

Fourth Annual UK-Japan Nuclear Dialogue (Summary of Discussions)

Date: 24-25 November 2015

Venue: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

Co-Chairs:

Prof Robin Grimes (Chief Scientific Adviser, FCO, UK)

Mr Yoshitoshi Nakamura (Deputy Director General,
Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, MOFA, Japan)

Background

The Prime Ministers of Japan and the UK held a summit meeting in April 2012 and produced a joint statement. The 'Japan-UK Framework on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation', which was annexed to the joint statement, states that Japan and the UK decided to launch an annual dialogue at senior level to strengthen bilateral cooperation across the full range of civil nuclear activities.

The fourth annual meeting was hosted by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London, UK on 24th and 25th November 2015.

I. Session One: Nuclear Research and Development

Both sides shared updates on the UK-Japan Joint Research Fund as well as projects funded over the past year. The group committed to further discussion on the fund focus. Both sides look forward to expanding partnership through the Joint Research Fund and by other means.

Both sides shared a common understanding on the importance of exchanges of researchers and students to deepen understanding and collaboration on research and development (R&D). The Dialogue members discussed developing research links through various channels. Both sides will explore the possibility of organising a face-to-face forum before the next Dialogue.

Japan explained the opening of the Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (CLADS) and the UK updated the Dialogue on a secondment by a UK researcher.

II. Session Two: Public Communication

Both sides welcomed the activities that have taken place over the past year including UK academics' outreach in Japan. Japan shared experiences on public engagement related to the reactor restarts. Both sides looked forward to further sharing experience on public communication.

The UK welcomed the Japanese model schools energy education programme and expressed an interest in working together in future to share experiences and benefit energy education in both countries.

III. Session Three: Nuclear Safety and Regulation

The UK and Japanese regulators (ONR and NRA, respectively) updated the Dialogue on their regulatory activities in the UK and Japan over the last 12 months and highlighted the key areas and priorities for 2016. They provided details of the Information Exchange topics and areas of cooperation that took place in the past year.

ONR provided assurances to the Japanese delegation regarding the adequacy of its resources to support the ongoing Generic Design Assessments of the UK ABWR and the AP1000, and its commitment to meet the indicative programmes for issuing of the design acceptance confirmations, subject to adequate safety submissions being received from the requesting parties.

On the occasion of the Dialogue, both sides highlighted potential new topics for future Information Exchange meetings. Both regulatory bodies indicated that there were mutual benefits from sharing experiences and practices and fully supported the continuation of the process as an effective means of international benchmarking in pursuance of relevant good practice.

IV. Session Four: Decommissioning and Clean-up

Both sides discussed decommissioning and decontamination related issues. Japan shared progress on clean-up at and around Fukushima. The UK acknowledged the contribution that the experience from Japan has made to updating the UK's radiation recovery handbooks. Both sides also welcomed the Working Group's activities over the past year which had included a workshop held between British and Japanese experts on various aspects of nuclear collaboration.

TEPCO and Sellafield Ltd presented to the Dialogue on their collaboration and exchange over the past year, which demonstrated the significant benefits of their relationship in areas such as site management and public communication.

The NDA and NDF presented a summary of their collaboration activities. There had been many useful discussions in areas such as a risk based approach and prioritisation of activities. Both sides recognised the mutual benefit in continuing this excellent relationship.

It was noted that there was potential for joint development of technologies which could be carried out under existing relationships.

V. Session Five: Nuclear Policy

The two delegations updated each other on their current nuclear energy-related policy. The UK gave an update on its new build programme including progress at Wylfa and Moorside. The UK welcomed Japanese industry's involvement in the UK's new build programme as part of a broad/strategic industrial partnership between the two countries.

The UK and Japan recognised that the complementary strengths of British and Japanese companies in the civil nuclear sector give them the opportunity to pursue more strategic partnerships for mutual benefit and gain. This concept of strategic partnerships would be commercial in nature and would be at the discretion of individual companies.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The co-chairs, Prof. Robin Grimes and Mr. Yoshitoshi Nakamura, expressed that the Fourth Annual UK-Japan Nuclear Dialogue had enabled important discussions and set the scene for further UK-Japan cooperation in the area of civil nuclear energy. Through the Dialogue, both sides gained official, high-level recognition for the collaborative activities undertaken so far and delegates were able to identify opportunities for further cooperation.

The Japanese side expressed appreciation for the opportunity to visit the Sellafield site and the insight that it provided.

The delegations reaffirmed that the UK and Japan share common values and see each other as natural partners to pursue further opportunities and deepen what is a historic relationship for the long term. The delegations confirmed to hold the next Dialogue in Tokyo in 2016 and to continue to promote the positive relationship.

Appendix: List of Acronyms

ABWR – advanced boiling water reactor

CLADS – Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (Japan)

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)

GDA – Generic Design Assessment

MOFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)

NDA – Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (UK)

NDF – Nuclear Damage Compensation and Decommissioning Facilitation Corporation (Japan)

NRA – Nuclear Regulation Authority (Japan)

ONR – Office for Nuclear Regulation (UK)

R&D – research and development

TEPCO – Tokyo Electric Power Company (Japan)