

Good morning, everyone.

I am KOGUCHI Masanori, president of JAEA.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all as new colleagues at JAEA today.

JAEA is an organization that implements the government's policies on nuclear energy in society through research and development of nuclear energy.

As you are all aware, the social environment surrounding nuclear energy has changed dramatically since Prime Minister Kishida announced the so-called Green Transformation (GX) policy last fall, which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by FY 2050.

Almost identical policy is adopted not only in Japan but also in the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and other countries. It is no exaggeration to say that this is, in a sense, a global trend.

This is not simply an attempt to bring nuclear energy back again as a means to generate power, but a truly challenging initiative by making a 180-degree turn from the conventional society that maintained and developed by consuming carbon to building a new one that does not use carbon.

To achieve this goal, nuclear energy, along with the effective use of renewable energy, is expected to play a central role by maximizing its potential. You could say we are witnessing a historic moment in our efforts to tackle this grand task.

In order to clearly share this mission with all staff members, I have set forth a vision for the new fiscal year beginning this April: "Explore A New Future with the Synergy of Nuclear and Renewable."

The basic notion is not to cling to the sterile dualism of nuclear and renewable energy but to integrate them by maximizing the advantages of each source and eliminating their disadvantages in order to achieve the great goal of realizing a decarbonized society, that is, a sustainable society.

Thus, in terms of social implementation, nuclear science and technology is about to enter a completely new phase.

For this purpose, we ourselves need to change in response to the demands of the times. In other words, the future of JAEA is not on an extension of the past.

At the same time, nuclear science and technology alone can no longer solve all problems. We are now entering the world of integrated science, where nuclear energy is not only a renewable technology but also a collection of peripheral sciences, such as IT and chemistry, as well as social sciences and a wide range of other sciences and knowledge. We must be prepared for this.

No single country can do everything in the field of nuclear science and technology alone. Therefore, international collaboration, especially with countries that share common values, is essential. In other words, international collaboration is also international competition. The key clincher to gain the upper hand in the international competition is whether JAEA has state-of-the-art knowledge and expertise. We must hone our technologies so that other countries will covet them.

Furthermore, in implementing nuclear technology, communication with society has become more important than ever. We cannot move forward or backward unless we are accepted by society.

So far, I mentioned some important issues. In summary, we must step out of the self-righteous, so-called “Nuclear Power Village” (the insular community of nuclear energy) and try with all of our might to achieve our major goal of realizing a sustainable society by acquiring a wide range of knowledge and expertise while living in good harmony with society.

You are all now standing at this historical turning point where you can fully utilize the strength you have cultivated. I would like you to take this opportunity to get a sense of the importance of this moment. I hope you will exercise all of your fresh energy to bring a new breath of fresh air to JAEA.

That said, the reality is not so simple. You may face a stark reality in the future, or you may be lost in a maze. You may be distressed by the gap between your dreams and reality.

I was once there, too. However, in times like these, you need to look further ahead. We are taking on the challenge of realizing the grandest dream since the beginning of humankind; to create a sustainable society. Not everyone is worthy of the challenge. Consider it a privilege for being a JAEA staff member, and shift into high gear. I expect that all of you will keep your chin up and take pride in your work at JAEA.

I sincerely hope that the seasons you will spend at JAEA may add colors and richness to your lives while you contribute to society.

Thank you.