

Text of Speech

Mr. M. Fazlur Rahman,
Secretary, Ministry of Science & Technology,
Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

23rd RCA National Representatives Meeting
18-22 March 2001, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. President,
Dr. Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director, Technical Cooperation, IAEA
Dr. Razley, Head, Asia & Pacific Section, IAEA
Dr. Aleta, RCA Coordinator, IAEA
National Representatives of the RCA Member States,
RCA National Coordinator for Bangladesh,
Representatives of the Media,
Respected Guests,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I indeed consider it a privilege to be here today in the inauguration of the 23rd meeting of the RCA National Representatives. I thank the organizer for this very pleasing gesture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has been actively participating in the RCA programmes since the inception of this august body. The members of the RCA vary in terms of their respective stages of socio economic development. Yet the urge to share knowledge and resources on a regional basis is outstanding. It's achievements are the examples of what can be achieved through cooperation among countries in the south. In fact, I had proudly cited RCA as a trendsetter in TCDC when I had attended the "Expert Group Meeting Preparatory to LDC III Meeting to be held in Brussels in May 2001" that was held last week in New York. I was encouraged to note that RCA model was well received and the UNESCO representative attending the Expert Group Meeting in his intervention also mentioned of this model which he opined may be followed by the LDCs furthermore in their S&T initiatives.

I am delighted to see our friends from the International Atomic Energy Agency particularly Dr. Shihab-Eldin, Director Technical Cooperation for our region. We are thankful to you and your colleagues Dr. Razley and Dr. Aleta for supporting our different projects related to peaceful use of nuclear energy. Dear National Representatives from the East Asia and Pacific Area we are happy to welcome you all to Bangladesh. I learnt that this particular meeting is one of the most significant event of IAEA and RCA that we had the honour to host. Our government considers

this as a manifestation of the long-standing good relationship. I am also delighted to see that all the seventeen countries of the RCA are participating in this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to say that the Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh attaches great importance to the development of science and technology in order to derive maximum benefits from its limited resources and raise the quality of life. In keeping with this conviction, efforts are being made to strengthen and diversify research and development activities in various fields, including peaceful applications of nuclear energy in agriculture, medicine, industry, nuclear power and the environment. At the moment 13 development programmes in different areas of nuclear energy is in progress costing above 25 million US\$. These include research reactor upgradation, nuclear energy, isotope production, radiation processing, radioactive waste management, radiation protection, nuclear medicine, agrochemical residues and over and above all human resource development in nuclear science and technology. Over the last three years 31 scientists have been sent at GOB cost to undertake higher studies leading to Ph.D. in different areas of nuclear science and technology in North America and Western Europe. More and more will be in future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand the RCA National Coordinator and RCA project coordinators are directly involved in formulation, planning, preparation and programming as well as in project implementation. I am told that RCA in the last 25 years have matured enough to move forward to further development and wider peaceful utilization of nuclear technology. Indeed, RCA programme has demonstrated record of the transfer of new and emerging nuclear technologies to the developing countries in Asia and Pacific region through cooperative efforts of the developing countries. The geographic area covered by the Asia and the Pacific Region consists of countries with political, cultural and economic diversities among the people, the achievements made with this regional group are worthy of emulation by all parties who are concerned about the various aspects of regional cooperation.

We in Bangladesh have substantially benefited from the activities of RCA in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology in the areas of agriculture, health, industry research reactor utilization. We regard RCA as an effective tool for collaborative work on different advantage of skills and expertise available in the region.

I understand the RCA is giving consideration to clear vision for future word of activities to deliver the benefits of nuclear science and technology so as to meet the established needs of RCA member states on a sustainable basis through proven and well developed projects which have regional character. I am hopeful that the RCA activities in future will further increase in future and address a wider cross-

section of common problems faced by its Member States. I hope, that extension of the present RCA agreement will open up new arenas and be an example of others to follow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I, on behalf of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, wish success of the Twenty Third Meeting of the National Representatives of RCA member states and hope that its outcome would greatly facilitate shaping the future programme of the RCA in such a way that all its Member States may be benefited by peaceful uses of Atomic Energy. I wish the foreign participants a happy stay in our country. I hope that all of you would carry back to your countries happy and rewarding memories of this short visit.

I thank you for your kind and patience hearing.