

# For the ASRC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## Hiroshi Ikukawa

Director, The Atomic Energy Division at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology



I am honored to have the opportunity to say a few words at this symposium commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC) of Japan Atomic Energy Agency.

At first, I would like to extend my heart-felt sympathies to the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster on March 11, and the accidents at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, or MEXT, has been promoting efforts for the research and development of atomic energy utilization and fostering human resources in this field. For this, we have received tremendous cooperation from Japan Atomic Energy Agency, JAEA, and we have been unified in our efforts on advancing relevant projects. However, with the occurrence of the accidents at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, the highest priority of the Japanese Government has shifted to act under the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters led by the prime minister, to promptly bring the situation at Fukushima under control. It has become imperative to make long-term efforts for the recovery from the unprecedented nuclear accidents, including measures for decommissioning the crippled reactors and decontaminating the surrounding areas.

JAEA has made a swift move to actively contribute to coping with the Fukushima nuclear accident. It has started research and development on radiation decontamination, played a leading role in the government's decontamination model projects, and sent a lot of experts to lectures and meetings held in Fukushima Prefecture to provide accurate information on radiation and its effect on human being. JAEA has also begun efforts to develop necessary technologies for the decommissioning of the damaged reactors in line with the road map worked out by the government. The Japanese Government is now making its utmost efforts to cope with the situation at the Fukushima power plant and expedite the recovery of the region based on local needs and requests so that the victims of the disaster can regain their safe and secure daily lives as soon as possible, and we would like to ask for JAEA's continued cooperation in this regard.

While it is necessary to make all efforts to deal with the nuclear accident, it is also important for us to review and revise the direction of Japan's energy and nuclear policy taking into account what has happened in Fukushima. The government is now conducting extensive discussions for this review with the aim of reaching conclusions around this summer. Those conclusions will certainly have significant impact on the direction of JAEA's research and development activities, particularly in the field of nuclear fuel cycle and fast-breeder reactors. On the other hand, regardless of what nuclear energy policy we would choose, we believe basic research, efforts for fostering human resources, and international cooperation activities for maintaining and improving the technological base of nuclear related fields will continue to be important and essential.

The Advanced Science Research Center has made very energetic and significant efforts for advancing innovative, fundamental research, creating an international research hub, and developing human resources, which lead to the opening of new groundbreaking fields in nuclear energy science. These efforts not only support the foundation for the utilization of nuclear energy, but also contribute to various areas other than energy, such as the use of radiation for medical purposes. Again, the importance of this kind of research and development will not change in the future. The advanced, fundamental research being conducted at ASRC also contributes to the development of academic fields such as theoretical physics, chemistry, and so on. The researchers at ASRC have achieved outstanding results, published cutting-edge academic papers, and their activities have been internationally recognized and commended. The efforts and achievements of ASRC to date have definitely demonstrated that nuclear energy study is an important part of science and technology that supports the foundation of a wide range of scientific and engineering fields. I am also quite aware that ASRC has cooperated in technology assistance and the dispatch of experts for the decontamination efforts conducted by JAEA, while continuing the outstanding research I mentioned before. ASRC is also pursuing research on decontamination, including that of contaminated soil and water. While coping with the aftermaths of Fukushima, I believe that ASRC will keep moving forward with its research activities and efforts to foster human resources. I sincerely hope that ASRC will continue to be at the forefront of creating outstanding and world-recognized innovations as well as producing many top-notch researchers and scientists.

Finally let me finish my remarks by wishing you all a success of this symposium and continued advancement in your work and endeavors.