

Welcome Remarks
By
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(Introduction)

My name is Takaichi, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy.

Ladies and gentlemen from overseas, as a representative of one of the cosponsors, I welcome you to Japan. And ladies and gentlemen from within Japan, I thank you for participating in this special symposium despite your busy schedules. Here, I would like to heartily congratulate the International Atomic Energy Agency for its 50th anniversary. It is a great pleasure for us to cosponsor this special symposium for the IAEA anniversary in Aomori Prefecture, the center of Japan's nuclear fuel cycle.

As many of you here may well know, holding the symposium in Aomori to mark the 50th anniversary of the IAEA is of special significance.

Since Aomori Prefecture and Rokkasho Village announced their acceptance of nuclear fuel cycle facilities including those for reprocessing spent nuclear fuel, enriching uranium and storing low-level radioactive wastes on 18 April 1985, just 22 years ago, Aomori region has played a key role as the center of Japan's nuclear fuel cycle project. I can't emphasize enough Aomori's significance to Japan's nuclear policy. Again, I would like to thank the citizens of Aomori Prefecture for their cooperation on the nuclear policy.

Japan's commercial nuclear fuel cycle project here represents Japan's strong will and persistent efforts to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the results of relevant countries' and the IAEA's cooperation.

Japan's attitude toward peaceful uses of nuclear energy has been consistent. Japan has faithfully responded not only to the commitment in the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement with the

IAEA but also to the expansion of the IAEA inspections under the Additional Protocol with the IAEA. As a result, the IAEA in 2004 concluded that all nuclear material within the territories of Japan had been placed under safeguards and remained in peaceful nuclear activities. This was the first time for major nuclear power-generating countries to receive such kind of conclusion by the IAEA.

The Nuclear fuel cycle Project in Aomori indicates a model case for the world and the fruits of efforts accumulated by Aomori people, the Government, the project participants, the IAEA and other relevant parties. Therefore, the implementation here in Aomori region of the special symposium to mark the IAEA's 50th anniversary is profound for Japan and of great significance to the world.

(Peaceful uses of nuclear power generation)

As energy consumption has been increasing in the world, especially in developing countries, at present, stable energy supply has become a major national policy challenge. In its report in February this year, meanwhile, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that global warming has been occurring apparently due to greenhouse gases produced by humankind.

Under such situation, the introduction of nuclear power generation is expected to expand in developing countries that pursue to secure stable, new energy sources, as well as in industrial countries that appreciate nuclear power generation as the means to pursue both stable energy supply and prevention of global warming.

Nuclear non-proliferation, security and safety are preconditions for the expansion of peaceful uses of nuclear power generation. In this sense, the IAEA's activities are growing more important.

Japan for its part has been cooperating with the IAEA in helping such countries as Vietnam, Indonesia and Kazakhstan to introduce nuclear power generation.

(Nuclear non-proliferation)

It may be needless to say that the IAEA is the pivotal organization to support the international nuclear non-proliferation

regime. We believe that it is extremely important for countries using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to ratify additional protocols with the IAEA and comply with relevant obligations. The international community should be united to prevent nuclear proliferation risks from growing while the number of countries, which introduce nuclear power generation, would increase in future. In this respect, the IAEA has taken leadership in considering a mechanism to assure nuclear fuel supply. At last September's IAEA general meeting, Iwao Matsuda, former Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, made its proposal for such mechanism. In addition, Shunsuke Kondo, Japan Atomic Energy Commission Chairman, explained the Japanese proposal at a special event of the meeting. Japan will positively participate in and contribute to discussions on a nuclear fuel supply assurance that aims to expand global nuclear power generation and ensure nuclear non-proliferation.

(Nuclear safety)

We believe that ensuring nuclear safety is the precondition to promote research, development and utilization of nuclear energy. We know that the IAEA, aiming for global nuclear safety, has been taken an active part in conducting production, systematization and diffusion of knowledge on a global scale, including the creation of various nuclear safety standards. We hope that IAEA would play a central role to further promote the activities for global nuclear safety.

(Nuclear security)

Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, the enhancement of nuclear security has emerged as a new challenge that the international community as a whole must tackle. The international community must be united to enhance nuclear security in order to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism. We must promote the conclusion of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and must enrich international efforts further to enhance measures against nuclear terrorism, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism as advocated by the United States' and Russian presidents

in July last year.

When discussing the obligation for peaceful uses of nuclear power and nuclear non-proliferation, as a citizen of the only atomic-bombed country, I must touch upon nuclear disarmament as another obligation under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The early effectuation of the Complete Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to prohibit nuclear weapons development tests, and the realization of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) to ban production of fissile substances for nuclear weapons are the most important challenges toward the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. While non-nuclear weapon states are required to prevent nuclear proliferation under the NPT, nuclear weapon states are obligated to conduct negotiations toward nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapon states should try to reduce nuclear weapons and should make maximum efforts to ratify the CTBT and realize a FMCT.

(Conclusion)

Sadly, nuclear energy had been used for weapons. If humans handle nuclear energy carefully and rationally, however, it could become an excellent blessing to make human lives more affluent. We, human beings, can choose to utilize nuclear energy as a means for destruction or as a blessing. I do believe that through the efforts by citizens in the world who pursue peace and affluence, the international community will be united to decisively choose the blessings of nuclear energy and to implement further strong cooperation aiming for peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation.

The IAEA and Director General, Dr. ElBaradei, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, being admired for the ceaseless efforts both in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation, made by the IAEA as a center of those activities and cooperation in the international community. Japan also thinks highly of the IAEA's achievement so far, over a period of 50 years.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to hope that the IAEA will take leadership in implementing such actions to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy in any nation with nuclear non-proliferation secured and to contribute to the development of

human society and the improvement of living standards in all nations.
I thank you for your kind attention.