

**Remarks by Mr. W. Burkart
Deputy Director General
Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications**

Distinguished Chairman, Delegates

I thank you for this opportunity on the occasion of the 47th General Conference to address again this meeting of RCA. And may I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Member States of the region for the progress made and positive achievements during the past year in the various fields of nuclear sciences and applications. The 36 active RCA regional projects, covering the majority of the Agency's activities in nuclear sciences and technology, are a tribute to the depth and diversity of interests in the region.

Delegates may recall that at the 13th meeting of RCA last year I was able to report on my impressions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to recap on some of the key issues that emerged from the Summit, and how they are reflected in our programmes. Water, health, food and agriculture and sustainable industrial development and environmental programmes remain, and are likely to remain, as the most important programmes that we implement in your region. At this General Conference, in response to Resolutions from the Conferences in 2001 and 2002 we have been pleased, I might even say proud, to report on our activities in these and other areas undertaken in co-operation with yourselves and other organisations in the UN family.

We have reported on isotope hydrology for water resources management; on our work that is beginning on research into the use of the sterile insect technique for malaria bearing mosquitoes; on humanitarian de-mining; on radiation therapy for cancer treatment; on nutrition activities, and on our support to the Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign in Africa. The reports carry many references to activities in Member States in the RCA; in particular I could mention the uses of isotope hydrology, radiation therapy and nuclear medicine and nutrition.

The region has also in the last year produced some "headline" material. In his opening speech to the General Conference the Director General referred to the success in improvement of rice strains through radiation mutation induction and to trials in nine Asian countries. He also referred to a particular rice strain introduced into 20 Indonesian provinces, which was celebrated at a high profile harvesting ceremony. And at our SAGNA meeting in June, the member from Thailand reported to the meeting on the success of an SIT project against a fruit fly which resulted in reducing damage to mangoes and dramatically increasing production, allowing exports to Japan. The mangoes were also tested by SAGNA, who found them extremely delicious !!

These projects are examples of and a testament to the commitment of the region to implement high quality projects. Success in a project requires good preparation, and my staff are ready at all times to assist you with your project requests, preparation and implementation.

In respect of our work in Major Programme 2, implemented by my Department, it is appropriate now for me to thank delegates here today for the strong support given to the Programme in this last round of Programme and Budget negotiations for the 2004 -

2005 biennium. Member States have agreed the very necessary budget increases to maintain our levels of programme delivery, recognising the unique roles that nuclear and isotopic techniques can play in serving basic human needs. We will, I believe, be able to better respond to your priorities, as you would wish us to in the coming biennium.

With these few remarks, Chairman, I wish the meeting every success.