

**Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Asia and Pacific region**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Representatives**  
**Welcome Speech of Prof. (Mrs.) R.Hewamanna**  
**Chairman, Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka**

Dr. D.A.Nethsinghe, Chief Guest, Dr. Manase P. Salema, Director of the Division for Africa, East Asia and the Pacific and other Distinguished Representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency, distinguished National Representatives and Delegates, Additional Secretary and the Senior Officials of the Ministry of Economic Reform, Science and Technology, Prof. Prinath Dias Guest of Honour, Representatives of the RCA Regional Office and the FNCA, Distinguished Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka, the host of this meeting, I have the pleasure and the privilege of welcoming you to the opening of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the RCA National Representatives. I thank the RCA Member states and the IAEA for giving us the opportunity to host this meeting. I wish all the delegates a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka joined the RCA in 1976, four years after it came into force in 1972 and we are glad to note that the membership of the RCA has now increased to 17 countries in the region. Sri Lanka has actively participated in the programmes of the RCA and has significantly benefited from this participation. RCA programmes have been instrumental in the establishment of national programmes on the use of nuclear technology in Sri Lanka, mainly in the medical, agricultural and industrial sectors. Many programmes initiated through the RCA have been developed to national programmes through Technical Cooperation of the IAEA and Government support for the benefit of the people of Sri Lanka.

We are also glad to note the recent developments in the management structure of the RCA. The establishment of a Regional Office in the Republic of Korea is a very important and a positive step for the future development of the RCA. I wish to thank the Republic of Korea for its generous support for the establishment of this Regional Office.

I have no doubt that in time to come there will be many new donor agencies supporting the activities of the RCA, as a result of this development.

Sri Lanka was officially designated to host this meeting in 2004, however circumstances made it necessary to host it this year at rather short notice. The staff of the AEA has worked very hard to make all the necessary preparations for the meeting and ensure a comfortable stay in Sri Lanka for all the delegates. Please accept my apologies for any shortcomings.

I once again wish all the delegates a pleasant and a successful stay in Sri Lanka. If there is anything we can do to make your participation more comfortable and productive, please do not hesitate to contact me or the staff of the Atomic Energy Authority.

Thank You.