

IAEA Safety Review – Fukushima ALPS treated water

Press briefing - Thursday 9th September 2021

As prepared for delivery

My name is Lydie Evrard, I am Deputy Director General, Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security at the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is my great pleasure to be here today.

Thank you to all of you for joining the press briefing this afternoon.

Today is the last day of our 3-day visit to Japan.

I would like to highlight some of the major outcomes from our meetings in Tokyo and the visit to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

Our visit this week was the next step towards implementing the agreement taken at the highest level of our institutions, by IAEA Director General Grossi and Minister Kajiyama of METI, regarding the review of safety related aspects for the handling of ALPS-treated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi NPS.

The IAEA will conduct this review against international safety standards. The review will include several missions and technical visits in the coming months and years.

Our visit this week was the very first meeting in Japan. I found it incredibly useful and informative.

The main purpose of this kick-off meeting was twofold for the Agency:

- Firstly, to agree with Japan on the schedule and milestones of the Agency's review over the coming months, the preliminary scope of each mission and the documents that will be needed to conduct the mission
- Secondly, to discuss with Japan the way we will communicate throughout the different steps of our review.

We met Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; the Ministry of the Environment; and the Nuclear Regulation Authority.

I was very honoured to also meet with Mr. Ejima, the State Minister of METI, and Mr. Washio, the State Minister of MOFA.

We also met with officials from TEPCO during our visit to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

Now focusing on the outcomes from our visit, I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to our hosts in Japan, MOFA, METI, NRA and TEPCO. Our discussions were very constructive, conducted in a very open manner to discuss the challenges ahead of us, but also the significant opportunities for strengthening our cooperation.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to hold face to face discussions. The restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of Covid were difficult to manage, but we succeeded in holding fruitful meetings. We are thankful for our hosts in Japan who helped us in this regard while also ensuring everyone took the necessary pandemic related precautions.

We took great benefit from the in-person format, that is easier for both sides to communicate and will allow us to move forward more quickly.

In addition, the visit to Fukushima Daiichi NPS provided us with an updated view of the process, which will be valuable to better understand the safety related aspects of the water discharge plans and activities.

While this project will last many years, the IAEA is focused on near term steps to progress in our review. Both sides agreed on the main parts of this mission.

The IAEA review will have 3 main parts:

- The safety related aspects
- The regulatory activities
- The environmental monitoring.

All three parts of the review are linked together.

For each of these parts, the IAEA discussed the technical documentation that will be needed for our reviews. Some documents are already available, others are in the latest step of preparation. The IAEA will follow up their submission in close cooperation with the Japanese authorities.

In the coming weeks, the IAEA will start the review of the implementation plan to be submitted by TEPCO, including the safety assessment, and shortly after, the IAEA will begin work on the regulatory aspects and the sampling and environmental monitoring aspects.

Additionally, the Task Force set up by the IAEA Director General will meet in the coming weeks to prepare for the IAEA's reviews.

This Task Force is composed of both IAEA and international experts. These internationally recognized experts will bring a diversity of expertise, viewpoints and backgrounds contributing to the ultimate success of the review.

I would also like to reiterate that this mission will be a first of a kind mission for the Agency. The IAEA will specifically tailor this mission, while considering the unique nature of Japan's plan. That is, the large amount of water stored in the tanks, the long duration of the water release, and the level of regional interest and scrutiny that the plan will receive.

The IAEA's primary objective will be to review the implementation of Japan's basic policy, with safety and transparency as central pillars of our review, before, during and after the water release.

The IAEA is strongly committed to ensuring that the review is comprehensive and objective and that the results are conveyed clearly to the international community.

I would conclude my introductory statement by underlining the main takeaways from my perspective:

- The meetings and the visit were very constructive and productive. That is very valuable considering the scale and the scope of the water discharge activities, and the ongoing pandemic related challenges that are presented to us.
- We shared our views on the most important milestones and key elements for the schedule and the timeline of the project. The IAEA has now a better idea about the scope of the missions, what documentation is needed and when, and the sequence through which we will conduct our review. The IAEA will build on the information shared during this week, to move forward and to be more specific as documents become available.
- We also exchanged our views with Japan on the importance of communication throughout this review. The IAEA confirms that this effort will be undertaken in a transparent manner.

Our visit and the meetings this week marked the first step in what I hope is a long and successful collaboration. It demonstrates how committed and dedicated all the stakeholders are to the entire review. The IAEA can acknowledge the proactive approach in our collaboration. That will play a key role for the success of the review over the coming months and years.

On behalf of the IAEA, I would like to warmly thank all the participants once again, for their availability, constructive approach, and openness in our discussions.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I will now open the floor to your questions.