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Dr Masakazu Aono is the Director General of the Nanosystem Functionality Center, National Institute for Materials Science (NIMS), Tsukuba, Japan. He is also a Professor at the Department of Material and Life Science, Osaka University, Japan. His main research interests lie in nanoscience and technology, surface physics and chemistry, and nanoelectronics. He obtained his PhD from the University of Tokyo in 1972. Before serving as a Chief Scientist in RIKEN during 1982 to 2002, he spent 2 years as a Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin, USA. He has been the director of several large research projects funded by Japan Science and Technology Corporation (JST) such as the Aono Atomcraft Project in the ERATO program (1989-1994), Novel Functions of Artificial Nanostructures Project in the CREST Program (1995-2001), the Novel Atomic Switch Project in the SORST Program (2001-2003) and the Nanoscale Quantum Conductor Array Project in the ICORP Program. Dr Aono has been awarded various prestigious prizes in Japan including the Minister of Science and Technology Agency Prize, the Kumagi Prize for Vacuum Science and the Japan Surface Science Society Prize. He is also a Fellow of the American Vacuum Society (USA), the Institute of Physics (UK) and the National Institute for Materials Science (Japan). He serves on various international advisory board and editorial board such as International Conferences on the Structure of Surfaces, International Conferences on Ion Beam Analysis, International Conferences on Trends in Nanotechnology, Japanese Journal of Applied Physics, Surface Review and Letters, Probe Microscopy, Nanoscience, Small, etc.