

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

Date: 31 October, 1 November 2016

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Tokyo

Co-Chairs:

Mr Masahiro Kawasaki (Ambassador, Deputy Director-General,
Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, MOFA, Japan)
Prof Robin Grimes (Chief Scientific Adviser, FCO, UK)

Background

The 'Japan-UK Framework on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation', which was annexed to the joint statement at the Japan-UK summit meeting in April 2012, 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 fifth annual meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in Tokyo, Japan on 31st October and 1st November 2016.

I. Session One: Nuclear Research and Development

Both sides shared updates on the Japan-UK Joint Research Fund as well as projects funded over the past year, and welcomed the steady and successful achievements of the fund. Both sides look forward to expanding partnership through the Joint Research Fund and by other means.

Both sides were pleased to acknowledge of the increasing number of UK-Japan groups which have been formed to deepen understanding and collaboration on research and development (R&D). Both sides discussed developing research links through various channels as well as academic exchange.

Both sides noted the cooperation between the Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (CLADS) and the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) and the importance of needs-based research in tackling complex decommissioning challenges.

Both sides discussed the possibility of exploring ideas to utilise each other's research facilities, and also to continue the successful exchange students and researchers between both countries.

II. Session Two: Decommissioning and Clean-up

Both sides discussed decommissioning and decontamination related issues. Japan shared progress on off-site clean-up and environmental remediation activities at and around Fukushima. Both sides acknowledged the deepening of the relationship in this area over the past 5 years. This included collaborations between the NDA & NDF, and Sellafield & TEPCO. Both sides were able to share experience from their decommissioning programmes, and noted the value of sharing knowledge on complex decommissioning issues, and the value of potential joint research in this area.

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

The NDA and NDF reaffirmed the merit of sharing the knowledge and shared the intention to continue their cooperation.

III. Session Three: Public Communication

Both sides welcomed the activities that have taken place over the past year, and Japan shared experiences on public engagement related to reactor restarts. Both sides confirmed to further share their experience in public communication and cooperate on deepening the understanding of nuclear energy in both countries.

TEPCO and Sellafield Ltd presented their Fukushima – West Cumbria study to the Dialogue. This is an excellent example of the advantages of the UK-Japan collaboration. It is a year-long joint project in stakeholder engagement, sharing best practice between the two organisations.

IV. Session Four: Nuclear Policy

Both sides 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 and explained the new legal framework for future foreign investment in UK's critical infrastructure. 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. Japan outlined developments in its nuclear policy such as restarts of NPP. Both sides confirmed that following the referendum on the UK membership of the EU, the importance of each other as the global partner sharing fundamental values would remain unchanged and that close cooperation will continue in the field of nuclear energy.

The UK and Japan noted the many areas where the two industries were working together, and welcomed the opportunity for commercial organisations to meet at the UK-Japan Industry to Industry forum at the British Embassy in Tokyo in Jan 2017.

V. Session Five: 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 2017. They provided details of the Information Exchange topics and areas of cooperation that took place this year.

ONR described the concept of 'Enabling Regulation', and also 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.

Japan explained their efforts in nuclear disaster prevention by presenting their emergency plan. Both sides confirmed the importance of sharing knowledge in nuclear disaster prevention and shared intention to continue the discussion.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The co-chairs, Ambassador Masahiro Kawasaki and Prof. Robin Grimes, expressed that the Fifth 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 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 agreed to hold the next Dialogue in London in 2017 and to continue to promote the positive relationship.

Appendix: List of Acronyms

CLADS – Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (Japan)
FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
MOFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
NDA – Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (UK)
NDF – Nuclear Damage Compensation and Decommissioning Facilitation Corporation (Japan)
NNL – National Nuclear Laboratory (UK)
NRA – Nuclear Regulation Authority (Japan)
ONR – Office for Nuclear Regulation (UK)
R&D – research and development
TEPCO – Tokyo Electric Power Company (Japan)