

Remarks from the Engineering Academy of Japan

Hideaki KOIZUMI

Chair, Committee on International Affairs
The Engineering Academy of Japan

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be attending this CAETS Convocation as a representative of the Engineering Academy of Japan. As you are all well aware, Japan suffered a massive earthquake followed by a huge tsunami on March 11 this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the people of your country again for the speedy, warm and substantial support shown us which has strengthened and encouraged us as we work towards recovery from a disaster of heretofore unknown scale.

One of the many complications we are still facing is the serious damage to the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant caused by the tsunami. Many engineers in Japan and from other countries are working to cool the nuclear reactors but we are still struggling with the cooling and the various problems caused by radioactivity. This issue is considered top priority by the Engineering Academy of Japan.

With regard to safe and effective energy resources for the future, options are still being hotly debated. Calm and rational judgment taking into account the entire human life system is required. We are learning many different things as a result of this disaster. We have provided clear reports on the Fukushima case to the IAEA which can be viewed on the Internet, and will continue to report on what is happening there. We would also like to share with CAETS society what we are learning through this severe experience.

Following the disaster, we returned to basics to guide our way of thinking. For example, does materialistic prosperity ensure happiness or well-being? What is most important to us as human beings? What is the final destination of engineering - the true objective of engineering? We are again taking a good look at "Human Security and Well-Being." Fortunately, there were no direct or immediate fatalities due to radiation or explosion at the Fukushima plant, but over 20,000 innocent lives were lost to the tsunami on the north-eastern Pacific coastline of Japan, and we need to be more considerate and careful in the future for the sake of our children.

If we think further, more than 30,000 people lose their lives every year through suicide in Japan, and more than 80% of the suicides are thought to be related to mental illness such as depression triggered by various events. We are concerned that the recent tragedies might lead to possible worse trends. A new field of human-oriented engineering is being pursued, such as the development of a diagnostic apparatus for mental illness to decrease the suicide rate, the improvement of various education and rehabilitation opportunities for "Human Empowerment," as well as engineering for new energy resources.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Japanese people and to let you know about the present situation in Japan.

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