

WELCOME ADDRESS

Hideaki YOKOMIZO

Executive Director
Japan Atomic Energy Agency

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson;

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Hideaki Yokomizo, the executive director of Japan Atomic Energy Agency. On behalf of JAEA, we would like to extend a cordial welcome to all of you, gathering here for this 10th OECD/NEA Information Exchange Meeting on Actinide and Fission Product Partitioning and Transmutation.

Nowadays, nuclear power has become a very important energy resource as one of the solutions against the global environmental issues of the emission of greenhouse effect gases. As growing demands for nuclear energy, future nuclear systems consisting of advanced reactors, accelerator-driven systems and associated fuel cycles have been proposed and developed aiming at more effective use of nuclear fuels and reasonable waste disposal.

We believe that partitioning and transmutation is one of the promising options for the enhancement of the efficiency of high level waste disposal and the utilization of resources in the spent fuel. Japan had already launched a long term R&D plan on partitioning and transmutation technology in 1988, which is called the OMEGA program, and invited the NEA to coordinate an international cooperation program for information exchange on this important issue.

It is a great pleasure and honor for us that we hosted the first NEA Information Exchange Meeting on Actinide and Fission Product Partitioning and Transmutation in 1990, and that this 10th meeting is taking place here. We believe that this cooperation program has benefited and enhanced the studies in this field and will be expanded onward.

In Japan, the Atomic Energy Commission has started the check & review about partitioning and transmutation technology at the working group under the Advisory Committee on Research and Development. This working group will review the progress on Japanese partitioning and transmutation technologies since 2000, and will discuss the future R&D plan.

JAEA is now preparing to restart operation of Monju, a FBR-type reactor, which has not been operated since 1995 due to a sodium leakage in its secondary heat transfer system during performance tests. Monju will be ready to operate in early next year. As the number of fast reactors for research is decreasing in the world, we believe that the Monju will be an important R&D tool for transmutation system.

On the other hand, the Phase-I J-PARC Project is almost complete and about to start its service. In the second phase of J-PARC, the Transmutation Experimental Facility will be constructed though the budget of the construction has not been approved yet. I also hope this Phase-II Project becomes an international project and the JAEA plays an important role in the R&D of partitioning and transmutation technology in the world.

I sincerely hope that this 10th meeting will be fruitful and useful for all the participants and provide opportunities to establish further international collaborations. Also, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mr. Dujardin of the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee, and all the participants.

In closing my remarks I wish you will enjoy your stay. Autumn is the best season in Japan. I hope you will be refreshed with the nice foods and atmosphere of Mito as well as the animated discussion at the meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.