SPEECH BY

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NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY FOR DEVELOPMMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS AND FNCA ACTIVITIES

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, your colleagues and the Government of Japan for organising the fourth Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA) in Okinawa this year. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, my delegation and I officially thank the Government of Japan for kindly inviting us to this forum. It is indeed an honour for us, and gives the opportunity to share with you our experience in the sustainable development and application of nuclear science and technology in Malaysia. Today I will share with you our experience in Science and Technology Policy for Development and Competitiveness.

Mr. Chairman

2. Today we live in a globalised world, a world that is highly competitive and increasingly becoming borderless. The changes that are taking place today demand that government and industries to be innovative and creative to improve our competitive edges. With the shift towards knowledge-based economy, the ability of a nation to continuously enhance proficiency in science, technology and innovation is becoming more important.

3. In a competitive market economy, the ability to exploit Science and Technology (S&T) is becoming strategically important and decisive for the

economic performance of Malaysia. Besides playing a critical role in social, environmental and health care programmes, sustainable development and job creation, S&T is expected to transform the nation, so that it adapts to the knowledge-based economy. The rapid development of capability and capacity in S&T is therefore needed to enable the country to sustain its economic growth in the future in line with the requirement of our Vision 2020.

Mr. Chairman

4. Malaysia first introduced the Science and Technology Policy in 1986 followed by the Industrial Technology Development Action Plan in 1990. Within a span of 20 years, among other things Malaysia has successfully integrated S&T in the national development plan, strengthening out S&T infrastructure, built up human resources for S&T and establishing funding mechanism for R&D. Science and technology offers Malaysia its greatest opportunity to turn ideas and creativity into highly competitive business in the 21st. century. The Nation is at critical phase for its economic development , where sustained growth and prosperity depend on how quickly technology and innovation are applied across both the traditional and new industry such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and biotechnology. Proficiency in S&T is imperative if Malaysia aspires to be an advanced and affluent nation.

5. The Government has undertaken a review of the S&T Policy and has launched the Second National Science and Technology Policy and Plan of Action in June 2003. It was formulated to create a conducive environment to further spur the development of science and technology and hence Malaysia's competitiveness. The Second S&T Policy focused on strengthening research and technological capacity and capability in Malaysia with emphasis on commercialisation of research outputs, strengthening of institutional framework and management of S&T. Central to all these strategic thrusts is the need to

bring government, industry , universities and public research institutions together in a synergistic partnership.

Mr. Chairman

6. The Second S&T Policy has identified seven key strategic thrusts to transform the country into knowledge-driven economy so as to maximise economic and social return. They are as follows:

- Strengthening research and technological capacity and capability
- Promoting commercialization of research outputs
- Developing human resource capacity and capability
- Promoting a culture for science, innovation and techno-entrepreneurship
- Strengthening institutional framework and management of S&T and monitoring of S&T policy implementation
- Ensuring widespread diffusion and application of technology, leading to enhanced market-driven R&D to adapt and improve technologies, and
- Building competence for specialization in key emerging technologies.

7. To support the implementation of these strategic thrusts, the government had also identified 55 action plans or specific initiatives. The implementation of the Second S&T Policy will involve a large financial outlay by the government. However, the government is committed to provide the allocation needed for such purposes.

Mr. Chairman

8. May I now turn to our regional cooperation under the FNCA framework. In this regards, let me from the very outset express our satisfaction with the steady progress and achievement made so far. Malaysia has participated in all the activities conducted under FNCA framework and has benefited in strengthening our national nuclear technology capability to enhance our socio-economic and well-being. In this respect we will continue to actively participate in FNCA programmes and activities in the future. We are very pleased that even though there were some problems affecting the region recently such as the outbreak of SARS, we still managed to carry out all the activities of the FNCA as scheduled. For Malaysia, this year we have successfully hosted two FNCA activities namely the Workshop on Application of Electron Accelerator and also receiving an expert mission from Task Force on TENORM, both of them in August. As for the future, Malaysia would like to host the FNCA Workshop on Human Resource Development next year and in 2005 to host Workshop on Mutation Breeding to coincide with the completion of the gamma green house facility for chronic irradiation at MINT. We also would like to offer Malaysia as the venue for the seventh FNCA Meeting in 2006.

Mr. Chairman

9. As the cooperation under the FNCA framework has produced some good results to benefit all the participating countries under the existing programmes, it is logical that we should explore to continue to build up from our success and cooperate in other new nuclear technology areas of common interest to the region. In this regards Malaysia would like to propose a new project on the Expansion of Nuclear Medicine Services: Medical Application and Usage of Positron Emission Tomography, Cyclotron and Radioisotopes. Malaysia is embarking on the expansion of nuclear medicine services in the

country to include the use of PET and very short-lived radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals to enhance health care services in the country. The introduction of this programme is not only for the routine clinical use at the hospitals, but it will also include the support from nuclear research institution in the development of special radiopharmaceuticals and in ensuring the safety aspect. In addition the support from R&D is also required to enhance the programme. We believe many countries in the region will be interested in this area of cooperation that will contribute towards enhancing the quality of life of the people and the cooperation under FNCA is best suited for the above purpose.

Mr. Chairman

10. In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan for it's tremendous effort in making the cooperation under FNCA successful. Let me assure you once again our continual support and commitment to ensure the success of the regional nuclear cooperation under the FNCA framework in the future.

Thank you for your attention.