

WELCOME ADDRESSES

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President of the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI)

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here in beautiful Jeju Island in the most beautiful season.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome all of you to “The 7th OECD/NEA Information Exchange Meeting on Actinide and Fission Product Partitioning and Transmutation”. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all participants who are willing to share their invaluable experience and information with us. I also would like to express my wholehearted appreciation to the organising and scientific advisory committee of this meeting.

Korea has been known as the hermit country or the Land of Morning Calm. However, our country is no longer the Land of Morning Calm, but is now known as the Land of the Morning Rush due to its recent economic development. Korea is a country blessed with natural beauty. However, this country has not been blessed with natural energy resources. In this reason, Korea industry has been dependent on the turnkey-based trade, and we had to find a solution for the electric power supply.

Recognising the benefits of nuclear energy, Korea, with poor natural resources, has been an active promoter of its nuclear power programmes ever since it introduced nuclear power as a new source of electricity generation in 1978. Nuclear power is the most reliable and sustainable means of generating electricity, improving human life and ensuring the nation's economic growth. Since the commercial operation of the Gori nuclear power plant in 1978, 17 nuclear power plants are currently in commercial operation. Nuclear power generation in 2001 provided more than 40% of the country's total electrical generation. I am sure that nuclear energy is the power to drive Korean economic engine in the past, present and furthermore in the future.

Last summer, we experienced floods the most terrible in last half a century in this country. Property damage due to floods were estimated to be about 4 billion US dollars. And these days, in various corners of the world we see the abnormalities of climate. In Europe, there was a flood which was the worst in the last 100 years. And we know the catastrophe which Australia has never experienced. All these things remind us that global warming due to greenhouse effect is imminent to all of us. We all know that reduction of carbon-dioxide(CO₂) emission is an urgent and important task we must solve. And we all know that present nuclear power generation systems have also various issues to be solved, which I do not need to mention today. Some people say that we have to exploit alternative energy sources like solar, wind, geo-thermal or even biomass. However, most of us understand that there is no definitive solution to the worldwide energy and environmental problems in near future.

Nowadays, we start to understand again the great potential of nuclear power. During last decade, P&T people have insisted on the full recycle of actinide to reduce long-term radio toxicity and improve the resource efficiency. I firmly believe that this information exchange meeting has contributed to the boost-up of the R&D on P&T in a number of countries. Thanks to the P&T people and this information exchange meeting, full recycle of actinide is being considered seriously in advanced nuclear system such as Generation IV and “International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles” so call INPRO which is initiated by IAEA.

The P&T technology may not be a perfect solution but can be a big jump in the improvement of nuclear energy system. I expect that, if P&T technology is successfully developed, some relevant issues overshadowing nuclear industry will be greatly alleviated and nuclear power will play a major role in supplying energy for hundreds of years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here together from all around of the world to complete P&T technology. There will be various ingredients necessary for the success of P&T technology, including supports and co-operation on international basis and advice from senior scientists who have gained valuable experience. I believe this meeting will be a good opportunity for all of you to exchange mutual interests and to enhance mutual communication and co-operation. Our efforts in this meeting will contribute not only to nuclear industry but also to the prevention of the catastrophe we are facing with, due to the climate change.

While US President Eisenhower proposed the “Atoms for Peace” speech before the UN General assembly in 1953 to control and develop the peaceful use of atomic energy, I would like to propose “Atoms for Next generation” to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

As you see, the fall of Jeju is really wonderful and there are many places where you can experience new things. Such as world cup stadium, golfing, fishing, mountain climbing etc. I hope that you will remember this meeting as a joyful occasion and enjoy your stay in Jeju.

Thank you very much.