

Welcoming Remarks

By

Dr. Young-Bok Chae

Minister of Science and Technology

Distinguished Representatives from the RCA Member States,
Dr. Qian Jihui, Deputy Director General, IAEA,
and Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to deliver welcoming remarks at the opening ceremony of the 24th RCA Meeting of National Representatives.

On behalf of Korean Government, I sincerely welcome National Representatives from 17 RCA Member States, Delegates from the IAEA and from the missions in Seoul.

First of all, I would like to extend our deep appreciation to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General, IAEA, for his congratulatory message with full support and encouragement, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the RCA agreement.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Qian Jihui, Deputy Director General, IAEA, for his dedicated support to the development of the RCA, and my warm appreciation to Dr. Carlito Aleta for his efforts to promote and co-ordinate the RCA programs.

I would also thank for the participation of distinguished speakers, Dr. Anil Anand from India, Professor Naiyyum Choudhury from Bangladesh, Dr. Sueo Machi from Japan, Dr. John Easey from Australia and Dr. Byong Whi Lee from Korea, who allowed us to learn their valuable memories, experiences as the first RCA generation, at the RCA Scientific Forum in this afternoon.

As we well aware of, the RCA, the first and oldest nuclear regional cooperative agreement, has accumulated outstanding achievements since its establishment in 1972. RCA cooperative projects have contributed significantly to regional socio-economic development in such areas as food, agriculture, health care, industry and environmental protection. The number of scientists participated in the RCA projects is over seven thousand, and the annual budget reaches around 3 million dollars.

Now, based upon 30 years' cooperation, the RCA is facing new challenges for the second generation. New challenges include RCA ownership by the Member States, close partnership with other international and regional organizations, and effectiveness of the RCA projects.

At this important moment turning to the second generation of RCA activities, I understand we are at the stage of new conceptual development. They are result-oriented cooperation to cope with regional tasks such as poverty, malnutrition, etc., and systematic formulation of projects under the spirit of "selection and concentration" aiming at utmost rewards with the utilization of limited available resources.

In this regard, we consider the decision to establish RCA Regional Office is timely and futuristic. I hope the Regional Office offer the cornerstone of future development of RCA, incorporating Member States' capabilities

Availing this opportunity, I reassure our government's commitment to support its operation and to make the necessary contribution in the coming years.

Distinguished Delegates and Honorable Guests,

In this modern society, the role of non-power applications of nuclear energy is ever increasing. Application of radiation and radioisotopes in our everyday lives will surely enhance the quality of life, as well as improve the industrial and agricultural technology.

In this connection, nuclear safety should be carefully guaranteed. Recently Korea developed a web-based Radiation Safety Information System. It monitors the life cycle of radioactive sources from production to disposal through the Internet. Korea hopes to share this new system technology with RCA Member States.

As for the human resources in nuclear energy for the future, I believe we need intimate cooperation among Member States. To this end, the International Nuclear Training and Education Center is newly built at the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute. We hope this center will be utilized as a common resource among RCA Member States.

Distinguished Representatives from the RCA Member States,

Beginning from today, we work together to open the second generation of RCA history. Korean government will do our best to support the 24th RCA meeting of National Representatives here and Daejeon.

Welcome again to all our colleagues in 17 RCA Member States.

Thank you.