

## **“The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident: OECD/NEA Nuclear Safety Response and Lessons Learnt ”**

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The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) has just published a report on the actions taken by the NEA member countries and standing technical committees in response to the March 2011 accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The report entitled The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident: OECD/NEA Nuclear Safety Response and Lessons Learnt outlines international efforts to strengthen nuclear regulation, safety, research and radiological protection in the post-Fukushima context. It also highlights key messages and lessons learnt, notably as related to assurance of safety, shared responsibilities, human and organisational factors, defence-in-depth, stakeholder engagement, crisis communication and emergency preparedness.

“Nuclear energy requires the highest standards of safety, and there can be absolutely no complacency in this regard,” affirmed NEA Director-General Luis Echávarri.

Mr. Echávarri added that the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident was one of the most severe accidents ever experienced at a nuclear power plant and marks a turning point in terms of reviewing how nuclear safety is evaluated and ensured. He noted that, “Although the principles upon which nuclear safety has been built remain valid, notably the defence-in-depth concept, more needs to be done to ensure their effective implementation in all countries and all circumstances.”

Quoting from the report, Dr. Jean-Christophe Niel, Chair of the NEA Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA) and Director-General of the French Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN), pointed out that, “Since an accident can never be completely ruled out, the necessary provisions for dealing with and managing a radiological emergency situation, onsite and offsite, must be planned, tested and regularly reviewed.”

Dr. Niel further stressed that ensuring safety is a national responsibility but poses a global concern due to potential accident consequences. In addition, complete experience feedback from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant

accident will take many years. International co-operation is therefore fundamental.

<Notes to editors>

Following the March 2011 accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, all NEA member countries took early action to ensure and confirm the continued safety of their nuclear power plants and the protection of the public. After these preliminary safety reviews, all countries with nuclear facilities carried out comprehensive safety reviews, often referred to as “stress tests”, which reassessed safety margins of nuclear facilities with a primary focus on challenges related to conditions experienced at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, for example extreme external events and the loss of safety functions, or capabilities to cope with severe accidents. As appropriate, improvements are being made to safety and emergency response systems to ensure that nuclear power plants are capable of withstanding events that lead to loss of electrical power and/or cooling capability.

In the weeks following the accident, the NEA immediately began establishing expert groups in the nuclear safety and radiological protection areas, as well as contributing to information exchange with the Japanese authorities and other international organisations. It promptly provided a forum for high-level decision makers and regulators within the G8-G20 frameworks.

The NEA actions taken at the international level in response to the accident have been carried out primarily by the three NEA standing technical committees concerned with nuclear and radiation safety issues – the Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA), the Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (CSNI) and the Committee on Radiation Protection and Public Health (CRPPH) – under the leadership of the CNRA.

More than two years following the accident, the NEA continues to assist the Japanese authorities in dealing with their nuclear safety and recovery efforts as well as to facilitate international co-operation on nuclear safety and radiological protection matters. It is strongly supporting the establishment of research programmes designed to improve understanding of how the accident progressed

as well as to obtain safety-related information during the decommissioning and dismantling of the damaged facilities.