

Japan: Antinuclear conference calls for full support of victims in Fukushima

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Contents

- [Antinuclear conference urges](#)
- [Nuke opponents warn of more](#)
- [Opponents of Hamaoka nuclear](#)
- [Fukushima governor demands](#)

YOKOHAMA (Kyodo) — Citizens, politicians and scientists attending an antinuclear conference called Sunday for sufficient support to be provided to those affected by the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

Participants of the Global Conference for a Nuclear Free World also called for “full transparency” by the Japanese government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., when dealing with the accident and helping victims.

The requests were part of the Yokohama Declaration that more than 10,000 participants from some 30 countries adopted on the second and last day of the event in Yokohama, organized by nongovernmental organizations such as Peace Boat.

Rights should be protected for those affected by the nuclear crisis, including “the right to evacuation, health care, decontamination, compensation and the right to enjoy the same standard of living as before March 11, 2011,” said the declaration.

The declaration also urged the government to comprehensively collect data related to radioactive contamination of humans, food, water, soil and air as a way to minimize people’s exposure to radiation released by the Fukushima plant disaster soon after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

That appeal was highlighted in a session of mayors of Japanese municipalities held on Sunday as part of the international conference.

Katsutaka Idogawa, mayor of Futaba, a Fukushima Prefecture town where the crippled nuclear power plant is located, told the session “There have been no sufficient radiation checks (in the town.)”

The mayor said he has urged the central government to monitor radiation levels in his town but the request has not been met.

In the declaration, conference participants emphasized the need for the global community to draw up a road map for phasing out the nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining to waste — and decommissioning all nuclear power plants.

“The ‘safety myth’ has been destroyed. Nuclear technology has never been safe and has never survived without massive public subsidies,” the declaration said, proposing instead promotion of

renewable energy.

“Renewable energy is proven and ready to be deployed on a decentralized and local scale if only policies to promote it were advanced to support local economies, such as Feed-in-Tariffs,” it said.

The declaration said Japanese atomic power plants that are currently idled should not be restarted.

Echoing the declaration, Katsunobu Sakurai, mayor of Minamisoma city in Fukushima Prefecture, appealed for gradual abolition of nuclear power.

“I came to strongly urge nuclear power generation to be phased out because we should never repeat this kind of crisis,” said Sakurai, who filed a direct appeal for support of those affected by the nuclear crisis on YouTube following the accident.

People in the affected areas are still searching for missing relatives, said the mayor. His city falls partially within the 20-kilometer exclusion zone around the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Tatsuya Yoshioka, representative of Peace Boat, told a press conference after the global meeting ended that the conference “showed many people want a clear message and standard at a time when the phrase ‘phasing out of nuclear power’ has become vague.”

The mayors agreed to build a nationwide network aimed at abolishing nuclear plants, and will hold a preliminary meeting slated for next month, according to Akira Kawasaki, a Peace Boat member and one of officials who organized the two-day event.

The Yokohama declaration also called on Japan not to export nuclear power generation equipment or technology to other countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Praful Bidwai, a guest speaker and journalist from India, said in a session on eliminating nuclear power and weapons, “The Japanese antinuclear movement must now pressure the government...not to sign a nuclear cooperation agreement (with India).”

Last month Japan and India agreed to move ahead with discussions on resuming negotiations over a bilateral treaty on peaceful nuclear energy cooperation.

Bidwai dismissed the idea of peaceful use of nuclear power as a move that would eventually lead to nuclear weapons development.

Kyodo Press, January 15, 2012

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2012/01/15/20120115p2g00m0dm075000c.html>

Antinuclear conference urges the need to phase out nuclear power

YOKOHAMA (Kyodo) — Politicians and civic activists from around the world gathered for a two-day antinuclear conference Saturday in Yokohama, urging the need to phase out nuclear power and shift to green energy by learning from nuclear disasters in Fukushima and around the world.

In the opening session, Yuri Tomitsuka, a 10-year-old boy who evacuated from Fukushima Prefecture to Yokohama said, "I want to ask politicians which is more important. Is it money or our lives? I don't want to get ill. Nuclear plants are not necessary for children."

A message saying, "I just only wish there were no nuclear plants, just no nuclear plants," was cited by Tatsuya Yoshioka, representative of Peace Boat, one of the organizers of the Global Conference for a Nuclear Power Free World bringing together about 5,000 participants from more than 30 countries.

He said the message was written by a head of the Maeda district in the village of Iitate, Fukushima Prefecture, who killed himself right after the nuclear accident at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

"If his message can be delivered to the world, we can achieve our goal of phasing out nuclear power...and if we truly believe in this, we can build an international network," Yoshioka said.

With some 100 guest speakers attending, the event is offering sessions and workshops to exchange views with living witnesses of nuclear disasters including Fukushima residents and people from Chernobyl and the Marshall Islands.

Based on the discussions, participants will propose a list of actions that should be taken by governments and citizens.

European Parliament member Rebecca Harms from Germany, said, "Japan is right now managing to run the very big cities with big industries," though only several reactors are working in Japan out of 54 in the wake of the nuclear crisis. "Why and how should Japan go back on to a nuclear way?"

Harms, co-chair of the Greens/European Free Alliance Group in the parliament, explained Germany's political decision to halt nuclear reactors, urging, "Please people of Japan, learn from German experience."

Shuntaro Hida, a doctor from Hiroshima Prefecture, shared his experience of treating atomic bomb survivors and warned, "Considering the internal exposure that can pose a threat with even a small amount, we should halt nuclear reactors."

Some discussions are also focusing on how to shift to renewable energy by taking examples from Canada and Denmark which actively promote green energy.

At the end of the conference Sunday, they are to declare the need for greater participation of citizens in energy policy, connecting with victims of radiation exposure and shifting the world to renewable energy.

Kyodo Press, January 15, 2012

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2012/01/15/20120115p2g00m0dm021000c.html>

Nuke opponents warn of more Fukushimas

OSAKA – The government's plan to allow nuclear reactors to operate as long as 60 years has shocked antinuclear experts and activists, who warn of a Fukushima sequel.

The central government announced its plan Tuesday, the 17th anniversary of the Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe. Under the proposal, once a reactor hits its 40th year, its operator could apply for a one-time extension of up to 20 years under certain conditions.

The proposal, which needs Diet approval, is similar to a law recently passed in the U.S. allowing 40-year-old reactors to apply for up to 20-year extensions.

Currently, plant operators in Japan can apply for a 10-year extension after 30 years, but it is the prefectures where the reactors are operated that have the final say.

Of Japan's 54 commercial reactors, 15 are at least 30 years old and four are more than 40 years old, including three in Fukui Prefecture and one in Fukushima Prefecture. No local government has ever said no to an extension after 30 years.

Tuesday's decision drew flak from nuclear power experts.

"Deciding to extend the life of the plants to up to 60 years was a purely political decision made due to pressure from the nuclear power lobby. It wasn't based on scientific data. And it was made despite the fact we don't know the exact cause of the meltdowns at Fukushima," said Hiroaki Koide, a nuclear physicist at Kyoto University Reactor Research Institute who turned against nuclear power years ago and wrote extensively before March 11 on the dangers of aging plants in quake-prone Japan.

Japan is home to about 20 percent of the world's earthquakes with a magnitude of 6 or higher. The Meteorological Agency reported earlier this month that there were 6,757 aftershocks between the March 11 Tohoku temblor and tsunami and Dec. 31, with 35 of them magnitude 5 or above.

Aileen Mioko Smith, executive director of Kyoto-based Green Action, warned that operating reactors for six decades runs a high risk of another Fukushima-like accident occurring and is unnecessary, given that even with about 90 percent of the nation's nuclear plants currently shut down, there is enough electricity.

"The decision is a clear indication that the Japanese government has trashed safety concerns in order not just to protect the utilities from their investments but also to allow them to make even more money on decrepit nuclear plants," she said.

Meanwhile, stress tests on reactors shut down after March 11 continue. But pressure is growing from utilities to restart their newer units.

In Oi, Fukui Prefecture, the No. 3 reactor, built in 1991, is likely to be the first in the nation to restart, possibly in March.

Hideyuki Koyama, of the group Osaka Citizens Against the Mihama, Oi, and Takahama Nuclear Plants, said financial incentives to Fukui officials from the nuclear power lobby could mean the prefecture's 14 reactors, the densest concentration in the world, will continue operating the full six decades.

"Fukui Prefecture wants a shinkansen, so central government approval for its construction might

persuade local officials to keep the aging plants running," he said.

By **ERIC JOHNSTON**, *Japan Times* Staff writer, January 19, 2012

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120119a2.html>

Opponents of Hamaoka nuclear plant restart gain momentum

SHIZUOKA — A growing number of municipalities near the suspended Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant in Shizuoka Prefecture are up in arms about plans by operator Chubu Electric Power Co. to restart the plant.

Chubu Electric Power shut down the nuclear plant in May as requested by then Prime Minister Naoto Kan due to fears of a possible huge earthquake in the aftermath of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that triggered the crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant.

Chubu Electric Power is aiming to restart the plant, southwest of Tokyo, after implementing measures against tsunami, including an 18-meter-tall seawall now under construction.

But many municipalities near the plant, including those within a 10-kilometer radius of the plant known as an emergency planning zone (EPZ) and those within a 30-kilometer radius known as an urgent protective action zone (UPZ), have passed resolutions and opinions opposing the plant's restart.

The city assembly in Makinohara, one of four cities within the 10-kilometer radius of the power plant, spearheaded the campaign against the plan by adopting a resolution last September calling for the decommissioning of the plant citing radiation fears among major firms in the city.

The city assembly in Omaezaki, host to the Hamaoka power station, took steps to counter the move by adopting documents that said that the city, heavily dependent on nuclear power-related revenue and subsidies, was troubled by the decommission appeal.

But the cities of Kikugawa and Kakegawa subsequently approved documents that say they cannot approve of the restart unless they win their residents' understanding.

Other local governments, which will be required to take preparatory steps if designated as parts of the UPZ in the course of a review of the nation's nuclear disaster-prevention system, are also becoming vocal about their opposition to the nuclear plant.

In addition to the city of Shimada, which adopted an anti-restart document in June, the city of Yaizu, home port of the Lucky Dragon No. 5, a tuna fishing boat exposed to nuclear fallout from U.S. thermonuclear testing on Bikini Atoll in 1954, adopted a similar resolution, along with the cities of Fujieda and Fukuroi.

The town assembly in Yoshida, located in a 30-kilometer radius of the power plant, unanimously adopted a resolution and a document urging that the plant be scrapped altogether.

Mainichi Shimbun, January 16, 2012

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2012/01/16/20120116p2a00m0na011000c.ht>

Fukushima governor demands TEPCO decommission all its 10 nuke reactors

FUKUSHIMA — Gov. Yuhei Sato has demanded that Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), the operator of the crippled nuclear plant, decommission all its 10 nuclear reactors in the prefecture.

Sato made the demand in a meeting with TEPCO President Toshio Nishizawa at prefectural government headquarters in the city of Fukushima on Dec. 27. Nishizawa stopped short of mentioning the possibility of decommissioning the reactors, and left the prefectural government without answering questions from reporters.

Nishizawa visited the Fukushima Prefectural Government's headquarters to report to the governor that the power supplier has completed Step 2 of the road map to bring the tsunami-hit Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant under control.

In the meeting, Sato strongly demanded that TEPCO decommission and dismantle all 10 reactors at the utility's Fukushima No. 1 and 2 nuclear plants.

"Fukushima Prefecture will build a society that won't rely on nuclear energy, and demands that all the reactors in the prefecture be decommissioned and dismantled," Sato told Nishizawa.

In response, the TEPCO head only said, "We'll sincerely take measures to ensure safety, pay compensation to those affected by the disaster and decontaminate tainted areas."

Mainichi Shimbun, December 28, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/12/28/20111228p2a00m0na010000c.html>
