

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

15 April 2011

Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations: Good evening. Let us start this evening's press briefing. My name is Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations at the Prime Minister's Office. To my right is Mr. Hidehiko Nishiyama, Deputy Director-General of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA), and to his right is Mr. Ichiro Nakagawa, Counselor of the Resources Enhancement Promotion Department, Fisheries Agency of Japan. To his right is Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga, Assistant Press Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). To my left-hand side is Mr. Shinichi Kawarada, Advisor to 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). Lastly, to his left is Mr. Eiichi Yokota, Senior Technical Officer of the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW).

I would like to just introduce to you a couple of points coming from today's press conference by Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano. Regarding the issue of responding to the economic damage caused by the accidents at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, the first meeting of the headquarters in charge of responding to the economic damage caused by the accidents at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station took place. The purpose of the headquarters is to discuss the basic framework of responding to the economic damage caused by the nuclear accidents. The headquarters have decided that the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) has to temporarily provide the necessary cash to evacuees as quickly as possible for their loss caused by the evacuation and indoor evacuation orders.

The headquarters have also affirmed that this money should serve as temporary payment for the overall compensation for the damage to be paid to evacuees that is supposed to be confirmed in the future, when the contents of respective detailed damage is specified.

As for the amount of payment, the government's basic stance is to provide 1 million yen per household to the evacuees as a temporary payment. This amount is intended to be extended at the earliest by Golden Week, which means the end of April or the beginning of May. Also, as for the possible recipients, regardless of evacuation or indoor

evacuation, all the evacuees within a 30km radius from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station are eligible for temporary payment.

Moving onto Mr. Edano's afternoon press conference, there was an announcement regarding the issue of power shortages during the summertime. Today, the government has received a report from TEPCO about the increase of electricity supply as a counter-measure for possible power shortages during this summer. According to TEPCO's report, the power supply will increase by 5 million kW by restoring the disaster-stricken thermal power plants, making use of existing aging thermal power plants, and also making use of pumping up hydroelectric power plants. Due to these efforts, around 50 million kW of power is likely to be created.

There was an instruction given by Mr. Edano to TEPCO take every potential measure to secure the safety of the strengthened power supply. At the same time, Mr. Edano has asked TEPCO to make efforts to generate more power and has instructed them to report the result by the latter half of next week.

Also, there was another point regarding radiation monitoring. The authorities have been compiling the results of radiation monitoring that was conducted within the 20km radius from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The report will be made public soon.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon another announcement, which is the holding of the Japan-China ROK Trilateral Summit Meeting. It is the fourth summit meeting of this kind, to be held on 21 May and 22 May. This is the fourth summit and this is going to be held in Tokyo, chaired by Prime Minister Kan, and will be attended by the Premier Wen Jiabao of China and President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea (ROK). This summit meeting is for the purpose of strengthening dialogue and cooperation in a wide range of areas from among the three leaders, and ever since it was held three years ago in December in Fukuoka, this is the second time that Japan is the host. In this summit meeting, we will be discussing trilateral cooperation in regional and international affairs and, in particular, based on what has happened after the Great East Japan Earthquake, there will be discussion of the strengthening of cooperation in such fields as nuclear safety and disaster management issues.

This concludes my initial remarks, and now I would like to ask Mr. Nishiyama of NISA to go next.

Mr. Nishiyama: Thank you, Mr. Shikata. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. First, I would like to update you on the status of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

Regarding Unit 1, we continued to inject nitrogen into the containment vessel. The pressure of the vessel is stable. We will do nitrogen injection for Units 2 and 3 in the near future, as soon as we get nitrogen-producing machines.

Regarding Unit 2, the parameters of the reactor are relatively stable. Regarding the stagnant water in the turbine building, we are repairing the radioactive waste disposal system so that we can safely store the highly-irradiated stagnant water in the turbine building of Unit 2. This transfer of water will begin within a few days, I believe.

We have a history that there was a water leak from a crack near the pit which contained the electricity cables, and we strengthened our treatment to inject chemical substances underground to stop the water from leaking through the wall of the pit, which was already stopped but we reinforced the measures we took in stopping the leak.

Regarding Unit 3, the parameters of the reactor are stable except the temperature at the joint part of the cap and body of the pressured vessel. However, the other data does not show any unusual figures, so we think the previously-mentioned data of temperature may be a measurement error.

Regarding Unit 4, the thing we should take care of in this unit is the spent fuel pool. We will inject 140t of pure water into the spent fuel pool of Unit 4 with a concrete-pumping machine.

In addition to those bits of information regarding each unit, we sprayed synthetic plastic emulsion over 1,900m² to settle the irradiated dust. We placed steel plates to not let the irradiated water in the intake of Unit 2 flow to the other part of the sea. We continue to remove irradiated debris and store them at a certain place. I have one more report today, which is regarding the release of low-level irradiated water from the radioactive waste disposal system and sub-drain pit of Units 5 and 6. Actually, the release was a very emergency measure to store highly irradiated water in those places, and also to protect Units 5 and 6 from leakage of the water from the underground. Actually, we are now distributing a report which will be convenient for you to look at. I am now explaining

the last two papers, please look at them, regarding the discharge of the waste water of which the concentration of radioactive materials exceeds the concentration limit by the notification to the sea. This was an emergency measure and the purpose was to secure space for the highly irradiated water, which principally came from Unit 2. At that time we could not find the place to store the leaking highly irradiated water, except for the place where this low-level irradiated water was stored. So, we, as an emergency measure, discharged the water into the sea to secure the place for the highly irradiated water. This is the evaluation of what happened in the past. It has already happened and, today, we finalized the report to evaluate the facts and the effects of the discharge. And, at the last part of the report, you can find that there will be actions to be taken. NISA directed TEPCO the following things. Please look at parentheses 2: “Actions to be Taken.”

First, let me explain a little bit. Please look at the reverse side of the first paper, number three: “Evaluation by NISA.” We received TEPCO’s report dated 4 April, and we evaluated the contents of that, and we confirmed that the actual amount of discharged stagnant water and radioactive materials were below the amount originally intended, which was 11,500t and 1.7×10^{11} , and then regarding the strengthening of monitoring, it was confirmed that TEPCO carried it out through increasing the number of monitoring points of the coast. And also it was confirmed that even compared to the data of transition since a week prior to the discharge, and outstanding deviation to the radioactive concentrations including ones in the vicinity of the nuclear power station plants had not occurred as below. I have skipped the detailed data, but please move on to the “Actions to be Taken” at the last part. These were emergency measures, so they were unavoidable for us. But, NISA, our agency, gave directions to TEPCO as follows: Firstly, regarding the impact of the discharge to the sea, this time, to implement the detailed assessment based on the amount of discharge this time, and results of monitoring, and submit the outcome. Secondly, in order to grasp a more extensive effect in the long term, to increase the numbering of monitoring points, to implement monitoring, and to announce publically the results of monitoring. Thirdly, to sample fish, shellfish, etc., from the sea area in the vicinity of the nuclear power plants to carry out the measurement of radiation dose, to assess the effect, and to announce, publically, the result. That is all for my report, today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Shikata: Thank you very much. Now, I would like to ask Mr. Shinichi Kawarada of MEXT to go next.

Mr. Kawarada: Thank you very much. On behalf of MEXT, I would like to make a comment. 10km and outwards are covered by MEXT to monitor the radioactivity covering the land, air, and sea. We are in charge of monitoring the environmental radioactivity. Generally speaking, the land area dose rate has fluctuated. As shown on page 5 of our material, it has been coming down gradually. Especially in the last ten days or so, it has been leveling off. There is a declining trend at the monitoring post as Mr. Nishiyama mentioned. What about the sea readings? Pages 11 to 13 of this document show the ocean monitoring results. For example, from Unit 1 of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, radioactive water has diffused gradually. Our monitoring post is located about 30km away from Unit 1. You can see that the impact is being observed at that point of the monitoring post. The radioactivity in the sea goes through the outer layer; it is quite often observed in the outer layer. With regard to the lower layer, near the bottom, hardly any impact has been observed. In other words, surface diffusion and scattering have been observed, which is a major feature of the radioactivity. What about air? We did the monitoring by helicopter. The flight route covers the 30km zone from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Around the 30km zone, the value is high, but away from there, the figure is much lower and close to the normal level. The page on air monitoring is page 14. The figure of the flight route of the helicopter monitoring is shown on page 16. You can see that near Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, a slightly high dose of radioactivity is observed. The rest of the pages show the data for the rest of the 47 prefectures, which we also monitor. As I report to you every day, Fukushima and the neighboring prefectures seem to have slightly higher values compared to the rest of Japan. With regard to tap water and fallout values, Fukushima and the neighboring prefectures seem to show slightly higher values than the other prefectures. Thank you very much, that is my report.

Mr. Shikata: Mr. Masanori Shinano of the Nuclear Safety Commission, please.

Mr. Shinano: Thank you very much. On behalf of the Nuclear Safety Commission, I would like to report to you the result of our daily monitoring. Today's report covers information published between 10:00 a.m. of 13 April and 10:00 a.m. of 14 April. Unfortunately, during this period, there are certain non-updated data. It does not mean that we did not monitor or observe. It is not negligence. It just happened to be that the data processing work was not carried out on time and was not disclosed because of the processing delay. But tomorrow and later on, we would like to add that information and

provide them to you. Generally speaking, no data was observed indicating a possible health hazard or adverse impact on health. Let me just highlight one point. With regard to tap water, iodine increased slightly, but for cesium, a slight reduction was observed. That is all for today's report from the Nuclear Safety Commission.

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

Mr. Yokota: I would like to report to you the result of the examination of the food items that was reported to us yesterday. Yesterday, 10 municipalities reported on the results of their samples. When you look at the result on the right hand side, you will see that there has not been one item which exceeded the tentative regulation limit. The other paper takes up the test results until yesterday. There were 14,094 samples that have been tested, and 193 samples exceeded the provisional regulation value.

Mr. Shikata: We are going to Mr. Ichiro Nakayama of the Fisheries Agency.

Mr. Nakayama: Today, I would like to report to you just one item. That is the renewal of the homepage of the Fisheries Agency. We have updated the site since 12 April. Based on the cooperation with the prefectures, we added 27 prefectures and 16 types of fish, including fish, octopus and squid. When you look at page 4, from 69 and onwards, those are the new samples that we added. On the last page, number 89, you will see this one sample had exceeded the provisional value. This is the city of Iwaki. Regarding Fukushima Prefecture, they voluntarily stopped all fishing. Therefore, these fish will not be distributed in the market. That is my report for today.

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

Mr. Matsunaga: Thank you, Mr. Shikata. Good evening. Yesterday, I informed you of the culinary event organized by MOFA. That started today. I would like to report about that event. Today, a farmers market was opened from noon to 2pm at MOFA. Vegetables from Fukushima Prefecture and other areas which have suffered from harmful rumors have been provided and sold. I am pleased to report to you that all the vegetables prepared were sold out. After the closure of the event, the organizer of the event apologized to the officials in MOFA for any inconvenience which the supply shortage may have caused. In addition, I also announced yesterday about the campaign which started today by MOFA entitled, "Hang in Japan, Cheer up Tohoku & Kanto Regions".

Under the event, menus were offered at restaurants in MOFA. Today's event was attended by many parliamentarians as well as officials. I noticed that members of the foreign press corps in Tokyo also joined the event. The menu offered today was vegetable curry and salad, which used vegetables produced in Fukushima Prefecture and other areas which suffered from the earthquake and harmful rumors. The event continues, and a menu using those vegetables continues to be offered in three different restaurants in MOFA, specifically the Japanese restaurant which is called Nagomi-tei, and the Chinese restaurant which is called Yoshi, and the western style restaurant which is called Sakura. In all those restaurants in MOFA a menu is offered using vegetables produced in those areas. And with respect to the farmers market which sold out all the prepared vegetables today I would like to report to you that the following vegetables were offered: asparagus from Fukushima Prefecture, cucumbers from Gunma Prefecture, tomatoes from Tochigi Prefecture, lettuce from Ibaraki Prefecture, spinach from Gunma Prefecture, Komatsuna vegetable from Saitama Prefecture, Mizuna vegetable from Ibaraki Prefecture, turnips from Chiba Prefecture and strawberries from Ibaraki Prefecture.

Next I would like to update you about the number of countries and territories as well as international organizations which have expressed intention for cooperation in response to the earthquake. As of today, 136 countries and territories have expressed their intention to assist Japan in response to the earthquake, and 39 international organizations have expressed their intention for assistance.

Third, if you look at one of the materials circulated for your reference, there is a matrix which explains assistance in kind from the international community. Now the matrix covers not only the relief supplies, but also the countries and territories which have offered monetary donations. So please find time to have a look at this material too.

Next, I would like to introduce to you on behalf of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) as to the announcement updated by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). That news release was issued after the upgrading of the International Nuclear Events Scale (INES) rating from Level 5 to Level 7 with respect to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. After referring to the upgrading, the ICAO news release stated that "radiation monitoring around airports and seaports in Japan continues to confirm that levels remain well within safe limits from a health perspective." "In addition, monitoring of passengers, crew and cargo from Japan carried

out to date in other countries in accordance with their national policy does not suggest any health or safety risk. Therefore screening of radiation for health and safety purposes is currently considered unnecessary at airports and sea ports around the world.” Thank you.

Mr. Shikata: Thank you Mr. Matsunaga. By the way, at the Kantei cafeteria we also provide vegetables and ingredients from Fukushima and other affected prefectures. Now I would like to open the floor for questions.

QUESTION (Mr. Pollack, New York Times): Mr. Nishiyama, I was wondering first what you thought of the report that apparently came out today from the Atomic Energy Society of Japan (AESJ), which seems to think that the fuel has dropped to the bottom of the reactor pressure vessel in the form of little kernels or grain sized kernels?

Mr. Nishiyama: To be honest we cannot say for sure what the situation is due to the shortage of data, so we cannot say anything at this point in time. Of course, judging from what has been released from the inside we estimate that there is certain damage done to the fuels. This is based on the radioactive substances that have been released. But we do not know what shape the fuels are taking, or any other details.

QUESTION (Mr. Pollack, New York Times): Mr. Nishiyama, do you get data from the drones the US is apparently flying over the plant, and if so what does that show in terms of radiation?

Mr. Nishiyama: I must admit that I do not know everything that is happening, but my understanding is that aside from what is released from the Department of Energy (DOE) of the United States we do not know what else is being obtained.

QUESTION: I have a question for Mr. Matsunaga. Do you have plans for more farmers markets at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Mr. Matsunaga: Very frankly I am not quite sure as to the future plans, but I certainly would like to convey the interest expressed by the members of the foreign press corps, and in addition I would like to mention that as I stated the event which is entitled “Hang in Japan, Cheer up Tohoku & Kanto Regions”, continues in three different restaurants in

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and they continue offering a menu which uses vegetables produced in the disaster-stricken prefectures. Thank you.

Mr. Shikata: Just for your information, other ministries, such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the MHLW, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), they have already started those kind of menus for their employees, and I believe that an increasing number of ministries in Kasumigaseki are introducing this approach.

QUESTION (Ms. Dvorak, Wall Street Journal): I just wanted to follow up quickly on the drone question. It was my understanding that TEPCO was controlling some of the drones. If that is incorrect, can you tell me who is actually flying them and who is obtaining the information?

Mr. Nishiyama: I personally am not aware of this, and therefore I do not have any knowledge on my part, but I believe that it is probably likely that in Japan there is the joint headquarters organized between the Japanese government and TEPCO, and I believe that they would be in the position to be controlling or obtaining this kind of information.

Mr. Shikata: Any other questions?

QUESTION (Ms. Dvorak, Wall Street Journal): Just a very small question for Mr. Nishiyama. You had mentioned earlier that you are waiting for nitrogen producing equipment in order to do nitrogen injection in Units 2 and 3, and I was wondering where that equipment is coming from.

Mr. Nishiyama: I believe that it will be coming from within Japan. I am not aware of the name of the manufacturer, but I do believe that it will be procured here in Japan.

Mr. Shikata: Are there any other questions? If there are no other questions I would like to conclude today's briefing. Thank you very much for coming.