



한국여성과학기술단체총연합회
Korea Federation of Women's Science & Technology Associations

Press Release

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Sir Tim Hunt makes formal apology to KOFWST

The Korea Federation of Women's Science & Technology Associations (KOFWST) requested Sir Tim Hunt's formal apology for his inappropriate remarks made during a luncheon sponsored by KOFWST at the WCSJ on June 8, 2015. Sir Tim Hunt responded immediately by e-mail and has apologized as follows.

- Attached 1. KOFWST Request to Sir Tim Hunt
- 2. Response of Sir Tim Hunt

2015. 6. 16. Korea Federation of Women's Science & Technology Associations

Attached 1. KOFWST Request to Sir Tim Hunt

Dear Sir Tim Hunt,

We, the members of the Korea Federation of Women's Science and Technology Associations (KOFWST), the sponsoring organization of the WCSJ luncheon on June 8, 2015, have decided to request your official acknowledgement and apology for the remarks made at the luncheon. Attached, please find, our call for apology. We hope to get your response **within 24 hours**. Your prompt and sincere apology is the least we can ask for any future collaboration with Korean scientists.

Yours sincerely,

Hee Young Paik, President

[Attachment]

**KOFWST call for apology over inappropriate comments
made by Sir Tim Hunt**

At a luncheon hosted by the Korea Federation of Women's Science and Technology Associations (KOFWST) during the World Conference of Science Journalists in Seoul on June 8, 2015, Nobel Laureate Sir Tim Hunt made some inappropriate remarks over which KOFWST would like to express its very strong regrets.

Sir Tim Hunt said that if men and women work in the same lab: "You fall in love with them, they fall in love with you and when you criticize them, they cry." As women scientists, we were deeply shocked and saddened by these remarks, but we are comforted by the widespread angered response from international social and news media: we are not alone in seeing these comments as sexist and damaging to science.

In a subsequent BBC interview, Sir Tim Hunt elaborated on his statement, saying that "I did mean [it]" and "I meant to be honest." His "honest" beliefs reveal deep gender prejudices and bias on how women's role in science is perceived. The international science community, including Korea, has been making great efforts to overcome persistent gender inequalities in science that prevent women from advancing on equal terms with men. During the last several decades, efforts made by Korean society, government and individuals have helped make great strides toward a more gender equal society. We cannot allow sexism to undermine this progress.

Although Dr. Hunt is a senior and highly accomplished scientist in his field who has closely collaborated with Korean scientists in the past, his comments have caused great concern and regret in Korea. They show that old prejudices are still well embedded in science cultures. On behalf of Korean female scientists, and all Koreans, we wish to express our great disappointment that these remarks were made at the event hosted by KOFWST. This unfortunate incident must not be

portrayed as a private story told as a joke. We cannot accept sexist remarks that threaten to reverse the gains made towards equality for women scientists, and women in the wider society.

On behalf of all women scientists in Korea and the world, we at KOFWST ask Dr. Hunt to acknowledge the seriousness of his remarks and extend a sincere and prompt apology in order to foster gender equality in science. Such an apology is the least that he can do in order to facilitate his future fruitful collaboration with Korean scientists.

KOFWST will continue to make every effort to foster a society, in which men and women can collaborate harmoniously and without gender bias or discrimination, to succeed.

2015. 6. 16.

Korea Federation of Women's Science & Technology Associations (KOFWST)

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Attached 2. Response of Sir Tim Hunt

Dear Hee Young Paik,

I am extremely grateful to you for giving me the opportunity of apologising for my stupid and ill-judged remarks.

I am extremely sorry for the remarks made during the recent "Women in science" lunch at the WCSJ in Seoul, Korea. I accept that my attempts at a self-deprecating joke were ill-judged and not in the least bit funny. I am mortified to have upset my hosts, which was the very last thing I intended. I also fully accept that the sentiments as interpreted have no place in modern science and deeply apologize to all those good friends who fear I have undermined their

efforts to put these stereotypes behind us. In my own career I have always tried to treat my colleagues with respect and kindness whoever they are and am proud to have developed and mentored the careers of many excellent young scientists who will be tackling tomorrow's biological problems long after I have left the scene. I would like to ask that people accept my apology as heartfelt and judge me on my record.

I have tremendous respect for Korean science and scientists, and would point out that my very happy association with Korea came about through a female scientist.

Best wishes,

Tim