technical challenges, and with steady progress in building understanding and support among the local communities in Hawai'i, the project must not falter at this critical juncture.

We recognize that the NSF's announcement reflects the content of its budget request, and that the direction to be indicated by the U.S. Congress, which holds the authority to appropriate funds, will be key to the realization of the project. In order to move the TMT project forward, it is essential for Japan to take the lead and demonstrate its strong commitment to realizing the project.

For these reasons, the Astronomical Society of Japan strongly supports the continued advancement of the TMT project, led by the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, as one of Large Scientific Research Projects in Japan.

Shigeru Ida

President Astronomical Society of Japan