

68th General Conference of the IAEA

Dr. UESAKA Mitsuru, Chairperson of Japan Atomic Energy Commission

President,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to congratulate your appointment as President. I would also like to welcome Cook Islands and Somalia as the Agency's newest member states.

As nuclear energy once again attracts significant attention due to fluctuating international affairs and advances in science technology, the role of the IAEA is becoming ever more critical. In this context, Japan underlines the following three points.

First, peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is one of the three pillars of the NPT and contributes to achieving the SDGs.

Nuclear energy is important from the perspectives of energy security and decarbonization. Under the policy of sustainable use of nuclear energy with the highest priority on its safety, Japan has been working on restarting nuclear power plants, extending its operation periods, research and development of next-generation advanced reactors, as well as strengthening supply chains through international collaboration.

Furthermore, nuclear technology plays a prominent role in its application to a wide range of areas, such as healthcare, agriculture, and environment. To give one example, Japan is putting efforts into domestic production of radioisotopes for medical use.

At the same time, to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy globally, Japan strongly supports the initiatives of Director General Grossi, such as "Rays of Hope" and "Atoms4Food", including through

our contributions to the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We also promote international cooperation in this field, including within the framework of the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

Japan has also been working on the early realization of the next generation energy---fusion energy. Last April Japan's first national strategy was formulated. Also, the Japan Fusion Energy Council (J-Fusion) was newly established. In cooperation with our partners, Japan will establish a basic approach for ensuring safety on fusion energy by March next year, and enhance collaborations in this field with the international community, including the IAEA.

Second, the highest standards of the 3S: nuclear safety, nuclear security, and safeguards.

Japan is sharing its experience from the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station and the knowledge it has gained through decommissioning the plant, with Japanese nationals and the international community including our neighboring countries. Japan also has been contributing to efforts by the international community to improve nuclear regulations.

Regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, Japan has discharged 8 batches to date. Its safety has been corroborated through monitoring and reviews conducted by the IAEA with the participation of analytical laboratories and international experts worldwide, including neighboring countries. The water is discharged after sufficient purification by ALPS and diluted by sea water, and thus has no impact on people and the environment. Therefore, it is not appropriate to describe the discharged water as contaminated water. Efforts toward decommissioning are progressing, and we have been moving on to a new phase including the fuel debris retrieval work, that is the most difficult task.

The IAEA, under its statute, has the authority to establish, adopt and apply international safety standards in the field of nuclear energy. We should respect its authority and independence.

Japan appreciates and respects the IAEA's independent, science-based, long-term commitment to this issue, and will continue to strengthen our engagement with domestic and international stakeholders, especially those in Asia Pacific and beyond, and to provide transparent explanations to the international community.

To ensure the highest standards of nuclear security, Japan supports the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment. At home, we have been working to minimize stocks of nuclear materials that could potentially pose a threat to the international community, such as the completion of the removal of all of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA). Also, we steadily advance the effort to continue education and research activities, converting research reactors at Kyoto University and Kindai University from HEU to low enriched uranium.

We are committed to further improving our nuclear security measures in light of the praise received this year from the International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission for the robustness of Japan's nuclear security regime.

As it serves as a core instrument for nuclear nonproliferation, Japan firmly supports the IAEA's works to strengthen and promote efficiency of its safeguards system. We also promote universalization of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocols and the amended Small Quantities Protocols.

In order to achieve 3S, global efforts for human resource development are indispensable. Japan has long been engaged in

capacity building assistance and R&D of this aspect in nuclear nonproliferation and security fields at Integrated Support Center for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security (ISCN) of JAEA which is designated as an IAEA Collaborating Centre. This year, ISCN upgraded its training facilities and became a new member of the IAEA Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN). Japan will further strengthen these contributions.

Third, regional non-proliferation issues. Japan attaches importance to such issues as North Korea, resolution of Iran's nuclear issue, and ensuring nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. We firmly support the IAEA's dedicated efforts in current tough international environment and will continue to actively contribute to the discussions concerned.

In particular, we strongly urge North Korea to abandon all its weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles of all ranges as well as related programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner, and re-emphasize the importance of full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions by all member states.

As a responsible Member State and Designated Board Member State of the IAEA, I would like to conclude by reiterating Japan's great appreciation for the professional efforts of Director General Grossi and the Secretariat, and its continued and maximum support to the IAEA. Thank you.