

Thank you, Laura, for your generous introduction.

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the “Workshop on Nuclear Safety: Current Status and Future Challenges.” On behalf of the Permanent Mission of Japan and the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, I would like to thank you for your participation, especially as many of you are preparing to go on your summer vacation.

This year marks the 5th anniversary since the Fukushima Daiichi accident. In the intervening years, we have worked on strengthening nuclear safety, drawing on lessons learned from the accident. Japan’s handling of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is on the right track, and you will see the current situation in a video presentation today. Internationally, we have made important achievements in recent years, including the publication of the 2013 UNSCEAR Fukushima Report and the 2015 IAEA Fukushima Report, the adoption of the Vienna Declaration of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and the implementation of IAEA Nuclear Safety Action Plan, which led to a revision of IAEA Safety Standards and to an increased number of IAEA review missions of various kinds to Member States.

While these are all important achievements that we should be proud of, we need to guard against becoming complacent. Building on the past achievements, we are now at the new stage of further enhancing nuclear safety. I understand that the IAEA is currently working on a new methodology to employ a systematic approach to nuclear safety, based on the IAEA General Conference’s resolution on nuclear safety last year. The process of drafting a new IAEA Medium Term Strategy is also ongoing, in which nuclear safety will be an important pillar. Discussions on a nuclear safety resolution for the General Conference this year will start shortly. And the wider use of nuclear technology in both power and non-power sectors worldwide should mean more demand in many countries for enhancing their capacities to safely operate nuclear installations and handle radioactive materials. Therefore, it is the right time for all of us to discuss ways forward, and that is exactly why we offered to host this workshop today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are privileged to have so many distinguished speakers among us today, I expect a lively discussion on nuclear safety from various perspectives. It is not my intention to prejudge any takeaway of the discussion this afternoon, but do allow me the opportunity to put forward a couple of points as “food-for-thought”.

First, we need to redouble our efforts to strengthen international legal frameworks for nuclear safety and ensure its effective implementation. With more newcomer countries in nuclear power and more ageing reactors in existing nuclear power countries, further universalization of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and strengthening the review process of the Convention are very important. The CNS provides a platform for contracting parties to peer review their respective actions to enhance nuclear safety, and the Vienna Declaration is an important document in that regard. All contracting parties have been encouraged to make enhanced national reporting in preparation for the 7th Review Meeting next year. Encouraging more countries to join other legal frameworks such as the Joint Convention and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC) is also important.

Second, Emergency Preparedness and Response, or EPR, is a critical area for international cooperation, fully drawing on the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. In this respect, we are pleased to see that the IAEA Response and Assistance Network-Capacity Building Center in Fukushima, which moved to a new facility last year, has been making significant contribution in sharing experiences of the Fukushima accident with other countries. Japan will continue to fully support this initiative.

Third, recognizing diversity of nuclear safety challenges due to the wider use of nuclear technology, we need to address them in a systematic and coherent way. Nuclear safety is not just the matter for countries operating nuclear power stations, but also for larger number of countries using radioactive sources in non-power sectors. Ensuring nuclear safety is a prerequisite for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Capacity building support to those countries using nuclear technology is the key, and IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) programs can play an important role to that end. Japan will actively consider supporting those TC programs through the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), in consultation

with the Agency and relevant countries. Transport safety is another important area, and Informal Dialogue between Coastal and Shipping States currently chaired by Japan serves as a trust building platform.

Last but not least, the importance of public communication on nuclear safety cannot be underestimated. In the era of social networks, information is instant. Any failure on our part to effectively communicate with the general public following nuclear safety incidents will lead to losing their confidence in nuclear safety. Our own experiences of Fukushima highlighted the challenges of disseminating data and information in a timely manner and in the right context. In this regard, the active involvement of UNSCEAR and the IAEA in public communication has been very helpful. Japan will actively consider enhancing the capacity of UNSCEAR and the IAEA, to facilitate their work in helping Member States to improve their public communication.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the critical role of nuclear technology, we, the Vienna community should reaffirm the importance of nuclear safety, renew our commitment to it, and share a common vision for the next steps towards improved nuclear safety.

I hope that this workshop will be a valuable experience for all of you.

Thank you very much.