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Administrative entity to judge the existence of plutonium reserves for which the purpose of utilization is unspecified

In response to the inquiry on the above-mentioned subject that the Nuclear Regulation Authority has made (ref. Gen-Ki-Sou-Hatsu-No.1704113 dated April 11, 2017), the Japan Atomic Energy Commission replies hereunder.

This Commission pronounced the policy of “not possessing plutonium reserves for which the purpose of utilization is unspecified”, in the paper entitled “Concerning the Basic Position on Japan’s Use of Plutonium” (Commission decision, August 5, 2003), and subsequently requested, with a view to providing higher transparency about its peaceful use and confirming the appropriateness of the purpose of its utilization, that electric power companies submit their plutonium use plan (hereinafter referred to as “the Use Plan”). The decision further stated that it would require electric power companies to review their Use Plans as necessary if it is deemed that the Use Plans are likely to be affected by the actual progress of electric power companies' plu-thermal plan (MOX fuel utilization plan) and the operations of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant and the other plants owned by Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited (JNFL). Through such process of the publication of the Use Plans and their views, this Commission ascertains the appropriateness of the purpose of plutonium utilization that includes the quantities of plutonium involved, the places where plutonium is used, the starting time and duration of the plutonium use.

This Commission as well recognizes the importance to secure supply-and-demand balance of plutonium consistent with the supply-and-demand situation based on changes in circumstances affecting the utilization of nuclear energy, the total volume of the Japanese plutonium possession and information obtained concerning each facility. In this regard, it may be recalled that “the Resolutions accompanying the Act for Partial Revision of the Spent Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Fund Act” (House of Representatives Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry, April 20, 2016 / House of Councilors Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry, May 10, 2016) required the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry to seek the

views of this Commission from the viewpoints of peaceful use of nuclear energy and ensuring supply-and-demand balance of plutonium, when the Minister is to approve the Mid-term Implementation Plan for spent nuclear fuel reprocessing to be adopted by the Nuclear Reprocessing Organization of Japan. On October 2016, as per the accompanying resolutions, this Commission requested the Minister to submit to this Commission the Mid-term Implementation Plan that includes the timing and the volume of reprocessing and fabrication of MOX fuel prior to its actual implementation.

Thus, as the Nuclear Regulation Authority suggested, this Commission will, as appropriate, ascertain, under Japan's policy of "not possessing plutonium reserves of which use is unspecified" and following the direction of the accompanying resolutions, the supply-and-demand balance of plutonium from neutral and broad viewpoints, publish the results of confirmation, and present its views to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, electric companies and spent nuclear fuel reprocessing related companies as necessary.