

Welcoming Remarks
by Mr. Ichita YAMAMOTO, Minister of State for Science and
Technology Policy (Japan)

(Introduction)

Good morning, excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for attending the 14th FNCA Ministerial Level Meeting. On behalf of the Japanese government, I would like to say a few words to welcome all of you from the neighboring countries.

(Circumstances about Nuclear Energy)

First of all, let me talk about Japan's nuclear energy policy. In 2011, we have experienced an unprecedented nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. We have sincerely regret that we were not able to prevent such an accident and resolved never to let it happen again. Now, we have been reconsidering the former Government's policy, which is "Zero operation of nuclear stations by 2030's." We are currently working to reestablish a responsible energy policy with our commitment to enhance nuclear nonproliferation structure.

While we may see less dependence on nuclear power as a result of energy conservation and growth of renewable energy, we recognize that nuclear power will remain as important energy source in respect of assuring stable supply of energy and affordable energy costs. In parallel, Japan will restart the nuclear power plants which are currently shut down once their compliance with the newly enacted regulations is confirmed. The Nuclear Regulation Authority that has launched in September last year has received applications for compliance check of the 14 reactors with the new regulations.

We are currently redefining the role of Japan Atomic Energy Commission as we recognize drastic changes have happened in the Japanese nuclear environment due to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. After a thorough review, a new role of the commission should

place emphasis on such themes as a peaceful use of nuclear technology, disposal of radioactive wastes and so on.

In this connection, let me briefly mention the current status of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. You will have detailed information in the afternoon session. Currently, radioactivity due to the contaminated ground water is contained within an area of 0.3 km² of the port of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Taking countermeasures against the contaminated ground water leakage is the most urgent task for us. The Government of Japan has decided to assume a proactive role to achieve a fundamental settlement of this issue. As for the decommissioning of the damaged reactors, we have started fuel removal from the Unit 4 pool on November 18. So far, removal operation is proceeding smoothly and on schedule.

(Effort by FNCA)

Let me go on to speak about FNCA. First, I would like to recall that FNCA is a framework that was established for the purpose of efficient and effective cooperation of Asian countries toward the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. Based on equal partnership, 12 countries have been promoting cooperative activities in the nuclear field.

I would like to recognize projects in the various fields such as medical care, industry and environment have been demonstrating solid achievement and have been contributing to the social and economic development and welfare of Asian region in a concrete manner. An example of such achievement is establishment of standard radiation therapy protocols on cancers.

FNCA Study Panel has been contributing to the highest level of nuclear safety in Asian region by active information sharing on the nuclear power infrastructure development. This is critically important in Asian region, where electricity demand has been growing faster than any other part of the world.

In our meeting this afternoon, we have two themes for the roundtable discussion. The first theme is “Effective Implementation of Project Outcomes and Building Relationship with End-users.” FNCA’s individual projects have already attained good level of R&D achievement. However, there are challenges to overcome when it comes to how to bring benefit to end users. I would like to see that all of us will share good ideas and discuss how we will be able to turn R&D achievement into commercial use.

The second theme is “Nuclear Security Culture Development”. Nuclear security is becoming more and more important in today’s international society. I hope to have a constructive discussion on how to establish nuclear security culture in our Asian community under our leadership.

(Closing Remarks)

Ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely hope that our FNCA’s activities will enhance the contribution of nuclear science and technology to social and economic development of the member countries and welfare of the citizens’.

Thank you for your attention.