

Opening Ceremony of NIIT Nuclear Seismic and Structural Research

Core Centre

November 24, 2010

Kashiwazaki, Niigata, Japan

Address of Mr. Denis Flory, Deputy Director General

International Atomic Energy Agency

Your excellency Governor, Honourable Mayor, Mister Chairman, Mister Director General, honourable guests and colleagues,

I would like to congratulate the Niigata Institute of Technology for the inauguration of the Nuclear Seismic and Structural Research Core Centre and to wish this centre a long and fruitful life at the service of nuclear safety.

This centre funded by METI is chartered with studying the relationship between seismic hazard assessment and the design of nuclear facilities, in a cooperative frame, between NIIT – the owner and operator of this centre – Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) and Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). NIIT uses this centre as a research, education and training centre. The Centre is a superb example of implementation of safety oriented research, where a TSO can form high-technology partnerships between industry and Academia, as advocated recently during the October Tokyo conference on Challenges faced by TSOs.

In August this year, representatives of JNES expressed their willingness to support and participate in the IAEA's Extra Budgetary Programme on the International Seismic Safety Centre (ISSC), which aims at collecting information and experience and implementing research programmes and knowledge exchange. The secretariat received proposals from different participating institutions in ten different working areas. I expect the programme proposals from JNES will be based on research coming from this centre and look forward to seeing successful activities in the future.

In nuclear safety, the experience feedback and lessons learned from existing nuclear facilities are extremely valuable. They effectively feed into IAEA services to Member States. I know that the experience from this local community, and the research carried out by experts, as organised through this research centre, will be extremely useful for the community of safety experts and operators, in Japan, as well globally for all countries with nuclear facilities facing a seismic risk. This Centre will underpin the science and engineering requirements needed to develop seismic knowledge, expertise and skills.

Again I express my congratulations and best wishes for success to NIIT, JNES, TEPCO and all stakeholders and local communities who have worked cooperatively in the establishment of the research centre and will continue to do so in the future.

Thank you for your attention.

International Symposium on Seismic Safety of Nuclear Installations

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Over the past half century, the IAEA has been extensively working on nuclear safety issues in the world, providing assistance to Member States by the development and application of safety standards, but also by providing services, and most important, through promoting competence building.

External hazards and site safety including seismic hazard assessment and earthquake resistant design are some of the very important factors in the defence-in-depth concept. It is one of the first challenges a State has to consider before embarking in a nuclear power programme.

The NCO Earthquake in 2007 highlighted the full range of unanswered questions regarding earthquakes, their magnitude, and the possible damage to Nuclear power plants. These are questions of a more global relevance, to Japan most obviously, as well as to other countries similarly prone to these natural events. The American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said “We learn geology the morning after the earthquake.” It is an interesting notion from a philosopher, but no good philosophy for engineers, particularly when it involves nuclear safety. With this in mind

the Agency has established the ISSC based on the lessons learned from such events in the past, with a particular input from the NCO earthquake.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the symposium in Kashiwazaki where local community and Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPP experienced strong tremor. I express my respects to those who suffered from the earthquake, then reconstructed their daily lives and look forward to the new era.

With the participants who have come together today and the world-wide experts, the IAEA will carry out international collaboration under ISSC. This inter-governmental and inter-institutional collaboration will have as its roots a science-based competence. Continuous efforts in establishing and improving Safety Standards will benefit from the advances of knowledge which will help in the implementation and recognition of these standards as internationally relevant and of a global nature.

In doing so, sustainable arrangements for activities, as provided by the partners of ISSC, are essential.

I am very pleased to see that the Agency's commitment to serve through ISSC as the international platform with the active cooperation of experts from Member States is met by equal commitments by its partners from Japan, and from the nuclear safety community at large.

Thank you for your attention.