6th German-Japanese | 6th International Symposium on Nanostructures
March 3-5, 2013
Kusatsu/Kyoto, Japan

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

address by
Peter Altmaier
Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
for the
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Nanotechnology – moving forward to a sustainable technology

Nanomaterials including nanostructured materials are major drivers of technology which offer entirely new prospects. Their unique properties enable innovative companies to develop new products and enter new business areas.

Important application fields of nanomaterials are electric mobility and clean energy. Nanomaterials can be used to improve batteries as the key component of battery electric cars. Nanotechnology also plays a central role in alternative energy storage systems - for example for storing hydrogen. Hydrogen is another potential candidate for replacing fossil fuels in mobility e. g. by utilizing fuel cell electric vehicles as well as for short-term storage, particularly of renewable energies.

Nanotechnologies are widely expected to generate opportunities for economic growth. But there is also an urgent need to close existing knowledge gaps regarding the potential effects of nanomaterials and products on human health and the environment,. Therefore, the Federal Environment Ministry established the NanoDialogue as a stakeholder platform, supports research projects to generate data for risk assessment and has an active role in the EU and the OECD.

We are carefully considering the opportunities and impacts in order to achieve our goal of making nanotechnology safe and sustainable.

Globalization and the resulting international division of work have a major economic and social impact. That is why, alongside our own national science and research, we strongly support international cooperation. Improving our access to international knowledge is indispensable for innovation and employment - and international cooperation is therefore particularly important in the area of nanotechnology.

Japan and Germany have considerable influence in the huge field of nanotechnology. Together with Japan we are moving forward in the OECD “Working Party on Manufactured Nanomaterials” where we share our knowledge on the safety of nanomaterials and work on conclusions for testing and assessing nanomaterials.

In recent years the OZ conferences have made a key contribution to international dialogue and to the debate about the new opportunities offered by nanotechnology. This is particular important in order to strengthen the innovative capacity of the participating companies, institutes and universities and promotes a “growing together” on all levels.

I wish you all a successful OZ-13 conference in Japan with many innovative ideas.

Sincerely,