

Opening remark by Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano
at the “Symposium on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Science and Technology:
Towards the 2015 NPT Review Conference and beyond”

Excellences, ladies and gentleman, it is an honour to welcome you all here today to the Symposium on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Science and Technology jointly hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan and the Permanent Mission of Brazil.

I would like to thank so many Ambassadors, senior staffs of the IAEA Secretariat, and other distinguished participants for taking the time to come and speak about the positive impact nuclear science and technology can make.

Today’s symposium is not aimed at making any specific decisions or adopting resolutions, but rather to share various views and ideas, and to deepen our understanding on how nuclear science and technology can be useful for our lives. I hope we could learn a lot from today’s discussion.

This year will be an important year for the international community in addressing various global issues. We will have the NPT Review conference in two months’ time, where we will discuss peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology along with the other two pillars. We also expect that the post 2015 development agenda will be adopted in September at the United Nations General Assembly and a new climate framework is to be agreed in December at COP21.

Nuclear science and technology will play a unique and important role in this context.

Nuclear power, as a low carbon energy source, is a well-known example. While we need to ensure that maximum safety measures are implemented, it will remain an important option for many countries’ energy strategy.

At the same time, nuclear science and technology is not for nuclear power alone. Cancer diagnosis and treatment is an important illustration of this. Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) is another unique application of radiation, aimed to significantly reduce fruit flies and Malaria mosquitoes. Applications of Isotope techniques in various areas, such as water, ocean, and nutrition, are also eye-opening examples.

Unfortunately, these aspects are not well recognized yet. Much more efforts are needed to raise people's awareness on a wider range of opportunities for applications of nuclear technology. This is the main aim of today's symposium.

In peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, the role of the Agency is very important. The Agency has been at the forefront of collecting and developing cutting-edge knowledge and techniques, including through the activities of its Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf and Monaco. The Agency's Technical Cooperation programme is an important vehicle to enhancing access to peaceful uses of nuclear technology for many countries. In this regard, I recognize that the Agency has made great efforts in recent years, including its initiative to modernize Seibersdorf Laboratories, or ReNuAL. And I believe that we should keep this momentum in the next coming years.

Japan has been a beneficiary as well as supporter of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for many decades. Not only developing our own national capability, infrastructure as well as human resources, we have also been actively engaged in international cooperation.

We have been supporting the Agency's activities in this area, and particularly since the last NPT Review Conference in 2010, we have been contributing to the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), on top of Technical Cooperation Fund, to further enhance access to peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Taking this opportunity, I'm pleased to report our latest contribution. Yesterday, I pledged to DDG Kwaku Aning our new contribution of 500,000 USD to the Agency's PUI project aimed at enhancing diagnostic capability of the Ebola Virus Disease in Africa. We commend the Agency for its engagement in tackling recent Ebola crisis. We will also consider further contribution to support the Agency's medium term capacity building measure to tackle Ebola and other zoonotic diseases that will be proposed for approval at the Board of Governors next week.

I hope that today's discussion will be useful, enjoyable and eye opening to you all. Thank you for your attention.