

Toward Recovery of the Public's Confidence in Efforts to Assure the Safety of Nuclear Energy

26 April 2007

Atomic Energy Commission

The electric utilities, one after the other, announced the data falsification, abnormal occurrences and other troubles of nuclear power generation facilities that had been covered up within their organizations, as the results of the investigation into past activities in accordance with the direction of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (hereinafter referred to as "NISA") of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Responding to the situation, the Atomic Energy Commission (hereinafter referred to as "AEC") requested appropriate responses of the NISA and the electric utilities on 19 March 2007, based on a conclusion that the past neglect of such misconducts without any correction is what would terribly shake the public and local communities' confidence in the safety assurance systems of nuclear energy, and the AEC cannot help but regard them as serious ones.

The NISA reported to the AEC its position on this issue with a paper titled "Evaluation of Comprehensive Checks on Power Generation Facilities and Future Measures" on 24 April. In the paper, the NISA concluded that the present inspection system, which is the core function of nuclear safety regulation, has been working effectively based on the fact that no data falsification conflicting with laws have been reported since October 2003 when the application of the new inspection system started. In addition, the NISA clarified the future countermeasures based on the deliberation of improvements from the viewpoints of facilitating information sharing and transparency in efforts to assure safety, as well as problems for higher effectiveness of the inspection system.

Since these countermeasures are regarded as appropriate, the AEC believes it essential for the NISA and electric utilities to steadily implement these countermeasures, continuously review them from the viewpoint of preventing the occurrence of false acts and to steadily accomplish the matters described below, in order to recover the public and local communities' confidence in efforts to secure the safety of nuclear energy.

1. The requirements for the NISA

- (1) To sincerely explain the verification results on the effectiveness of the present inspection system and the future countermeasures, which were concluded by the present check, to the public and local communities to gain an understanding of them.
- (2) To further clarify a mechanism for evaluating the safety importance of various equipment and human activities as appropriate and determining an appropriate priority of business and/or resource allocation according to their importance, because it grows increasingly important to conduct effective regulation activities with improved transparency by immediately grasping indications and problems concerning the quality degradation of utilities' safety assurance activities, as well as by finding violation events through inspection activities, in order to gain the understanding of the public and local communities on the regulatory system.
- (3) To enhance such functions as learning lessons from domestic/foreign accidents and troubles to reflect them in business in an organized way, as well as raising questions based on analysis of on-site information collected by inspections based on the latest scientific and technological knowledge. In this regard, to make special consideration for the development of human resource working for regulatory administration, aiming to enhance planning, performance and explanation abilities of the nuclear safety inspectors concerning the inspection activities.

2. The requirements for electric utilities

- (1) To immediately explain to the public and local communities that the measures to be taken to prevent recurrence, including the action plan that should be developed in the future, are effective for preventing false acts such as illegal behaviors and data falsification, coupled with the corporate governance mechanism concerning the compliance.
- (2) After completing the above activity, to explain to the public and local communities the implementation state of measures to prevent recurrence and an improved system for ensuring safety and activities based on that system continuously, and to make efforts to deepen mutual understanding.
- (3) To accept experts' review on the safety assurance activities more positively and

incorporate the explanations of the review results into future activities for mutual understanding, from the viewpoint of maximally pursuing information disclosure and transparency while conforming to the safety-related restrictions.

- (4) To enrich knowledge for and improve capability of finding potential problems and indications of future important issues among domestic and foreign operational experiences and trouble information, fully realizing social responsibility of being engaged in operations and other works of nuclear power plants that have significant public interest for human society. And furthermore, to continuously make efforts to acquire the capabilities to show leadership, to consider human/organizational factors and to cope with environmental changes, based on the extreme importance of those capabilities for the safety assurance activities.

The AEC intends to keep monitoring the above-mentioned efforts for recovering public confidence from the viewpoint that efforts for safety assurance should be continuously reviewed through plan-do-check-action cycle (PDCA cycle), and will newly initiate the evaluation of the efforts to recover public confidence in the policy evaluation process of the Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy, while listening seriously to the voices of the people.