

Mr Yukiya Amano

Director-General International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very pleased to attend this FAO Conference. I am very much pleased because the relationship between FAO and IAEA has strengthened dramatically in the past several years.

Director-General José Graziano da Silva visited Vienna last year and now I am in Rome to attend your Conference. Director-General Graziano da Silva and I have just signed revised Joint Arrangements between the FAO and IAEA. Our two Organizations have one thing in common. We made an important contribution to combatting hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

Fifty years ago in 1964, we created the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, and that Joint Division has helped to unlock the potential of nuclear technology for the benefit of many hundreds of thousands of people in developing countries. Our cooperation continues to evolve.

With the support of FAO, the IAEA has proposed that it should become a member of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. The IAEA is often described in the media as the UN "nuclear watchdog", but we are more than that. By making nuclear technology available, we make a unique contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in ending poverty and hunger as well as in child and maternal health.

I have been impressed by the impact our projects have had in improving lives in many developing countries. I went to Peru two years ago and I met farmers who grow new types of barley at high altitudes, thanks to radiation induced mutation techniques made available with our assistance.

In Ethiopia – I went there this year – I learned how the sterile insect technique is being used successfully to eradicate the tsetse fly in the Southern Rift Valley. This has the potential to save the lives of millions of cattle and protect the livelihoods of over one hundred thousand farming families. In the eradication of the deadly cattle disease and the pest the Joint Division played a major role. Our work can also have a favorable impact on the environment, resulting in less use of fertilizer and more efficient use of water.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are making a real difference to the work. The Joint Division provides scientific and technical support for over two hundred fifty national and regional IAEA technical cooperation projects in Member Nations. Some five hundred research institutions and experimental stations in Member Nations participate in coordinating research projects every year. Our eight nuclear applications laboratories in Vienna are unique within the UN system. They are doing pioneering work related to human and animal health, food security and safety, and culture and environmental monitoring. However, these laboratories are becoming obsolete by today's standards. So we are finalizing plans for an extensive modernization of the laboratories in the next few years.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Joint FAO/IAEA Division and the FAO/IAEA Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratories are a successful example of interagency cooperation in the United Nations. In signing the Revised Arrangements today, we reconfirmed our commitment to this very effective partnership. Our work helps to reduce poverty, improve food security, and combat disease.

This brings us a step closer to the sort of world we all want to see. The IAEA greatly values our collaboration FAO. I thank you, Director-General, for your commitment to our joint endeavors, and I

assure you that I remain committed to strengthening cooperation between our two Organizations in the coming years. Thank you very much.