

Resolution to Drastically Reconsider the New Basic Energy Plan

On 11 April 2014, the Japanese Cabinet approved a new Basic Energy Plan that positioned nuclear energy as a “key base-load power source that contributes to the stability of the supply and demand structure, on the major premise of guaranteed safety”. Furthermore the plan made clear the intention to “respect judgements made (by the Nuclear Regulation Authority) and resume the operations of nuclear power plants”. On the other hand, the plan also states that dependence on nuclear energy will be “minimized as much as possible” but fails to offer any clarity at all in regards to the time frame and level that will be used to achieve this. On the contrary, the energy plan has devised policies to promote the development of new generation nuclear power generation such as high temperature gas cooling reactors etc., and has set its sights on new and additional nuclear power generation facilities. Far from minimizing the degree of dependence, this actually brings into view the possibility of unlimited dependence on nuclear power. New and additional facilities or even the idea of such cannot be tolerated.

The nuclear accident in Fukushima ripped apart the myth of nuclear power safety and taught us that nuclear power has the ability to cause brutal accidents. “Safety” plans based on such lessons therefore place absolute responsibility with Japan, which caused the accident. Furthermore, astronomical funds have been spent on cleaning up the accident and we are still in a situation where there is absolutely no idea what will happen hereafter. What is more, it is clear that it will take vast amounts of time and funds to decommission the reactor. In spite of the fact that nuclear energy is clearly far from being low cost technology, its positioning as a “key base-load power source” insults the victims of the accident.

If it is accepted that “In the event of an accident, the state will take responsibility to address said accident based on relevant laws and regulations”, then fundamental reform of the Act on Compensation for Nuclear Damages following the Fukushima nuclear accident is necessary. Furthermore, an insurance system under which businesses and enterprises can take responsibility for causing accidents should be newly introduced. However, the new “Basic Energy Plan” states that there will be comprehensive review without making clear the time frame or substance for carrying this out. This alone undeniably debunks the premise for resumption of nuclear power plants operations.

Moreover, promotion of the already completely bankrupt nuclear power cycle while pumping vast amounts of funds in to it is tantamount to promotion of nuclear power itself.

We simply cannot accept this basic plan, which ignores the debate taking place among citizens in these ways and acts as if the Fukushima accident did not even happen.

As mayors of the local government, we have the responsibility to protect the lives and property of our citizens, as well as to safeguard the future of our communities. We strongly appeal for a drastic revision of this basic energy plan and for a clear policy that rejects the building of new nuclear power plants. The new basic energy plan should take the stance of being a “Basic Non-Nuclear Plan” and should be developed together with legal systems such as the Basic Non-Nuclear Law, in order to realize a zero nuclear society.

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Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan