

Press briefing at the Prime Minister's Office for members of the foreign press

20 April 2011

Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations: Good evening, we are starting this evening's briefing for the international press. My name is Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations at the Prime Minister's Office. Today's briefers are as follows: Mr. Hidehiko Nishiyama, Deputy Director-General of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA); to his right is Mr. Ichiro Nakagawa, Counselor of the Resources Enhancement Promotion Department, Fisheries Agency of Japan; and to his right is Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga, Assistant Press Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). And to my left is Mr. Shinichi Kawarada, Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); and to his left is Mr. Masanori Shinano, Counselor Secretariat of the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC); and lastly, Mr. Eiichi Yokota, Senior Technical Officer of the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW).

I have a brief introduction regarding what Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano announced at today's press conferences. One point is today, based on the Act on Special Measures Concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness, the Japanese government instructed the Governor of Fukushima Prefecture to place shipping and consumption restrictions on Pacific Sandeel and young lance fish caught in Fukushima Prefecture. He mentioned that for details, please inquire to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

There was a question regarding the reports about the considerations for the creation of policies for the establishment of a no-entry zone within the 20km radius from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. On this question, Mr. Edano mentioned that the situation at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station is still not sufficiently stable, and thus in order to ensure public health and safety, we would like to ask that no one enter the area within 20km of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station unless there are special instructions to do so from the national or local government.

It is unfortunately the case that there are some people who have entered this area, so we are currently moving forward with discussions with local municipalities concerning the establishment of the no-entry zone as a means of enforcing entry restrictions. On this

issue, there is a related issue – Mr. Edano also mentioned that we understand how those who evacuated with little more than the clothes on their backs must feel, and in fact it is precisely because we understand how the public feels that the discussions on temporary reentry have proceeded as far as they have. He mentioned that we should be able to realize a method by which residents can safely and temporarily visit their homes.

So, there is also the issue of how to allow the residents to enter the evacuation zone, with special needs. But at the same time, when there are a number of people who have entered the zone, we must discuss the establishment of a no-entry zone.

Also, there was an announcement that Prime Minister Kan will be visiting Fukushima Prefecture tomorrow. It is a day trip, and Prime Minister Kan plans to enter Fukushima Prefecture by Self-Defense Forces (SDF) helicopter. He is planning to meet with the Governor of Fukushima prefecture as well as visiting the local headquarters of the Nuclear Disaster Response Team, which is located inside Fukushima Prefecture, as well as visiting some of the evacuation centers in Tamura City and Koriyama City of Fukushima Prefecture. So this is the plan, as long as the weather permits, because the transportation is going to be by helicopter.

So I will stop here and I would like now to ask Mr. Nishiyama of NISA to go next.

Mr. Nishiyama: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to give a very brief overview regarding Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

Regarding Unit 1, we continued to inject nitrogen into the containment vessel of Unit 1. The pressure shows a slightly declining trend. We think the reason for this is, as the temperature goes down, the amount of vapor declines. Meanwhile, we are continuing to inject pure water to cool the fuel down.

Regarding Unit 2, the parameters of the reactor of Unit 2 are relatively stable. We continue to transfer the water in the trench attached to Unit 2 to the irradiated waste disposal system. Around 300t of water was transferred. The surface of the trench water of Unit 2 was lowered by 1cm. We have a plan to transfer 10,000t of highly-irradiated water through this irradiated waste disposal system. We will prepare a water treatment system connected to this waste disposal system to create clean water or water with low levels of radiation. We plan to introduce the clean water to the reactor as coolant so we

can refrain from adding new water. The capacity of the water treatment system is to be larger than the amount of pure water introduced to the reactor to a considerable extent.

Regarding Unit 3, the parameters of the reactor of Unit 3 are relatively stable. The surface of the trench water of Unit 3 rose 3cm compared to yesterday. We have to remove debris to prepare for nitrogen injection into the reactor of this unit.

Regarding Unit 4, we injected 100t of pure water into the spent fuel pool of Unit 4. We need to build a support structure under the bottom of this unit's spent fuel pool. We are now doing research on the situation of the reactor building of this unit.

Regarding Unit 6, we transferred 100m³ of the stagnant water of the turbine 6 into the hot well of this unit. This was a kind of emergency measure to deal with the water. We temporarily stopped the tentative residual heat removal system of Unit 6 and moved seawater pump to the pit where we can get seawater to avoid conflict between hoses and the removing work of debris. This work has finished already, safely. In addition to those, we sprayed synthetic plastic over 1,000m² of place near the irradiated waste disposal system to settle the irradiated dust. Thank you, that is all for my report today.

Mr. Shikata: Now, I would like to ask Mr. Kawarada of MEXT to go next.

Mr. Kawarada: Thank you. MEXT has, from a point 20km further from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, been conducting radiation monitoring. At the same time, we are monitoring the radiation and radioactivity monitoring of all prefectures.

First of all, regarding the monitoring beyond the 20km radius from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, I believe you have on hand a document entitled "MEXT" and on page 5 of that document there is a time-wise level of the radioactivity in the air, which for the past two weeks has been level after dropping considerably two weeks ago. Although there are some ups and downs, on the whole, the trend is level for the radioactivity in the air to level out.

As for the radiation and radioactivity monitoring at all prefectures, please refer to pages 14 and 15, and you will see the spatial radiation dose rate figures. Fukushima, of course, measured very high dose rates, and Ibaraki, Chiba, and the vicinity prefectures of

Fukushima showed slightly higher levels, but for the other prefectures they are within normal bounds.

Amongst all of the prefectures, the radioactive fallout, as well as drinking water measurements, are shown for all prefectures. As for fallout, over a wide-reaching area, there have been very slight levels of impact in a very wide area. As for drinking water, the Kanto area around Fukushima has shown some measurements of radioactive iodine as well as cesium within the drinking water. Thank you.

Mr. Shikata: I would like to ask the Nuclear Safety Commission's (NSC) Mr. Shinano to go next.

Mr. Shinano: Thank you very much. I would like to give you the daily report about the results of the environmental monitoring. Today, I will report to you the numbers that were announced between 10:00 of 17 April and 10:00 of 18 April, and in general there was no figure that would have an impact on human health. On an individual basis, as for the spatial radiation dosage, as compared to the previous day, there were a few points with somewhat of a slight increase. As was indicated from the material from MEXT, on 18 April, there was some increase on the dosage. It is probably due to the wind direction, as well as the rain. And it is not probably caused by anything that had happened at the reactor site.

As for the radioactive material in the air, there is somewhat of an increase for both iodine and cesium, but they are both below the provisional regulation and it does not have impact on human health.

As for the environmental values, we check the sea surface, as well as the lower level of ocean, as well as on the surface of the sea, and for all the number is lower than that of the previous day for iodine and cesium.

Mr. Shikata: Now I would like to ask Mr. Yokota of MHLW to go next.

Mr. Yokota: Well, from MHLW, there was a report that was given to us yesterday and I would like to report to you on that. Yesterday, 9 municipalities had given us the results of the testing for 36 samples. If you will look at the results on the backside, you will see one column that is grey, and that is a sample that exceeded the provisional standard.

This is the sand lance from Fukushima, which had actually exceeded the provisional standard value, but Fukushima prefecture is not carrying out any fishing. Therefore there are no fish that are marketed. On the following material, we do provide you with the overall number of the testing that we have had. We had 1,703, and 198 of them had actually showed the result that exceeded the provisional value.

The last paper is the instruction associated with food by the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters. You will see that today there was an instruction given regarding the sand lances from Fukushima prefecture. There was the ban on shipment as well as intake of the sand lances as of today.

Mr. Shikata: Now I would like to ask Mr. Ichiro Nakayama of the Fisheries Agency to go next.

Mr. Nakayama: Thank you very much. I would like to give you just one report today. That is, we had renewed the homepage of the Fisheries Agency. We have added 23 samples. As was already reported to you by the MHLW, one sample of sand lances had exceeded the provisional value, but the others have not passed the level. In this way, we have enhanced the monitoring on the part of the Fisheries Agency. In the homepage of the Fisheries Agency, on page 9, you will find this kind of map. It was found in the Japanese version, but now you see this map on the English homepage. You see the sampling points, and you will see that the white circles are below the provisional standards and that the black circles are the new ones that exceeded the provisional values. So these are the new things that we added to the homepage.

Mr. Shikata: I would like to ask MOFA to go next.

Mr. Matsunaga: Thank you, Mr. Shikata. Today, I would like to report to you about the Kyiv Summit on Safe and Innovative Use of Nuclear Energy that was convened yesterday. From the Government of Japan, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Chiaki Takahashi, attended the meeting. At the end of the meeting, a declaration was adopted, which consists of six paragraphs. One paragraph is devoted to the incident of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which reads, "The unfolding events at the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear plant remind us of the importance of strengthening nuclear safety and of responding promptly to nuclear accidents and emergencies including those caused by large scale natural disasters. These events demonstrate that

nuclear safety is enhanced when the global community works together to meet these challenges.”

As the representative of the Japanese Government, Mr. Takahashi made a statement. In the statement, he mentioned that the Japanese Government is mobilizing all available resources to settle the situation as early as possible, as our top priority. In that context, he mentioned the upgrading of the assessment of the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES) to Level 7. In that regard, he emphasized that this new assessment does not mean that the situation in Fukushima is aggravating, and that most of the radioactive substances were released in the first few days and the airborne radiation dose has gradually declined. As an example, he mentioned that in Tokyo, its radiation dose has never reached the level which would affect human health, adding that it has been declining steadily. The current data show that it has returned to an approximately normal level, he said, adding that we will continue to conduct radioactive monitoring. He also compared the Fukushima incident with the Chernobyl accident. In that respect, he stated that the reasons and the aspects of the Fukushima accident are quite different from the Chernobyl incident. In that respect, he mentioned that the total amount of radioactive substances released from the Fukushima plant at present is estimated to be far less than that of Chernobyl. He also mentioned that there have been no casualties from radiation exposure, and there are no health problems caused by the radiation among those residents in the vicinity of the nuclear power station. He also mentioned that although the two accidents are assessed as the same Level 7, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) explained that the two differ substantially, for the Fukushima reactors suspended their operations after the earthquake, whereas in Chernobyl the fire broke out and nuclear materials were diffused while the reactors were in operation. He also mentioned that such international organizations as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), and World Health Organization (WHO) have made objective assessments that excessive measures such as the general travel restriction to Japan are not needed. He expressed that Japan will continue to exert efforts to provide the latest information in a timely manner and explained the roadmap announced by the TEPCO. He mentioned that our immediate priority at this time is to bring the situation under control at the earliest possible date. He added that as a next step, we will thoroughly examine this accident and share the knowledge and experience gained from the accident with the international community with maximum transparency. He concluded his statement by stating that we recognize that the IAEA Ministerial Conference to be held from 20 to 24

June in Vienna will be a very crucial occasion. That is my report about the Kyiv summit.

Next, I would like to mention the additional cooperation expressed by foreign countries and territories. The Republic of Niger expressed its intention to make a monetary donation. Likewise, the Republic of Kazakhstan expressed its intention to provide monetary assistance. The Kazakh Government also dispatched a second batch of relief supplies, which consist of beef cans, which arrived on 18 April. I would also like to mention the second batch of relief supplies which came from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The third batch of supplies consists of 30,000 pairs of socks, which arrived at Narita Airport early morning today.

Finally, I would like to update you about the number of foreign embassies in Tokyo which are temporarily closed. Last time, I referred to five foreign embassies which are still temporarily closed. The number is now four. Only four embassies in Tokyo are still temporarily closed. That is all from me. Thank you very much.

Mr. Shikata: I would like to open the floor for questions.

QUESTION (Mr. Bradshaw, NYT): First question, when you say that you ask that people not go into the area, but on the other hand you say that you understand people may have left only with clothes on their back. Whom are you most concerned about here? Are you concerned that there may be looting taking place in the area? Are you concerned about media going into the area? Are you concerned that residents are going back and staying back because it is all clear? Whom are you really aiming this concern at right now?

Mr. Shikata: Our highest goal is to ensure the health and safety of the people. At this juncture we have been seeing a number of cases where people are entering the restricted evacuation zone. This zone has not been legally enforced, so what we're discussing is whether it's possible to apply stronger or more effective means based on a legal structure, basically to enforce the no-entry policy for the zone. We are taking a number of factors into account, including, for example, possibilities of looting, as you said. And we want to keep the orders inside the 20km radius. But as I mentioned, the primary goal is to ensure the health and safety of the people, and at the same time, as I mentioned, there is a very strong request from the residents to go back temporarily to their homes to

bring some of their belongings out of their residences. We understand this aspect quite well. We are trying to balance both the needs of the residents to revisit their residences and also the need to enforce the no-entry policy for the zone to protect the health and safety of the people.

QUESTION (Mr. Lee, Yonhap News Agency): I have several questions I'd like to ask, beginning with Deputy Director-General Mr. Nishiyama. In regard to the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station and the transfer of contaminated water, estimates say that there is as much as 600 million tons of such contaminated water. If you were to transfer at the current speed of 300t per day, at least from the perspective of an overseas layman, the speed seems to be too slow. If it's just a problem of transferring the contaminated water, why not install more tanks so that you can speed up the process. What do you think about this type of thinking?

Mr. Nishiyama: As for the containers into which we can transfer the contaminated water, as I stated earlier, at present we only have that waste disposal treatment building. Earlier you stated that the total amount of contaminated water is estimated to be 600 million tons. Actually the amount is 60,000t, of which 25,000t, the highly irradiated water, is in Unit 2. This is the water that we want to transfer to this main building. As for the pump speed, we have just begun this process, and so at this initial stage we have tried to limit the amount of water that we are transferring. Having seen the results, we'd like to increase this speed if possible. By attempting to purify some of the contaminated water that will be transferred to the waste disposal facility, some of it can be recycled back to the reactors for cooling purposes. And also after purification it would be possible to transfer this water to more simple types of tanks.

QUESTION (Ms. Dvorak, Wall Street Journal): On the decontamination of water, I believe that Areva has said that they will be helping with the decontamination process. Could you talk a little bit about that – what the timetable you see for that as being, and where does that fit in you entire plans for decontamination of water?

Mr. Nishiyama: When we talk about the purification of the contaminated water, it is divided into two different types of purification. One is the removal of the radioactive substances, and the other would be the desalting process, removing the salt. And we want to have an integrated process in which both types of purification can take place in one. The system which is being offered by Areva is the system for removing the

radioactive substances. And as for the treatment speed, we are thinking of 1,200t per day, and we believe that the system can be built by the end of May.

QUESTION (Mr. Bradshaw, NYT): A question either for Mr. Kawarada or for Mr. Shinano. Looking at the readings, it looks like the radiation readings that we are seeing on land anyway seem to be less than a tenth of Chernobyl readings at comparable distances – please correct me if I am wrong. So does that mean that a very large amount of it went out to sea? Is there any way to say, basically since this runs right next to the ocean, is there a way of saying like instead of half of it going out to sea can you say maybe three-quarters went out to sea, or four-fifths of it went out to sea? Why is it that all of the readings that we are hearing about really just don't show that much, as far as we can tell?

Mr. Kawarada: Well Mr. Shinano might be a better person to try to respond, but looking at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station the radiation dose at the station has been announced, and judging from that, the total, we can say for example the Iodine-131 or Cesium-137, it is, as you say, one-tenth or so that of Chernobyl, so it does appear to be quite small from the readings. But your question is about then how much was discharged to the sea. Well at this point in time we do not know, because we do not have such data giving the proportion.

Mr. Shinano: Well, yes, here we are making a comparison with Chernobyl, and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mr. Takahashi was also explaining this, but yes, in terms of the INES Level 7, Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station is the same as that of Chernobyl, but in terms of the incidents that have been occurring, and also the radiation dose, the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station is much smaller than that of Chernobyl. As for the amount of radiation dose that has fallen on land, actually we have not yet calculated quantitatively the amount, but we will be, based on the monitoring data that has been collected, trying to evaluate that amount. But one thing that we can say, considering the site of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, the duration during which the wind blows from the land to sea is quite long, and therefore judging from the direction of the wind we could say that a large proportion of the radioactive substances have been discharged or have flown to the sea.

Mr. Shikata: Any other questions? Please identify yourself.

QUESTION (Mr. Lee, Yonhap News Agency): I would like to first of all confirm the facts. I hear that at Unit 1 of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station you are in the process of trying to put in place the system for injecting the cooling water, so the cooling water supply system is being constructed, or being installed. So can I confirm that this is the case? And also, in South Korea and China there is the demand to have the certificate of origin or safety certificate issued by the Japanese government for agricultural produce being exported to these countries. Now, in Japan do you have such a system, and if not, how is the government going to respond to this requirement?

Mr. Nishiyama: In response to your first question, as was announced in the roadmap by TEPCO on 17 April, they are considering filling the containment vessel with water up to the tip of the nuclear fuel. At present, up until this point, the water that has been injected into the nuclear reactor, this water has built up inside the containment vessel.

Therefore, unlike what has been reported in some parts that something new is being done in order to fill the containment vessel with water – no, that is not the case. We are not taking any new actions, but instead, continuing to do what we have been doing up until this point in time.

Mr. Nakagawa: I am sorry, I do not have accurate information with me now, so let me take back your question and respond later.

Mr. Shikata: If I may add a comment here, first of all, we do have recognition that some of our trading partners are trying to impose regulations or restrictions on food or other products being exported from Japan to those countries.

I have been explaining about this even in the past press briefings, but here in Japan, before distributing these products into the Japanese market we do have this monitoring system, a very strict system under which we ensure the safety of the food. So be it the case where these products are being distributed inside Japan, or be it those cases in which these products are being exported overseas, it is the Government's position that we are ensuring that these products are safe in all cases.

Because the WTO member need to comply with the WTO rules in which it states that trading must take place based on scientific data – it must be science-based. Therefore, we believe that our trading partners should abide by this rule. You happened to mention

the names of China and South Korea, but Japan is and will continue to explain to these partners about Japan's food safety. By doing so, we hope to smooth and facilitate the exports from Japan to these countries. In order to do so, we will continue on with our explanation.

QUESTION (Ms. Dvorak, Wall Street Journal): This is a question for Mr. Nishiyama on the parameters that are announced everyday. I know that you announce temperature, pressure, etc., of the reactors. Could you give a little bit of an explanation on how accurate these readings are now, and where they are gathered and how they are gathered?

Mr. Nishiyama: In regards to you question about the accuracy of the data, at one point in time we lost power at the nuclear power plant. Therefore, at that time, we could not measure in the normal way, because of the power outage. But for the data which we deemed absolutely necessary, we used a battery to try and obtain the same data.

Of course, amongst the data, there are some which we did not think very credible. If that were to be the case, for example, we would combine that data with other data to try and enhance the credibility. Also, it could be that even with a single set of data we could look at the transition during the timeframe and try to observe judging from the fluctuation in the same data how reliable the data is.

So in that respect, I think that in the previous question there was a question regarding the water level inside the containment vessel, and what level the water has reached, but this is very difficult for us to judge, and therefore we have to make an estimate based upon the data that is available to us.

QUESTION (Mr. Bradshaw, NYT): There was a report this morning that the Government might contribute to a compensation fund to help compensate some of these same people we are talking about, who want to get back into the area. Is the Government prepared to make a financial contribution, or is it going to leave this exclusively TEPCO? Thank you.

Mr. Shikata: Actually, this question was asked to Mr. Edano today, and the line that he responded was that 'A broad policy direction has already been made clear, by which TEPCO will make compensation for those people who have been affected by the

accidents. As necessary, the Government will provide the necessary assistance.’ That is in addition to TEPCO’s assistance. And also, what must be implemented in an expedited manner is the provision of the temporary payment of 1 million yen per household to the people who have been evacuated, which will be followed by the next step, which is the expedited provision of temporary compensation payments to businesses that were operating in the area’s affected. As for the temporary payments of 1 million yen, I understand that there is going to be the launch of an office to start transactions from 28 April. The priority is to give primary consideration to these payments and implement them. As for the modality by which the Government may assist TEPCO to implement compensation payments, it has not been reached yet in terms of a concrete format. That will be announced when it becomes clear.

Any other questions? If there are no other questions, we wish to conclude today’s briefing. Thank you very much for coming.