

Opening Address by Mr. Yoshitake MASUHARA, Senior Vice-Minister of
Cabinet Office, Japan

The 9th Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA) Ministerial Level
Meeting, November 28, 2008

(Opening)

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Upon opening the 9th Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA)
Ministerial Level Meeting, I would like to extend my greetings as one of
the organizers of the meeting, and as the senior-vice minister for science
and technology policy at large, including nuclear energy.

First of all, I am honored to have delegates from Australia, Bangladesh,
China, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam join the
meeting.

The government of the Philippines hosts this meeting jointly with Japan,
and we thank the Philippines for the g good hospitality we received at
yesterday's reception and on other occasions.

(Situations surrounding Nuclear Power)

In recent years, global warming and securing stable energy supply has now
come to be a global issue.

Considering that the expected increase of global energy consumption in the future forms a significant threat to the stable supply of energy, it is now necessary to swiftly work out effective countermeasures. In order to achieve a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions toward 2050, while seeking a stable energy supply, the peaceful use of nuclear energy must be indispensable.

At the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July this year, participating countries shared the awareness in its leaders declaration that stated "we witness that a growing number of countries have expressed their interests in nuclear power programs as a means to addressing climate change and energy security concerns. These countries regard nuclear power as an essential instrument in reducing dependence on fossil fuels and hence greenhouse gas emissions."

(Approaches of the FNCA)

The FNCA has continued for 8 years since 2000, and for nearly 20 years when its predecessor, the International Conference for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (ICNCA), is included. The FNCA is a unique cooperation framework which, through active partnership of member countries, has steadily produced results contributing to the practical application of nuclear technology.

I recognize that the source of the FNCA's success lies in the fact that it has conducted research and development cooperation as well as joint studies in practical manners, selecting the subject of radiation application technologies in which member countries have a common interest.

Research and development cooperation through multilateral frameworks can be advantageous because it enables the utilization of a broad range of needs, data and know-how possessed by each member country, and makes it easier to pursue results that have wider range of applications.

I hope that this cooperation will be actively promoted so that we can continue to obtain better results which contribute to regional development.

(Efforts for Infrastructure Development)

As stated in the "Joint Communiqué" issued at last year's Ministerial Meeting of the FNCA, nuclear power generation is the practical means that can contribute to both stable energy supply and to reduction in emission of greenhouse gases.

As such, the FNCA member countries are showing increasingly active moves toward initiation and expansion of nuclear power generation.

The Japanese government recognizes that its important role is to provide Japan's experience and knowledge on infrastructure development for nuclear power as well as its advanced safety technologies, to the movements toward the introduction of nuclear power.

Securing reliable operation of nuclear power generation requires development and continuous improvement of many technical and social infrastructures, as stated in the IAEA's "Milestones" documents.

I believe that the activity required of the FNCA is the building of know-how for utilizing the experience and knowledge stored among member countries to develop infrastructure for the introduction and expansion of nuclear power. I will refer to this point in my preliminary deliberation for today's round table meeting.

(Closing)

I hope that this ministerial level meeting will hold active discussions and have results that will contribute to the further progress of the FNCA.

The FNCA will become more and more important while the expansion of peaceful use of nuclear energy is expected in the area, and nuclear power is regarded as a major issue at the ASEAN as well. Pursuing better coordination with activities by international organizations like the IAEA is also important.

Finally, I hope that FNCA member countries' activities in the peaceful use of nuclear energy will be benefitted by FNCA achievements, and will contribute to the development of the respective countries' social economy and the people's welfare.

(End)