

Glossary

Atomic Energy Basic Law

A law setting forth Japan's basic principles on nuclear energy. Among other things, it describes the objective as contributing to the welfare of human society and the improvement of people's living standards by promoting the research, development and utilization of nuclear energy; and it states that such energy is to be utilized under the three principles of democracy, independence and openness. It was enacted in 1955.

Criticality Accident at a Uranium-Processing Plant

A criticality accident that occurred in the uranium conversion testing building at JCO Co. Ltd.'s Tokai Works on September 30, 1999. The cause of the accident was the pouring of a large amount of uranyl nitrate solution (a kind of uranium solution) above the permissible limit into a settling tank that was installed for other purposes. The accident was unprecedented for a nuclear facility in Japan, as three workers on duty at site at the time of the accident suffered serious radiation exposure. Two of them later died.

Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia

A framework for dialogue at the level of state ministers in charge of nuclear energy, to promote regional cooperation in using this energy for peaceful purposes. With the participation of nine countries, the forum is now promoting cooperation mainly by holding workshops in seven fields, including the use of research reactors and radiation. The forum is a continuation of the International Conference for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, which met ten times through 1999. The first meeting under the framework of the new forum was in Thailand in November 2000 under the joint auspices of the Atomic Energy Commission of Japan, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Thailand.

Grants under the three electric power-source siting laws

Grants-in-aid and subsidies under Three Laws on Power-Source Siting (the Electric Power Development Promotion Law, the Law on Special Accounts for Electric Power Development Acceleration Measures, and the Law on the Development of Areas Adjacent to Electric Power Generating Facilities). These grants and subsidies are considered principal measures to facilitate the siting of new power sources through a mixture of initiatives, including the enhancement of public facilities in the siting areas of power generating facilities.

High-Intensity Proton Accelerator

An accelerator facility, a joint project of the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI) and the High Energy Accelerator Research Organization. The project calls for releasing neutrons and many other kinds of secondary particles by bombarding a target with the world's highest-intensity proton beam. The secondary particles will be used for studies in such fields as life science, materials science, nucleonics, elementary particle physics, and on future nuclear power systems.

Nuclear Reactor Regulation Law

Short name for the Law concerning the Regulation of Nuclear Material Substances, Nuclear Fuel Substances and Nuclear Reactors, enacted in 1957. The purpose of the law is to provide necessary regulations on business activities in refining, processing, storing, reprocessing and disposing of nuclear materials, and on the installation and operation of reactors, etc., based on the spirit of the Atomic Energy Basic Law.

Nuclear Safety Network

An organization established in December 1999 with electric utilities, fuel processors, plant manufacturers, other companies in the nuclear industry and related research institutes as members. Creation followed the September 1999 criticality accident at the uranium processing plant. The network engages in three major activities – the spreading of nuclear safety culture, peer reviews, and exchanges and offers of relevant information – in an effort to improve safety consciousness and ethics in the nuclear industry as a whole, and to share and spread nuclear safety culture among all members.

RI Beam Accelerator Facility (RI Beam Factory)

An accelerator facility nearing completion that is now being constructed at the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research. It will generate beams of unstable nuclei (RI) of elements ranging from hydrogen to uranium at the world's highest intensities, using a heavy-ion nuclear reaction, and directing the generated beams for use in experiments in various fields of science.

Round-Table Conference on Nuclear Policy

A series of public meetings initiated amid mounting public concern and distrust in nuclear power following an accident at the prototype fast breeder reactor "Monju" in

December 1995. Established by the Atomic Energy Commission in March 1996, with participation by representatives from diverse segments of society, the roundtable conference endeavored to ascertain and reflect a wide range of opinions in Japan's nuclear energy policy. Based on proposals by this conference, another roundtable conference on nuclear energy policy was organized in 1998. The new conference submitted its proposals in February 2000.

Special Law of Emergency Preparedness for Nuclear Disaster

A law enacted in December 1999 for drastic enhancement of measures against nuclear disasters in the light of what was learned from a criticality accident at a uranium processing plant in September of the same year. The law aims, among other things, to secure prompt initial action and cooperation between the central and local governments to properly respond to any nuclear accident; to enhance the central government's emergency response measures; and to clarifying the role of nuclear operators in preventing nuclear accidents.