

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

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It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to this meeting on behalf of the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD.

At this stage of my remarks I frequently feel the need to explain what the Nuclear Energy Agency is and does, but in this company I think I can leave that aside. So I will pass immediately to my next important and very easy duty. That is to thank the STA, JAERI and PNC for the dedication and effort they have put into organizing this meeting. They have made my job as the nominal organiser of the Information Exchange Programme very easy indeed. Additional evidence of the strength of support has come in the presence of Mr. T. Yamamoto, Director General, Atomic Energy Bureau of STA, at the reception last night and again this morning. We are also honoured to have Professor Y. Yamamoto as the Chairman of this morning's session. Thank you all.

Before I get into some remarks on the practical organisation of the meeting, I think it might be helpful to relate a little of the brief history of this enterprise. It was in 1988 that the Japanese government suggested to the NEA that we should conduct some form of international project related to actinide separation and use. In this way, the Agency could help to spread the benefit of Japan's OMEGA project. The NEA is always willing to investigate suggestions for its work from any member country, so I was immediately asked by the Director General, Dr. Uematsu, to look into this question. You will note that this reflects our recognition that this topic is one of scientific and technological development, it is not one of current primary concern of those people organizing waste management programmed. There followed a period of discussions involving Japan, the NEA and a number of Member countries in which Mr. Hirose (Mr. Hoshiba's predecessor) was an active participant. This led to a discussion at the NEA's Fuel Cycle Committee in January 1989. This Committee of government representatives called for advice from an expert group. That group met in May 1989 under the chairmanship of M. Lefèvre, whom I am very glad to see here. They recommended that there would be value in setting up a programme of technical information exchange and produced a list of points to guide such a programme. The Fuel Cycle Committee accepted the recommendation and turned the guidance points into a Mandate for the Liaison Officers through whom the programme was to be organised.

In all these discussions the stress continued to be on the long term research and development nature of the programme. That point has been emphasized yet again when the Steering Committee and the Radioactive Waste Management Committee of the NEA have considered this topic. I believe it fair to say that both those bodies have clearly acknowledged that it is desirable to have a programme with that long term orientation and that there may be short- or medium-term benefits to be derived from it. However, one of their strongest messages is that it is important to avoid creating any impression that burning of actinides is an alternative waste management route which does away with the need for geological disposal.

In order to help us develop our interest in the long-term research, the Japanese government provided extra funds to the NEA, for which we are most grateful. A good part of those funds is being used to retain consultants. I am happy to say that we shall hear two of them reporting their work at this meeting.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that as background, what is the purpose of this meeting? Quite simply it is to provide an opportunity for an exchange of information and ideas between all the places in OECD countries where relevant work is going on or being thought about. I am conscious of, though not very well-informed about, a number of bilateral arrangements. I hope they are proving satisfactory to all the parties concerned. However, an organisation like mine is perpetually asking "could there be more benefit from wider international cooperation". We are perhaps biased in that we always think that the answer is "yes". But in this case, where we are dealing with a complex technology which could take a very long time to come to fruition, I think there is more likelihood that that is the right answer. In the course of this meeting you could be testing my hypothesis. Your reports and your ideas on how to pursue the next steps might well bring out common views with others about where to go next. Perhaps this meeting will catalyse some additional interaction.

Another question should also be in our minds - is the NEA the best forum for carrying forward any new interactions? I hasten to say that this meeting has no authority to tell the NEA what to do, but ideas on what we should or should not do in this field will be helpful in advising our Standing and Steering Committees who do decide on our programme.

Formally this Exchange Programme is intended to run for 5 years. It could be shortened by mutual agreement of our Members. Personally I hope that no one presses for a shorter programme as I find it a fascinating field to study. But professionally and formally I am neutral. I am here to help carry messages to places where decisions are taken.

I have already referred to the complexity of this field. That makes it difficult to form and carry simple messages. And so I come to the structure of the meeting. I have used my prerogative to arrange it so that I shall get some help in finding the right messages. I do not think that has caused any unbearable distortion because I think it fits reasonably well with a logic discernible in the subject matter.

We found this logical structure once we saw what papers were available rather than seeking papers to fit a defined pattern. Perhaps that can best be excused as arising from the desire to have an informal meeting. I hope you will be able to accept the form of logic we have adopted and I apologise in advance to any author who finds himself placed at an awkward spot in the programme. My main hope is that this structure does not inhibit discussion.

We shall start with a number of general overview papers to give us some broad perspectives. Following that we take a look at some basic facts about physics and about the quantities of materials we are talking about. Then we proceed to some specific aspects of partitioning, starting with evolution from today's commercially applied processes and going on to other possibilities. At the end of the third session we take a look at the significance of partitioning and transmutation of actinides before we embark on two sessions on transmutation, first in reactors and second in accelerators.

You will see that the last session is designed to allow our chairmen to throw back into the discussion the main points which need to be looked at when considering future work in this area. By that means I am hoping to get their and your help in identifying the messages which I should carry back about the future of this Exchange Programme.

I am looking for two outcomes from this meeting. One is a set of messages which I can inject into further decisions by the Programmers Liaison Officers and the Nuclear Development Committee. The second is a set of Proceedings. It is my present intention to collect **all** the contributions into one bound document which would be for general distribution by the NEA. I would rather like to avoid the internal bureaucratic problems of aiming for a full, glossy OECD publication. The only advantage of that would be that it would instantly be bought by a number of libraries who have subscriptions for all OECD publications. I doubt whether some of them would know where to file a report on Actinide Partitioning and Transmutation! On the other hand, by having a General Distribution Document we can ensure that all the interested people get a free report of our activities here. I hope to include the highlights of discussion in these Proceedings, so we are recording them to assist me in the editing process. For that reason I should be grateful if all speakers would remember to use microphones. And one request to authors - I should like to have camera-ready copy available within 1 month. Please see me later if that could cause a problem. I would be grateful if session chairmen could each provide a short contribution on a similar **timescale**.

I am delighted that such a broad range of countries is represented and that so many papers have been offered. I must confess to some embarrassment, as when I opted for a three day meeting I had not envisaged so many papers and therefore had expected more time set aside for discussion. I can only ask that presenters try to leave adequate time for discussion of their papers. I shall be encouraging chairmen to repeat that message. I hope that you all use the coffee breaks, lunches and receptions to continue the exchange; and that you bring the main conclusions into the last session.

I am greatly looking forward to a stimulating meeting and hope you all have an enjoyable one.