Welcome Speech at the First Meeting of the Study Panel for Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Energy in Asia of the 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 very pleased to welcome you all to the first meeting of the Study Panel on the Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Energy in Asia, established as an important new initiative of the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA).

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 future.

At the same time, we should pay due attention to the recent statement of Dr. Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He said in the statement that as global atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases had increased markedly as a result of human activities, it was very likely that hot extremes, heat waves and heavy precipitation events would continue to become more frequent and coastal areas, especially heavily-populated mega-delta regions in Southeast Asia, would be at greatest risk due to increased flooding from the sea and, in some mega-deltas, flooding from the rivers. He then suggested that although to prepare to adapt to the intensifying effects of climate change in the future was essential, adaptation alone was not expected to cope with all the projected effects of climate change, and therefore reduction of emissions needs to start in short term.

This is the reason why in May this year, former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe presented to the world an initiative to address global warming entitled "Invitation to Cool Earth 50." He proposed under this initiative a target of cutting global emission of greenhouse gases by 50% from the current level by the year 2050. To pursue this target, he then proposed three

principles in designing a framework beyond the Kyoto Protocol; these are; 1) participation of all large-scale emitting countries; 2) acceptance of flexible and diverse emission reduction approaches; and 3) compatibility between environmental protection and economic growth.

It is obvious that to realize the target would require an expanded use of nuclear energy as well as high-efficiency energy technologies, renewable energies, hydrogen, and carbon-sequestration technologies, much beyond any realistic scenarios proposed in the past in both developed and developing countries, as nuclear energy is nearly carbon free and one of the cost-effective options available today for reducing carbon-dioxide gas emissions,

Therefore it is a great pleasure to host this first meeting of the study panel on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Energy in Asia of the FNCA, of which main topic of the study is human resource development for nuclear energy utilization.

The knowledge and skills necessary to promote and regulate nuclear energy utilization are spread across most scientific and engineering disciplines. In addition to a relevant level of knowledge and skills of this kind, it is shared among global nuclear community as a vital requirement that the human resources for nuclear energy utilization should acquire additional knowledge and appreciation of both the increased attention to detail to ensure operational safety, security, and radiation protection and the heightened attention to the quality of and the risk associated with major systems and equipment, that should be managed through an integrated management activity for knowledgeable decision making.

As you may know, a powerful earthquake hit the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant on 16 July and the operating units were automatically shutdown and all plants behaved in a safe manner, during and after earthquake. Inspections of all units are under way. So far significant damage of safety-related structures, systems and components of the plants has not been reported; however, non-safety related structures, systems and components were apparently affected by anchorage failures and oil leakages due to significant soil deformation around the reactor buildings where they were not anchored to the bedrock.

To restart the operation of seven units at the site, of which total capacity is

8.2 GWe, TEPCO will need the consent of local communities as well as the permission of the regulatory authority, submitting a re-evaluation report on the seismic safety of the plant in accordance with new seismic design guidelines of the Nuclear Safety Commission issued in September 2006. In the evaluation, it is necessary for TEPCO to take into account lessons learned from the occurrence of the earthquake at a nearby fault that had not been identified at the time of application of construction permit but caused a seismic input significantly exceeding the level of design basis seismic motion.

As a guardian of nuclear energy policy, the AEC has asked all nuclear power operators to review the adequacy of preparation to the crisis due to earthquake, and seismic safety of their plants according to the new seismic safety design guideline and communicate the result to the public as soon as possible. At the same time the Commission has reminded them that it is a prerequisite for the safe and reliable operation of nuclear power plants to periodically perform strategic risk assessment and management as a part of an integrated management activity for plant operation.

Before closing I would like to remind you that we have already established the Asian Nuclear Training and Education Program (ANTEP) to support national Human Resources Development of the FNCA countries. I hope that your panel will deliberate at some point, the possibility of wider and deeper use of the ANTEP for human resource development in the FNCA regions. Personally I would like to see the increase in the visibility of the ANTEP and even an association or network of the ANTEP alumni as well as an awarding system for excellent graduates of the ANTEP.

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

Thank you for your attention.