

Concerning the Report Entitled “Evaluation of the Basic Concepts of Approaches to the Coexistence of Nuclear Energy and People/Local Community, Specified in the Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy”

20 November, 2007  
Atomic Energy Commission

On 20 November 2007, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) received from the Policy Evaluation Committee a report entitled “Evaluation of the Basic Concepts of Approaches to the Coexistence of Nuclear Energy and People/Local Community, Specified in the Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy” The committee collected information from the concerned administrative bodies focusing on the measures that they had implemented based on the basic concepts specified in Chapter 2, 2-5 of the Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy entitled Coexistence of Nuclear Energy and People/Local Community, and compiled this report which presented the committee’s evaluation of these matters, taken into consideration of public comments on its draft version. The report states that the “concerned administrative bodies are carrying out measures related to the coexistence of nuclear energy and people/local communities in line with these basic concepts,” and summarizes various proposals conducive to the betterment and improvement of these measures. The AEC considers this report to be reasonable.

The AEC expects the concerned administrative bodies and other organizations to continue to promote approaches related to the coexistence of nuclear energy and people/local committees by holding in high regard the basic concepts specified in the Framework for Nuclear Energy Policy, as well as by keeping in mind the proposals made in this report as specified in the attached paper. Under the current circumstances of nuclear energy utilization, the AEC expects concerned administrative bodies to expediently address the following tasks.

- To improve the transmission of information on the state of nuclear facilities in both normal and emergency situations, so as to transmit what the public want to know;
- To further strengthen activities to provide the public opportunities to learn the basic facts of nuclear energy and radiation utilization and develop leaders who promote activities to raise the public understanding of them through mutual communication, considering the importance of nuclear energy as a measure against global warming and need for bringing about marked improvements in public understanding of them;
- To assure the effective public involvement in the decision-making of nuclear

energy policy and nuclear safety policy in particular, and explain the results of such decision-making to the public;

- To increase the opportunity for and to improve the contents of exchange with prefectural and municipal governments across the country in order to facilitate mutual understanding of matters related with nuclear energy policy among them;
- To carry out also measures to facilitate mutual understanding of matters related with nuclear energy policy with local governments throughout the country with a view to promoting the idea that as the construction of the disposal facility for high-level radioactive waste will be beneficial to people, the Government should support, as a representative of the public, the sustainable regional development at the disposal facility site from the viewpoint of equity of benefits.
- To pursue mutual understanding with local governments of the importance of ensuring extensiveness and diversity for realizing stable mid- and long-term regional development, and endeavor to expand its range of policies to capitalize on the enthusiasm and ideas generated by local governments to pursue development based on coexistence with neighboring area.

The AEC will check the efforts of the concerned administrative bodies and other organizations based on the above understanding, taking the opportunity of deliberating annual estimate for research, development and utilization of nuclear energy, and require necessary actions as appropriate.

1. Secure transparency and promotion of mutual understanding with the public

(1) Sharing basic information on the operation of nuclear facilities

The Cabinet Office (CAO), The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), operating entities, research and development institutes and other organizations should endeavor to devise further measures to promote mutual understanding so as to achieve wider public dissemination of basic information on the operation of nuclear facilities, including the effects of radiation and the release of radioactive substances from those facilities.

(2) Measures taken during times of normalcy for ensuring precise communication of information in abnormal occurrences and emergencies

CAO, MEXT, METI, operating entities, research and development institutes and other organizations should take various measures including information dissemination drills for abnormal circumstances and consideration of means for transmitting information in and outside the country during times of normalcy so as to ensure that precise information is communicated during abnormal occurrences and emergencies.

(3) Dissemination of information from the viewpoint of the public concern at the occurrence of a large scale natural disaster that does not cause the nuclear disasters

In such times as when a large scale natural disaster occurs wherein people and mass media express strong concern over the state of the operational conditions of nuclear facilities, the release of radioactive substances from them and so on, operating entities and research and development institutes should timely disseminate relevant information from the viewpoint of the public concern even if the situation does not affect nuclear facilities in any abnormal occurrences or reach the nuclear disasters. Also, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency and other organizations should establish a system allowing for prompt and easy-to-understand announcements of evaluations of such information.

(4) Establishment of nuclear emergency hotline by academic societies

Academic societies are expected to consider the improvement of information service systems such as the establishment of nuclear emergency hotline as a means of providing appropriate easy-to-understand explanations independent from the Government or from operating entities, wherein the opinions of experts are required on the information reported by operating entities and other organizations or on the news coverage regarding abnormal occurrences and so

on.

(5) Prompt reaction to news coverage based on incorrect interpretation of facts

CAO, MEXT, METI, operating entities, research and development institutes should establish a system for the dissemination of accurate information in a timely manner and take measures against news coverage based on misinterpreted facts and conflicting views, such as requiring immediate corrections and expressing clearer views. Also, they should pursue the verification of news coverage afterward involving third parties, where necessary, and ensure that the lessons learned from it are utilized by the Government, operating entities and other organizations.

2. Development and enrichment of learning opportunities and public participation

(1) Providing opportunities for learning basic information

MEXT, METI, operating entities, research and development institutes, academic societies and other organizations should further improve their activities aimed at providing opportunities to all the people for learning and sharing basic information related to nuclear energy and radiation utilization. Also, operating entities and other organizations are expected to engage in continuous discussion and trials aimed at realizing facility tours, as an invaluable means of ensuring understanding among people, to the fullest possible extent while placing top priority on strengthening nuclear security.

(2) Sufficient utilization of activities for developing human resources capable of achieving mutual understanding

Local governments, non-profit organizations and academic societies are expected to further enhance their activities aimed at developing human resources capable of facilitating of mutual understanding with the people, through measures such as the utilization of the human resources development program of the Government.

(3) Thorough public hearings in the Government's policymaking process

CAO, MEXT, METI and other organizations should endeavor to increase opportunities for exchange of views with the people. At the same time, they must strive to further increase the transparency of the policymaking process and raise public awareness, and also endeavor to enrich public hearing activities while seeking various forms of public participation.

3. Relationship between the Government and local governments

(1) Proactive promotion of nuclear energy policy by the Government

CAO, MEXT and METI should construct a cooperative framework together

with local governments on the premise that they responsibly and proactively promote the nuclear energy policy.

- (2) Promotion of trilateral understanding among the Government and local governments of prefectures and municipalities where nuclear facilities are located

The Government and local governments of prefectures and municipalities where nuclear facilities are located should share information pertaining to needs and problems based on the actual situation of the local communities, increase opportunities for exchange of views and enrich the contents thereof, facilitate mutual understanding of the nuclear energy policy and construct relations of trust required for the promotion of the policy.

- (3) Active approach from the Government to local governments and the residents of communities where nuclear facilities are not located

CAO, MEXT and METI should take measures to facilitate further mutual understanding on the nuclear energy policy, including the importance in the national policy of constructing and operating nuclear facilities, the role of the subsidy system accompanying the acceptance of such facilities and the necessity of high-level radioactive waste disposal facilities, together with prefectural and municipal governments and the residents of communities where nuclear facilities are not located.

#### 4. Coexistence with local residents

- (1) Prioritizing the transmission of information from communities where nuclear facilities are located

CAO, MEXT and METI should place emphasis on the transmission of information from local governments and residents of communities where nuclear facilities are located on the current situation, experiences and accumulated knowledge concerning coexistence with nuclear facilities, to all the regions in Japan, and provide many occasions and opportunities for dissemination of such information.

- (2) Formulation of mid- and long-term vision at municipalities locating nuclear facilities that intends to ensure coexistence with neighboring area

Local governments in the area where nuclear facilities are located are expected to formulate mid- to long-term visions for sustainable regional development that correspond to actual situations therein by considering coexistence with neighboring area and reinforcing the system by which regional needs are ascertained, while also fully utilizing the subsidy system based on the Three Laws on Power-Source Siting. In doing so, MEXT and METI are expected to respect the enthusiasm and ideas generated by the local governments

and residents, and to prepare a wide variety of easy-to-utilize policy options. In particular, METI and operating entities should raise national consciousness in the high-level radioactive waste disposal through continuous and active discussion of the issue, including consideration of various models for the sustainable development of the municipalities that accept the siting of the disposal facility site, inviting not only experts but also the general public.

(3) Respect for local communities and active participation aimed at realizing visions for regional development

Operating entities and research and development institutes are expected to continuously contribute to the formulation of visions for regional development by local governments as partners through utilizing their resources and expertise, while also establishing open communication with local communities.

(4) Reinforcement of PDCA activities related to the utilization of the subsidy system based on the Three Laws on Power-Source Siting and sharing of recognition thereof among people

As for the utilization of the subsidy system based on the Three Laws on Power-Source Siting, it is considered that local governments should continuously engage in the planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement thereof in an appropriate manner. In particular, it is considered that evaluations of activities utilizing the subsidy system should be widely disclosed to the public. Furthermore, MEXT and METI should constantly review the subsidy system based on the reevaluation thereof, and inform the public the contents of evaluations by local governments to a greater extent in order to share the recognition with the people.