

**Welcome Remarks by Mr.Katuei Hirasawa, Senior Deputy Minister
of State for Science and Technology policy, Cabinet Office**

The 7th Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA) Ministerial-level Meeting,

November 27, 2006

(Opening)

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

In opening the 7th Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA) Ministerial-level Meeting and Seminar and Exhibition on Public Information of Nuclear Energy, I wish to offer opening remarks on the capacity of the Senior Deputy Minister of the Japanese government in charge of science and technology policy, including the R&D and utilization of nuclear energy.

First of all, I wish to thank the Malaysian government for its warmest hospitality. Let me also extend my sincere welcome to delegations from FNCA partners, namely Australia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and our new partner Bangladesh, which is participating in a FNCA meeting for the first time.

(Basic recognition of FNCA)

In order to make effective use of knowledge and achievements in nuclear-related science and technology, it is essential to establish international cooperation including exchange of information and experiences through bilateral, multilateral and international entities, while maintaining the premise of ensuring peaceful use of nuclear

technology, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear safety and nuclear security. I understand that the aim of FNCA is to pursue peaceful and safe use of nuclear technology and promote Asia's socio-economic development through exercising active partnership in the region. It is an optimum platform of international cooperation in promoting such exchange of information and experiences.

In the "Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy", setting out the nation's basic nuclear energy policy, Japan expresses its emphasis on cooperation with Asian nations, with which we have close ties both geographically and economically. The Japanese government intends to remain actively involved in activities of FNCA.

(Peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation)

The recent nuclear test by North Korea poses a serious threat to the peace and safety of not only Japan but also the rest of East Asia and the international community, and is therefore totally unacceptable. Being the only country that has suffered a nuclear attack, Japan is firmly committed to the three principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan. To maintain and strengthen the international mechanism for nuclear non-proliferation must be in place to promote the research, development and use of nuclear energy for the purposes of enhancing the welfare of human society and improving the standard of living in various countries. Japan has ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, concluded the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocols with IAEA, and established a corresponding safeguard system domestically. To reinforce

the NPT framework, it is extremely important that all countries that utilize nuclear energy sign the Additional Protocols, and comply with the obligations in good faith.

(Nuclear safety and security)

Safety assurance is the fundamental premise for promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Amidst threat of nuclear terrorism, the international community must unite in reinforcing nuclear security. Japan recognizes the utmost significance of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism adopted last year and the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, as proof of international community's resolve in reinforcing measures against nuclear terrorism. We are examining the Conventions for early ratification, so as to facilitate their swift effectuation.

I expect the FNCA activities I am going to describe to be promoted on this premise.

(Use of radiation)

Firstly, use of radiation is an area of extreme importance in FNCA-cooperated projects in view of the current status of nuclear energy use in Asia. Numerous achievements have already been made in the fields of agricultural and medical use, and applied in real life situations. I hope cooperation between relevant countries in this type of area will be promoted, thereby spreading radiation use, delivering its benefits to a large number of people, and improving their quality of life.

(Use of nuclear energy)

Situations regarding energy use vary among FNCA members. Yet, recent changes in energy trends and the need to address environmental issues have renewed recognition of the roles of nuclear energy, building up the international momentum for promoting its peaceful use. FNCA recognizes the need for assessing nuclear energy in the perspectives of countering long-term environmental issues and securing energy resources, in a bid to ensure sustainable development of the Asian region, one of the areas around the world where solid economic growth is anticipated. In light of this, it set up a panel of experts in 2004 to initiate a three-year program to examine the “roles of nuclear energy for the sustainable development of Asia”. As Topic 1 of the round-table discussions, we report the panel’s past activities, and Japan proposes the establishment of a new panel for examining how member nations should cooperate in the area of nuclear energy. I hope to see exchange of frank opinions on this proposal among FNCA members, thus promoting FNCA’s cooperation in nuclear energy.

(Foundation activities)

In regard to activities that provide the foundation for the use of nuclear energy, FNCA is already initiating collaborations in the areas of human resources development, public information on nuclear energy and nuclear safety culture. In Asia, human resources development is a task of particular importance. Under the framework of ANTEP (Asian Nuclear Training and Education Program), agreed in the previous Ministerial-level Meeting, I expect to see the promotion of specific cooperation in sending and accepting human resources among FNCA members.

Regarding Seminar and Exhibition on Public Information of Nuclear Energy, which is hosted by the Malaysian government, I believe that these activities will lead to broad cooperation among FNCA members.

(Closing comments)

Finally, it is my hope that the Ministerial-level Meeting and your guidance will further develop FNCA activities, which, in turn, promotes each member nation's activities in the field of nuclear energy, thereby contributing to its socio-economic development.

Thank you very much for your attention.