

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

25 April 2011

Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations: Good afternoon. We would like to start today'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 include, to my right, Mr. Hidehiko Nishiyama, Deputy Director-General of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA); to his right is Mr. Sumito Yasuoka, Deputy Director of the Agricultural Production Support Planning Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); to his right is Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga, Assistant Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); to my left is Mr. Shinichi Kawarada, Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); to his left is Mr. Masanori Shinano, Counselor Secretariat of the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC); and 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).

At the outset, I would just like to make two announcements. One is regarding the holding of fairs to support agricultural products from affected areas. From today, the webpage of MAFF started to announce or put together various events taking place across the country to support agricultural products from affected areas. There is a nationwide development in terms of supporting affected areas to promote sales of agricultural or other marine products from affected areas, and some increasing number of companies with their cafeteria as well as restaurants are making use of those products from the affected areas. This kind of effort is, from the government's viewpoint, extremely important to dispel so-called reputational damage. We are thankful for the efforts of those concerned for this purpose. We hope that we will be able to contribute to the revitalization of the agricultural and fisheries industries in the affected areas and we wish to continue to support the areas towards the future.

The second point is regarding the imposition of shipment restrictions and the lifting of shipment restrictions. Today, based on the Nuclear Disaster Special Measures Law, Article 20, there is a new imposition of the shipment restrictions on shiitake mushrooms cultivated on tree logs outside from Motomiya City of Fukushima Prefecture. At the

same time, regarding those shiitake mushrooms produced in Iwaki city, the shipment restrictions are now lifted. This is the instruction given to Fukushima Prefecture.

Now, I would like to move on to the next speaker, Mr. Hidehiko Nishiyama of NISA.

Mr. Nishiyama: Thank you, Mr. Shikata. Today, I would like to explain NISA's report on the evaluation regarding Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) report published on 21 April, regarding the contaminated water, which included radioactive materials with a high concentration that flowed out from Unit 2 of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

According to the report, TEPCO found that contaminated water was flowing out to the sea from the vertical part of the power cable trench near the intake channel of Unit 2, around 9:30 on 2 April. The outflow was stopped around 5:38 on 6 April. In estimating the overall amount of contaminated water which flowed out, the duration of outflow was assumed to be from 1 April to 6 April for calculation purposes. TEPCO's estimation of the overall amount of radioactive materials released was 4.7×10^{15} Bq, by multiplying the elements, and is judged plausible by NISA.

Regarding impact on the sea, the result of the monitoring of seawater conducted by MEXT and TEPCO shows that the concentration of radioactive materials included in seawater temporarily rose and then dropped due to the outflow of the contaminated water. Furthermore, monitoring conducted so far does not result in any sign of an outflow of contaminated water with a high concentration, including ground water, other than the point confirmed at this time.

Regarding the radioactive materials released into the sea, NSC shows the view that they will be carried along by the current and spread. MEXT considers that based on the result of the spread simulation of radioactive materials into the sea, seawater including radioactive materials stagnant near the power station will spread offshore with the complicated current of Fukushima. The result obtained this time is thought to be showing that the effect of the measure to control the outflow conducted by TEPCO and the spread of the radioactive materials by the current, as stated above, have contributed to the decrease of the concentration of radioactive materials in seawater.

Regarding future actions, we are thinking about: 1) strengthening the measures to control the outflow; 2) strengthening the monitoring; and 3) processing the contaminated water with a high concentration. With those efforts, we would like to prevent the further contamination of the sea by the outflow of radioactive materials from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Kawarada: Good afternoon. The radioactive monitoring of MEXT is something I would like to talk about. Please refer to the material compiled by MEXT. Based on this material, I would like to make a presentation of the radioactive monitoring beyond the 20km zone. On page 5, the spatial dose rate is noted. Already over the past two weeks or so, the radiation level has come down, although there is a slight fluctuation. But overall, the level is quite stable.

Today, sea area monitoring data is included, starting from Page 8 of the material. If you look at Page 8, the data from 22 April is included and most of the monitoring posts have a non-detectable level of radiation. On Page 12 and also on Page 13, in monitoring posts 3 or 5 or 7, relatively high levels of radioactive material have been detected in the sea, but on 21 April, it has come down close to zero in most of these monitoring points.

The aerial monitoring data is given starting on Page 14, and the spatial dose rate is included in the right-most column of this page. 4, 6, and 8 are the points where the level is higher than the normal level. Other than these points, it is close to the normal radiation level in the air. 4, 6, and 8, for Iitate and Nihonmatsu City, is included on Page 16, so it is in the northwestern direction from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

The prefectural monitoring data is included on Page 44 and beyond. As explained in the previous briefing and the one before that, there is data for Fukushima Prefecture, and in the neighboring areas of Fukushima the level is slightly higher than normal, but in other prefectures the level is low.

The plan for the enhancement of environmental monitoring was presented today, and in order to address exposure in an emergency, emergency prepared zones, emergency

evacuation preparation zones, and planned evacuation zones have been established. The monitoring is carried out by the respective municipalities.

On 22 April, last Friday, the Headquarters for Emergency Disaster Response compiled this environmental monitoring enhancement plan to have a firm understanding of the overall situation, and also to evaluate the effectiveness of planned monitoring, as well as the establishment of planned evacuation zones. So the environmental monitoring plan has been compiled according to zones in this manner.

The radiation map or the distribution map of radiation is also to be compiled. Also, monitoring and monitoring assessment are to be carried out on the shorelines and a comprehensive assessment is to be carried out on the outcome of the monitoring. Fukushima Prefecture and other prefectural governments will coordinate in carrying out enhanced monitoring activities. So that is the plan that has been compiled recently.

Mr. Shinano: Thank you. From the NSC, I would like to share with you the daily report on the evaluation of environmental radiation monitoring results. Today's evaluation results data are based on information published between 10:00 on 23 April and 10:00 on 24 April. On the whole, there were no measureable readings which will affect health.

First, the ambient radiation dose around Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Beyond the 20km zone from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, there were some areas where high radiation doses were observed. However, the planned evacuation zones will be imposed soon. So taking that into consideration, there were no measurements which will affect human health.

Next is dust samplings in the air. As our MEXT colleagues said, we did establish a plan to strengthen environmental monitoring and based on this, cesium 134 radioactivity levels have also been monitored for. This is the first time. For iodine and cesium 137, which had been monitored before, we did observe readings that were a little higher than yesterday. But for iodine 134, cesium 134, and cesium 137, the values are lower than the concentration limits.

Next, going onto five, which is Environmental Radioactivity Level Survey by Prefecture, for drinking water, iodine was the same level as the day before. And radioactive cesium, which is 134 and 137 together, for these two cesium readings, the

measurements were slightly higher than the previous evaluation report. That concludes my explanation.

From Friday 22 April to Sunday 24 April, I'd like to report to you about the food samplings and measurements taken and reported to MHLW. Pages 1 to 7 indicate the individual monitoring samples. 163 samples for 11 communities and local governments were reported and the result was that, on pages 6 and 7, the hashed portions are the areas where the provisional limits were exceeded. A total of six samples exceeded the limits. They are all Fukushima outdoor-grown shiitake. For the shiitake that did exceed the provisional limits, for those other than Motomiya, they were all already subject to shipment restrictions. The Motomiya samples were those before the shipment restrictions were imposed. But today, such a shipment ban was imposed. Therefore, there are none which have actually been circulated into the market.

Page 8 is a tabulation of all of the sampling results up to now.

And on page 9, the last page, are the instructions associated with food by the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters. From last Friday, the updated portions are the hashed areas. One is in some portions of Chiba prefecture. Vegetables which had been under shipment bans had all been lifted as of 22 April, which is Sunday. And at the bottom left, for "Fukushima Log-Grown Shiitake" grown outdoors, as of today, Iwaki has now been lifted from the shipment ban, however, as I explained earlier, as of today, the shiitake grown in Motomiya City—these are all grown outdoors—have been imposed with a shipment ban. That concludes my explanation.

Mr. Shikata: Now Takeshi Matsunaga of MOFA

Mr. Matsunaga: Thank you Mr. Shikata. Today, I would like to report to you about the acceptance of the medical teams from Jordan and Thailand. As announced by Foreign Minister Matsumoto last Friday, the Government of Japan decided to accept the medical teams from Jordan as well as from Thailand.

From Jordan, the medical team, which consists of two vascular surgeons and two ultrasound technicians, is arriving today. They are scheduled to work temporarily for three weeks.

In addition, the medical team from Thailand is arriving on 9 May. This consists of one medical doctor and one nurse. They are expected to work temporarily for two weeks. A succeeding team is also expected.

Both teams are to be accepted by Fukushima Medical University. We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the governments of Jordan and Thailand.

In addition, I would like to make an update about the operation by the US forces. Starting from last Thursday, the US Army has been working together with the Self Defense Forces to remove debris at the site of the JR Higashi Nippon Senseki Line. They are working to remove debris with a view to restoring the Senseki Line.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate the announcement made by Foreign Minister Matsumoto last Friday. He mentioned the dispatch of newly recruited MOFA officials, with a view to assisting the work at the area affected by the earthquake. The plan is to dispatch 24 officials, including 21 newly recruited MOFA officials. They are to assist in the removal of debris, cleaning up the volunteer center, and other management work at the center. That's all from me today. Thank you.

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