

The 10th Ministerial Level Meeting of the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia
(FNCA)

Welcoming Remark by Deputy Prime Minister Naoto KAN

16, December, 2009, Tokyo, Japan

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Japanese government, it is a great pleasure for me to deliver the welcome address to this gathering. Let me extend my hearty welcome to your Excellencies from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam to this memorable 10th Ministerial Level Meeting of the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia.

In Japan, the Hatoyama administration was inaugurated through the change of government this September. I have been supporting Prime Minister Hatoyama as the Deputy Prime Minister and have been promoting the entirety of science and technology policy, including nuclear energy policy, as the Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy. Back in university, though my major was science, I also took courses on nuclear engineering and acquired several credits. Coming from this background, I feel much honored to be able to participate in this meeting.

One of the top priorities for the new administration is to pursue the balancing of economic growth with environmental protection and the shift to a low carbon society, in particular. As you know, Prime Minister Hatoyama declared to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020, if compared to the 1990 level, on the premise of agreement on ambitious targets by all the major economies" at the United Nations Summit on Climate Change on September 22. It is widely known that these issues are now being discussed intensively at the ongoing meeting of the COP15 in Copenhagen.

In order to achieve this 25% reduction target, the Japanese government proposes to promote "Green Innovation" to its industry and people. This concept aims to promote technological development concerning solar energy and other new energy, as well as renewable energy, while building a sustainable society and changing social systems, with agriculture and forestry, or greenery, as a key element. In this process, nuclear energy, which is free from CO₂ emissions, is one of the significant components of "Green Innovation" in a wider sense. The Hatoyama administration will steadily promote nuclear power generation domestically and overseas, with safety as the major premise.

With that, let me turn to the nuclear power. Recently, the international community has come to reconsider the use of nuclear energy, with its high potential, from the viewpoint of coping with an expanding energy demand and the need for combating global warming and the moves to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy including nuclear power generation have further gained momentum, as you all know. In our homelands in Asia, which hold nearly 60% of the world's population and have high potential for economic growth, this tendency is particularly notable and several countries in the region are intensively promoting their programs of introducing and/or expanding nuclear power generation.

In parallel with this move, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have come to be recognized as significant issues in the world community. US President Obama's speech toward a "world without nuclear weapons" in Prague in April 2009 and his receiving of the Nobel Peace Prize have accelerated positive movements toward progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan, which has appealed the international community for the elimination of nuclear weapons as the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks, is determined to continue our strenuous efforts to accelerate global move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Japan has many nuclear power plants, but has consistently maintained the policy of limiting the research, development and utilization of nuclear energy only to the peaceful purposes, recycling the plutonium generated in the plants for power generation and not allowing it to be used for military purposes. We are proud that such a consistent stance has gained the trust of many countries in the world.

This December, Mr. Yukiya Amano from Japan acceded to the office of the IAEA Director General. Backed by strong momentum toward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the role that the IAEA is supposed to play has become more and more significant. The Japanese government will securely support Director General Amano so that he can fulfill his responsibilities.

This year marks the 10th year since the establishment of the FNCA in April of 2000. Under the principal concept of "aiming at contribution to enhancing socio-economic development through active regional partnerships on the peaceful use of nuclear technology," the FNCA has actively promoted cooperative activities in the fields of agriculture, medical care and industry and has numerous achievements in the last 10 years. For example, the Radiation Oncology Project has established the Standardized

Radiotherapy Protocol for Treatment of Uterine Cervix Cancer, which is now applied as the standard in Asia.

In 2004, cooperative activities in the field of nuclear power generation were newly introduced and the FNCA has held various study panel meetings that have facilitated positive discussions on the role of nuclear energy for the sustainable development of Asia and on the cooperation for human resources development for nuclear power generation and the nuclear safety.

Today's Ministerial Level Meeting is the memorable 10th meeting. I truly appreciate the contributions that all member countries have made in the last 10 years. I think that the activities of the FNCA will become more and more important in ensuring that the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the new era will be promoted in Asia and the world at large and will bring about happiness to as many people as possible throughout the world. I very much look forward to your positive participation and cooperation for the success of the meeting.

Thank you for listening.