

Remarks at the Fourth IFNEC Executive Committee Meeting
October 24th, 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting the fourth Executive Committee Meeting of the IFNEC here in the beautiful city of Abu Dhabi.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to update the off-site and on-site situations of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

At the Fukushima Daiichi, there are many challenges, including those to prevent the contamination of the groundwater flowing in the aquifer at the site to the sea. We are pursuing a defense-in depth strategy to suppress the risk of sea-contamination as low as practicable.

As for the decommissioning of the damaged units, we will start the removal of used and unused fuels from unit 4 in this November as planned. In parallel, we are promoting major R&D projects to deal with contaminated waters and highly activated core debris, including the development of robots and remote-handling devices for various activities to be done in high radiation environments.

As for off-site issues, though the Government has been promoting decontamination activities at accident stricken areas. I must inform you that some 80,000 people are still requested to be out of home and about the same number of people have chosen to leave home by themselves. This is because the activities have been delayed, as it takes time for the Government to agree with residents on the way to decontaminate their houses as well as on the location of the site for temporary storage of decontamination wastes. The Government is rescheduling the activities based on the experiences obtained so far in consultation with residents.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express our sincere gratitude once again for great support and assistance provided from the international community to us. As these decontamination and decommissioning activities are unprecedented tasks, we would like to utilize the most advanced knowledge and expertise in the world for the promotion of these activities. We welcome recommendations and proposals in this respect from the international community.

Mr. Chairman, nuclear plant operators in Japan have submitted the applications of 14 units to the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) for checking their conformity with the new regulation rules established by the NRA this July, after strengthening the robustness of the safety functions of their plants against severe external hazards. The review will take six months at least. The Government has made it clear to support the restart of idling nuclear power plants that comply with the NRA rules as an important power source.

The Government also has made it clear that it is a responsibility of Japan to contribute to strengthening the nuclear safety worldwide by sharing its experiences and lessons-learned from the nuclear accident at Fukushima, offering Japanese nuclear energy technologies to those countries that wish to utilize them. As for the future of nuclear energy development in Japan, the government is currently deliberating it as a part of a new energy policy that should assure the safe, secure and economical energy supply, satisfying sustainable development goals.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope that our discussion here will be beneficial to many countries that believe it important to utilize nuclear power in a safe, secure, economical and peaceful manner for assuring security and combating global warming. Japan believes that the IFNEC should continue to be a forum for mutual understanding of experiences accumulated and exploring innovative concepts and schemes for assuring safe, secure and economical utilization of nuclear power among such countries.

Thank you for your kind attention.