

Opening Address at the Third Panel Meeting on the Role of Nuclear Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia, Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA)

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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of Atomic Energy Commission of Japan, I am pleased to welcome you all to the third Panel Meeting on the Role of Nuclear Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Fukui Prefecture and Tsuruga City for your constant cooperation to the promotion of nuclear energy policy in Japan.

As energy is critical to virtually every form of economic activity, secure and affordable energy supply is a necessary pre-condition to raise the standard of living of the people. It is therefore essential for FNCA countries to prepare for steady growth of energy demand in the region, where the population is growing, information technology businesses are booming, and democratization of the society is in maturing process.

In considering a policy to prepare for the growing demand for energy, it is very important to pay due attention to the assurance of stable, economical and environmentally acceptable supply of energy over a long period. When we consider oil, coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, solar, wind, biomass and so on, as a resource or technology for making such assurance, we find that each of them has their own questions at issue. For example, in the case of coal, in which the region is rich, the emission of pollutants should be controlled to prevent air pollution and the efficiency of its use should be improved to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide gas into atmosphere. In the case of nuclear energy, it is a prerequisite to observe international norms for nuclear non-proliferation, in addition to those for safety and security.

Taking this opportunity I would like to stress that Japan has utilized nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes, fully accepting the IAEA safeguards including the additional protocol. From this viewpoint, the nuclear test by North Korea is absolutely unacceptable as it gives a blow to the international communities' efforts for nuclear non-proliferation. The Japan Atomic Energy Commission has strongly urged North Korea to immediately abandon its nuclear testing and nuclear development program and to promptly return to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

I understand that the governments of FNCA countries are actively examining the issues that are accompanied by the use of each energy supply source and technology, and, taking the result of such examination into consideration, are endeavoring to optimize their supply mix or portfolio of energy supply source and technology. I am sure that the major items for consideration are not only accessibility to each resource and technology and availability of human and capital resources to develop necessary infrastructure for their utilization but also the items based on cross border, regional and global imperatives.

The importance of the latter is clear because a) Asia has emerged as an area of major presence in the world equal to the Americas and Europe, although there are wide varieties in socioeconomic condition of countries in the region: b) the demand for oil in the region will grow steadily and the region as a whole is becoming a net importer of energy resources: c) as dominant part of energy demand in the region will be satisfied with coal over a long period, this region might become the largest producer of environmental pollutant and emitter of greenhouse-effects gas among three regions.

It is from this recognition that Japanese government considers it important to strengthen partnership within this region especially in the following three areas; 1) assurance of stable supply of oil, 2) efficient use of energy, especially at the point of end-use in buildings, electric appliances, vehicles and production processes as well as at the electricity generation processes as well as increased reliance on renewable energy sources; and 3) development and deployment of safe nuclear technologies on condition that rigid nuclear non-proliferation measures are implemented.

Therefore I sincerely hope that this panel on the role of nuclear energy will bring about common understanding of key energy policy issues across the region of the FNCA countries relating to their sustainable development in consistent with the sustainability of the world and clarifying the position of nuclear energy in the portfolio of energy supply resource and technology in the region of FNCA countries as a whole.

Needless to say, technically optimal solutions will not result automatically in a business-as-usual environment. In order to pursue the realization of an optimal portfolio in each country's energy system and realize the role of nuclear energy as expected, in particular, the government should explore various ways to raise public awareness of nuclear energy and stimulate learning and cooperation about it in the society on the one hand and to encourage investment in nuclear energy business and make the business operate under responsible quality and risk management.

In this endeavor, Governments of FNCA countries should utilize bilateral and multilateral cooperation and partnership in the framework of FNCA effectively, especially in their efforts for nurturing an environment that is favorable to the investment into nuclear energy businesses, including those efforts to establish transparent safety and environmental regulation, promote public education and develop human resources necessary for the utilization of nuclear energy.

I therefore hope that this panel will also prepare a proposal of action for such cooperation and partnership relevant in the region to be deliberated at the next Ministerial level meeting to be held in 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.

With that I wish you would have a productive meeting today and tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention