

Press Conference by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry

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[Provisional Translation]

Opening Statement by Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda

The Report of the Japanese Government to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda: Almost three months have passed since the start of the nuclear incident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. However, the incident hasn't drawn to a close, and the Government continues to work as one, exerting every effort in responding to the incident.

A moment ago at the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters, we finalized and approved a report on this incident. The report covers the causes and background of the nuclear incident to the extent that they have now been made clear, as well as the lessons we have learned from this incident and the measures we have developed in response to it.

I believe that Japan has a responsibility to provide information to the international community in the most open manner possible and to actively contribute to efforts to secure the safety of nuclear power in the future.

One important step for this will be the presentation of our report to the international community at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety on June 20. The recently completed report considers every piece of knowledge we have gleaned from the nuclear incident in order to make clear the full picture of our future nuclear safety measures. These measures are based on a comprehensive understanding of the causes and background of the recent incident, as well as the lessons we have learned from it. The emergency safety measures that were announced some time ago are included within these measures. It is believed that by steadily implementing these measures, there will be no problems regarding the safety of continuing or resuming operations at nuclear power stations in the future.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that we are prepared to make a quick response in the unlikely event that there is a severe accident in the future, we have requested that power companies formulate additional emergency safety measures and report them to

the Government by mid-June.

Just as the Prime Minister announced during the 2011 G8 Deauville Summit, nuclear power is among the four important pillars of Japan's energy policy. It is extremely important to our country from the perspective of power supply and demand. The Japanese Government is committed to fulfilling all of its responsibilities related to nuclear power, including with regard to safety.

In releasing the full picture of our safety measures, we are responding to requests from various regional governments. We will continue to thoroughly explain our plans in order to gain the cooperation and understanding of these communities. Further details about the report shall be explained by Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Goshi Hosono.

This concludes my initial remarks. .

Q&As

Concerning the Significance of the Report

REPORTER: I would like to ask about the significance of this report for the Japanese Government. Would you consider this report to be a commitment to the international community on nuclear safety?

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda: I'm not sure I understand exactly what you mean by 'commitment.' In releasing this report, we are fulfilling a portion of our responsibilities following the incident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station by making clear what we understand at the current moment in regard to the causes behind and possible explanations for the incident. The report also collects together the safety measures that must be implemented in the future. A report will also be released by the third-party investigation committee looking into the nuclear incident. The Government intends to incorporate the measures of that report as well in its nuclear safety policy.

Questions Concerning the Separation of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA)

REPORTER: I believe that the IAEA has requested in writing that an independent regulatory agency be established to handle nuclear issues. Is this why NISA is being

made independent of METI as stated in the report this time? What kind of independent regulatory institution is possible? Exactly what kind of organization do you have in mind?

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda: First of all, regarding the separation of NISA from METI, given METI's role of promoting nuclear policy, I do think there is some problem with having the nuclear regulatory agency, NISA, located within METI. First we should make NISA independent from METI, and then consider exactly how we might combine together the other regulatory functions related to nuclear power that are handled by the Government – for example, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is currently in charge of monitoring operation, and the Cabinet Office is overseeing the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC). We will begin discussions on this immediately.

Concerning the Japanese Government's Response to, and Evaluation of, the IAEA

REPORTER: I think that the Japanese Government is really working hard to respond to every request from the IAEA. I would like to ask you to tell us how important it is for Japan's national interest to respond to the IAEA in this way. I believe that part of this is because you thought that the IAEA would explain the developments within Japan to the rest of the world. How do you evaluate the actions they have taken for this? I would appreciate it if you could answer these two questions.

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda: First of all, some time ago the IAEA dispatched an investigation team to Japan, and we cooperated with that team in as open a manner as we possibly could. We incorporated the suggestions we received from the report this team compiled when it left Japan into the report this time.

The IAEA is an incredibly influential international nuclear regulatory organization with the participation of many countries. We believe that in maintaining close contact with the IAEA, we can make a contribution to nuclear safety in the future based on our experience with the current incident. In other words, through the IAEA, we believe we can fulfill our responsibilities to the world.

Concerning the Resumption of Operations at the Nuclear Power Station

REPORTER: You said in your opening statement just now that you would be asking power companies to formulate and report additional safety measures by the middle of June for the unlikely event that there is a severe accident in the future. You also said that nuclear power is important from the perspective of power supply and demand – is

it correct to understand that this means you will be resuming operations at nuclear power stations in order to cope with the increased demand for power in the summer?

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kaieda: The Government established emergency safety measures on March 30. I received reports on them, and decided that those measures were appropriate. I believe that with the current emergency safety measures, especially those for the securing of an emergency power supply in the event of a tsunami, are sufficient to ensure safety. With regard to the newly established safety standards and safety measures, we will be grouping them into short-term measures and mid-term measures. Among these, I have requested that further short-term measures be formulated by mid-June. Once I receive a report on the new measures, I will need to make a judgment on them. I hope to give my opinion on those measures at that time, including on whether they are sufficient from the perspective of ensuring safety.