

Statement for the Energy Supply and Demand Outlook Discussion was far removed from the realities of the post-nuclear accident—public opinion is "no nuclear power plant"

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Friends of the Earth Japan (FoE Japan)

On April 28, at the Resources and Energy Committee and Long-term Energy Supply and Demand Outlook Subcommittee meeting, the outline plan for 2030 was presented which includes 20-22% use of nuclear power and 22-24 % of renewable power.

Soon the proposal will be subjected to public comment. Following public comments, a decision is prospected to be made in May. Only one step remains before the decision is made. Although Government holds that they aim to reduce the amount of nuclear energy, following the earthquake, this is still far from public demand. It deviates from many Japanese voices who demand for a shift from nuclear energy and from the fact that currently no nuclear power plant is online; there is no need to use any nuclear power going forward. It ignores the everlasting damage of the nuclear accident and lack of aging and safety measures.

1. Ignore the 2012 national debate which led the "nuclear phase out" initiative

Following the result of large-scale national debate held on platforms such as hearings and polls that took place in various locations in the summer of 2012, it was concluded that we will aim to eliminate nuclear power use by 2030s. This conclusion cannot be ignored just because the administration has changed since the nuclear phase out in 2030s was once decided in 2012.

Recent polls show overwhelming majority opposes nuclear power.

Also, in this Long-term Energy Supply and Demand Outlook Discussion, the majority of council members consisted of nuclear power plant supporter and advocates, lacking a vocal balance and not reflecting the will of the people.

2. "Nuclear power plant use 20-22 % in 2030," the deviation from reality

As of 2015 none of Japan's nuclear power plants have been used for more than a year. Even if all 43 nuclear power plants (the existing 48 plants minus the 5 that have been selected for decommission) are re-activated, if we follow the rules of the 40-year production limit, in the 2030 fiscal year nuclear power plants will supply less than half of what we supplied before the earthquake (28.6%). In addition, there are nuclear power plants that were damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Niigata earthquake, and others remain a threat with active faults just below. The 20-22% plan includes re-operation of virtually impossible nuclear power plants and would push Japan past the 40-year production limit into a 60-year stretch, and require new expansion and subsequent replacement. The proposal has deviated too far from reality.

Setting 2010, which is before the Fukushima accident, as a base year when this is a review in light of lessons learned following the accident lacks rationality. The everlasting damage from the 2011 nuclear accident has been completely ignored.

3. Base loading nuclear power plants contradicts to sustainability

As described above, to keep positioning nuclear power as the "base load power" when maintenance and promotion of nuclear power plants has become practically impossible reverses the development of a sustainable society. This unrealistic positioning slows down or stops the promotion of renewable energy and energy conservation that we should be working on as soon as possible. In fact, in 2014, discussion on limiting renewable energy on the basis of unrealistic assumption about nuclear power plant utilization took place.

Europe and California are steadily increasing the percentage of sustainable energy through building a policy for global investment institutions to make adjustments and focusing on sustainable energy. Now the power system reform has been determined and transformation towards a flexible supply and demand system that includes wide-area cooperation is also about to take place in Japan, the premise to set nuclear power as a "base load" should be withdrawn.

4. Energy saving assumptions should be at least 30 % or more¹

Energy conservation should be top priority upon examination of the energy policy and power supply configuration. In addition to the current state of energy demand expected (reference case) being assumed higher than in 2013, the energy conservation (target) is too small. Now that practice of energy-saving and power-saving is clearly applied and power consumption after the earthquake has decreased by about 8% in all of Japan, 17% of power consumption in the reference case ratio of the draft (power) and 13% energy saving (energy whole) is not sufficient. Further dissemination of high-efficiency air conditioning and lighting equipment, dissemination of buildings with thermal insulation in the future, and waste heat utilization in factories, is expected to significantly reduce consumption. In addition, need for policy intervention remains for the review of the wasteful use of power, especially in small and medium-sized businesses and in homes. There are plenty of opportunities for dissemination, including sharing specific information.

5. Share of renewable energy should be at least 30 % or more²

In the current draft, renewable energy is underestimated both in terms of expansion possibilities and in terms of cost. Investment in renewables, which would cause currencies to circulate on a small scale, domestically and regionally, must be increased significantly to continue to reduce the production of unsustainable thermal power. Following the implementation of renewable energy feed-in tariffs, focus on renewable energy, led by solar, is significantly increasing in Japan. We should aim for ambitious expansion of renewable energy by including other sources such as wind and geothermal energy and the reviewing the strength or failure of support measures.

¹ "Proposal of Japan's energy conversion strategy - rich and safe to Japan -" Japan Renewable Energy Foundation (2015), pointed out that the industrial sector about 30%, the business sector and residential sector nearly 40% reduction is possible.

² In the same proposal, suggested that if combined with the 30% energy saving, 45% natural energy is also feasible..

6. Coal-fired power enhancement is contrary to the greenhouse gas reduction responsibility

Enhancement of coal-fired power generation is intended as a middle load power. New expansion of coal-fired power plants is an increasingly popular trend in the country. However, coal greenhouse gas emissions are very high; it is twice that of natural gas power generation even with the latest type. When we should be reducing the power demand, new expansion of coal-fired power plants is not only unnecessary but also contrary to the goal of greenhouse gas emissions reduction. We must make global effort towards reducing greenhouse. Japan is particularly responsible as a developed country. Expansion of coal-fired power generation should be stopped immediately.

The greenhouse gas emission reduction of Japan in 2030 which will be submitted to the United Nations for international negotiations of climate change, where in which issues be considered on the basis of this energy supply and demand outlook. Energy-related CO2 emissions will be down 21.9 % from 2013, but it is not commensurate with the scientific knowledge and international responsibility of Japan.³ Strengthening of international contributions and ambitious renewable energy and energy-saving measures needs to be achieved.

As described above, the long-term energy supply and demand METI Secretariat proposal is largely devoid of social acceptability regarding outlook, reality, and validity. FoE Japan cast a strong objection and demand for a sustainable energy policy through energy conservation and renewable energy use with nuclear phase out.

International environmental NGO FoE Japan

Itabashi-ku, Tokyo Komone 1-21-9Tel: 03-6909-5983 email: info@foejapan.org



"40 years Driving limit" of nuclear power plant from Natural Resources and Energy Committee and Nuclear Subcommittee Secretariat presentation materials of the primary (2014)

³ <http://www.can-japan.org/advocacy/1795>