

The 6th Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia
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Opening Address at the Ministerial Level Meeting

by H.E. Mr. Iwao Matsuda

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His Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

(Opening: Welcome Address)

At the opening of this Ministerial Level Meeting of the Sixth Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, I would like to say a few words as Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy.

Let me begin by extending a very cordial welcome as the representative of the host country to the distinguished participants from Australia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as those from Bangladesh, who will begin their participation as observers with this meeting.

(Basic Understanding Concerning FNCA)

It is my understanding that the purpose of FNCA is “to advance the peaceful and safe use of nuclear technology in order to facilitate socioeconomic development of the participating countries through proactive partnerships.”

In this regard, I would like to reiterate the relevant part of our nuclear policy document, “Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy” developed by the Atomic Energy Commission of Japan, and subsequently authorized by the Cabinet of the Japanese government. This basic policy states that the primary goal of the

nuclear energy cooperation to developing countries is to contribute to (a) improving the socioeconomic infrastructure, (b) establishing and strengthening nonproliferation regimes, as well as (c) enhancing nuclear safety of recipient countries. It also says that cooperation should be based on a partnership approach and be extended mainly to Asian countries. Our nation intends to continue to actively support FNCA activities in the future, as set out in this policy.

I would like to take this occasion today to express my expectations for the FNCA and our fundamental understanding regarding the use of nuclear energy.

(Radiation Use)

Firstly, the use of radiation technology is, given the present state of nuclear energy utilization in Asia, an extremely important branch of FNCA's activities. Many successes have already been obtained in agriculture, medicine and other fields, and they are actually contributing to the improvement of people's daily lives. It is my hope that cooperation will continue to move forward among the nations concerned, and that the utilization of radiation technology will become more widely used in the member countries and eventually large numbers of people will be able to enjoy the benefits of radiation technology.

(Utilization of Nuclear Energy)

Secondly, although the circumstances of each FNCA participating country's policy on energy use differs, I am convinced that the importance of nuclear energy use will increase in Asian countries in the very near future. As we all know significant economic growth is anticipated in the Asian region in coming years, and for this, securing a stable energy supply is essential to achieve such growth while our preventive action against global warming will become a more and more acute and critical matter for all of us. Last year, a panel was established in the FNCA, and a three-year

planned discussion on the "Role of Nuclear Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia" was commenced. Taking such perspectives on the future energy supply conditions in the Asian region into account, I strongly believe that it is very important to continue discussing the role of nuclear energy and cooperation among all FNCA nations in the panel, maintaining our fundamental premise on safety.

(Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation)

The underlying fundamental assumptions for the promotion of uses of nuclear energy are peaceful use, nonproliferation guarantees, ensuring safety, and the security of nuclear material.

Strengthening of a nuclear nonproliferation regime is extremely important to advancing the use of nuclear power. Our nation, as the sole country in the world that has been exposed to radiation from the harrowing experience of an atomic bomb, has strictly adhered to "the three non-nuclear principles" of not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan.

Japan has ratified the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and has concluded Comprehensive Safeguard Agreements and Additional Protocols with the IAEA. To implement obligations stipulated in these agreements, Japan has been implementing strict corresponding domestic safeguard measures and has undertaken continuous improvement of them. I consider it extremely important that all nations using nuclear energy sign the additional protocols and perform their obligations in good faith, and I call on those countries that have not ratified these agreements to do so promptly, in order to strengthen the nonproliferation regime.

(Nuclear Power Safety and Security)

Ensuring safety is the very fundamental prerequisite for the

promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. With the threat of nuclear terrorism on the rise, it is vital that the international community make a united effort to strengthen nuclear security, such as tightening controls on radioactive materials including nuclear materials. Our nation welcomes the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as well as the amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. I would like to call on FNCA participating countries to promptly ratify and implement both treaties so that these two important international agreements can be put into effect as early as possible. Furthermore, regulation of radiation sources is also important, and I request that FNCA participating countries strengthen their commitment to the IAEA's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

These are my expectations for the FNCA and the fundamental recognition regarding the present status, challenges in front of us, and future course of action to be taken in relation to the use of nuclear energy.

(Science & Technology and Nuclear Energy)

In order to achieve sustainable economic development in Asia, it is important for each nation to strive for economic development through the advancement of science and technology. Safe use of nuclear energy requires sound and reliable nuclear technology, which is an integrated technology bringing together science and technology from a variety of scientific technological fields. At the same time, nuclear technology contributes to a wide-range of other technology areas, providing tools for analysis, measurement and observational study. For example, in conducting research and development in biotechnology, nanotechnology, and new forms of medical treatment, nuclear technology has been playing an important role. Therefore, research and development of nuclear technology needs to be planned and conducted under a

well coordinated and comprehensive science and technology policy.

This is the reason why I chose "Science & Technology and Nuclear Energy," as one of the topics in today's round table session, which will be held in this afternoon.

In the discussion session, I anticipate we will be able to actively exchange our views and opinion on:

- (a) how we can establish an effective link between nuclear technology development and overall science and technology policy in a country; and
- (b) how we can obtain better public acceptance and understanding on science and technology including nuclear technology.

I believe that such exercise in the session will contribute to the better policy formulation in each participating countries by sharing our knowledge and experience on these issues, and to develop a common view on our future objectives to be aimed at in the framework of the FNCA.

(Concluding Remarks)

Lastly, I hope we will be able to have a fruitful Ministerial Level Meeting, and this meeting will be another step to strengthen our cooperation in the future FNCA activities. Also, I hope that the outcome of this meeting will contribute to promoting nuclear technology of every participating country on the fundamental premise of ensuring safety and public acceptance, and will eventually contribute to socioeconomic development.

Thank you very much for your attention.