

FNCA Ministerial Meeting Held in Tokyo

On November 30 and December 1, the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA) held its 6th Ministerial Level Meeting at the Chinzanso garden restaurant complex in Tokyo, Japan. Discussions focused on ways to cooperate in human resources development, and the relationship between science & technology and nuclear energy. The participating countries agreed with one another in their perception of the importance of enhancing cooperation in the Asian region toward the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, having agreed especially to set up a coordinated network to be called (tentatively) the Asia Nuclear Energy Education and Training Program.

Nine countries currently participate in the cooperative activities of FNCA: Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (South), Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Atomic Energy Commission of Japan (AEC) is in charge of Japan's contribution. The recent meeting served as a forum for ministers and other officers of equivalent status to get together and discuss policies. Bangladesh participated in the meeting for the first time, as an observer, having expressed its desire to use its experiences in bilateral cooperation with Japan in broader cooperative efforts carried out within a multinational framework.

At the beginning of the conclave, Japan's representative, Iwao Matsuda, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, stressed the importance of the role of nuclear energy utilization, not only as a way to secure energy – especially in Asia, which is expected to make rapid strides economically – but also from the perspective of the problem of global warming. In addition, he also urged non-signatories of the IAEA Safeguards Supplemental Protocol to sign it for the purpose of maintaining and reinforcing the nuclear nonproliferation regime.



As far as the recently agreed-upon Asia Nuclear Energy Education and Training Program is concerned, Vietnam's proposal last year to establish the program was accepted, and a basic concept was drawn up. The Program will take advantage of the educational and training resources already established in each participating country, and will endeavor to coordinate the countries' cooperative efforts for developing human resources. The next specific

step toward its creation will be a coordinators' meeting in March 2006, during which discussions will focus on each country's needs and potential for contribution, so as to better enhance the level of coordination.

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