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News

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Izumi Nakamitsu, U.N. Under-Secretary-General, visits Hiroshima RERF, energizing 23rd Open House event

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Office for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations, paid a courtesy visit to Hiroshima RERF on August 5, lending excitement to the first day of the annual Open House event. Ms. Nakamitsu was appointed to the U.N. post in May. Her visit to the laboratory was realized when RERF extended an invitation after learning of Ms. Nakamitsu's scheduled August 6 visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony.

Accompanied by Ms. Haruka Katarao, a Hiroshima native and staff member of the U.N. Office for Disarmament Affairs; Ms. Yuko Komatsu, a representative of the Hiroshima City government; and a daughter, Ms. Nakamitsu first spent time visiting with Dr. Ohtsura Niwa, RERF Chairman; Dr. Robert L. Ullrich, Vice Chairman; Dr. Akira Hashizume, Executive Director; Dr. Kazunori Kodama, Chief Scientist; and Mr. Douglas C. Solvie, Chief of Secretariat.

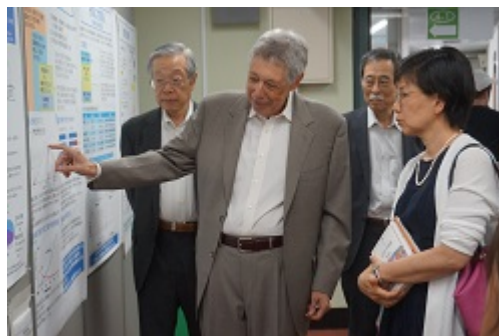
Later, the group viewed an Open House exhibit describing a published account by Dr. Michihiko Hachiya, a medical practitioner and hospital director, of his experience surviving the Hiroshima atomic bombing. "Hiroshima Diary"-explained Dr. Akiko Kubota, Assistant Professor, Hiroshima University Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine-was first published in English as a translation before the original Japanese and subsequently translated into 18 languages. Dr. Kubota related there were only four copies of a scrapbook commemorating publication of "Hiroshima Diary," with the RERF scrapbook-displayed to the public in a special exhibit at this year's Open House for the first time-the only original. Ms. Nakamitsu expressed delight after hearing of RERF's display of the scrapbook, which included book reviews from around the world, celebrating this important A-bombing literature's depiction of Hiroshima right after the atomic bombing.

On the opposite wall, the group viewed ABCC-RERF's photographs of notable visitors, with Ms. Nakamitsu paying special attention to the framed image of Carolyn Kennedy, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Japan 2013-2017, taken on her recent visit to RERF.

With respect to research conducted by ABCC-RERF, Dr. Ullrich explained RERF's Life Span Study (LSS) and some of the findings resulting from that long-term study, initiated in 1958. He noted that about 10% of solid cancers overall in the LSS were caused by A-bomb radiation exposure, with the increased cancer risk lasting a lifetime, and finished by stating, "Whatever you can do about getting rid of atomic weapons, you should," to which Ms. Nakamitsu nodded deeply.



Ms. Nakamitsu, looking at "Hiroshima Diary" display (center)



Dr. Ullrich explaining RERF's LSS study to Ms. Nakamitsu (right)



U.N. group at conclusion of Hiroshima Laboratory visit