

**Urgent Statement Regarding the Nuclear Energy Policy:  
Towards a Society That Respects Life.**

March 11, 2011 was the day Japan was hit by a large earthquake which triggered the accident at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. More than one month has passed since the accident, yet radioactive materials continue to leak from the plant till this day, and it is expected to require decades before it is fully resolved.

Radioactive materials have been spreading over the prosperous soils, rich oceans and great eco system that have been providing us with such great gifts. An organic farmer in Fukushima, who had dedicated his life to love and protect the richness of the soil, had committed suicide in despair. The extent of damages caused by the nuclear accident cannot be overestimated. The lives of the farmers and fishers engaged in the sustainable agriculture and fishing, local communities and their cultures in the effected area, mainly in Tohoku and Kanto are being threatened, as well as the hard works of people who've dedicated themselves to protect the biodiversity. It is not just the mankind that is being threatened... but rather the earth itself and the biodiversity it has nurtured over the years.

Nuclear energy had been touted as an economically efficient, safe clean energy with low CO2 emission, and had been promoted by the Japanese government as a technology that contributes to the country's economic prosperity. The information disclosure policy set by Japanese government even tried to block the discussion regarding the nuclear energy policy, and as a result, we still do not have enough access to the information that are critical in protecting our own lives. It is now widely regarded by the international community that it is not a natural disaster as it was previously sought, but rather a man-made disaster. The attitudes of our government and TECPO are being harshly criticized, but at the same time, we must admit that the industry, the intellects, mainstream-media, consumers and all of us Japanese citizens failed to prevent this tragedy from happening and we all share the responsibility.

15,000 metric ton of "low-level" radioactive water was intentionally poured into the ocean by TEPCO on April 4th, and high-level radioactive water measuring 1,000mSv has likely been leaking into the ocean continuously. Its effect on the ocean, a common resource shared by the international community, as well as on the various life forms that inhabit it is unimaginable. Due to these actions clearly in breach of the London Treaty, Japan, initially a victim of earthquake and tsunami, both of which are national disasters, has transformed itself into an offender of the environmental pollution.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity (COP10)

held in October, 2010, Japan had played the role of the chair, and displayed the leadership that led to the adoption of “Aichi Target” which sets the goals for the protection and restoration of biodiversity. Japan has successfully negotiated the conflict of interests among various nations and worked closely with the civil society to win the achievement and it has been acclaimed by the international communities.

However, while Japanese government is promoting the concept of “Life in Harmony”, as it introduced the lives in Satoyama and Satoumi, construction of new nuclear energy plant in Kaminoseki, which is sure to be a big loss for biodiversity had stated. The event has been regarded as a big disappointment by both domestic and international NGO’s. Economy for effectiveness seems to take precedence over a rich ecosystem and the life that it supports in local communities and their respected and inherited cultures. Big opposing voices have been raised not only by Japanese civil society but also by non-Japanese NGOs who described the attitude of the Japanese government to be in “great contradiction”. These concerns were clearly addressed in a statement mutually prepared by the international civil societies, including both Japanese and foreign NGO’s, and read aloud at a plenary session during the COP10. Japanese government must take a hard look at the reality, understand the true cause of the accident at the nuclear power plant, and must show the will to resolve the “great contradiction” from the roots or else the outcomes of the COP10 would all be in vain.

We, a Japanese environmental NGO, strongly see the importance of the policy making that puts biodiversity at its heart. We strongly urge our government to listen to the voices of the civil society and consider the following proposals with utmost attention.

- ① TEPCO and Japanese government to disclose all information related to the incident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and to call on experts from around the world to form an international disaster management team to resolve the incident.
- ② Japanese government to pay close attention to the provisions of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans in defining the National Energy Strategy and reconstruction plan and consider carefully the influence that it would have on future generations, taking into account the concept of risk management and disaster prevention.
- ③ Japanese government to encourage representatives from various organizations including the civil societies to be participate at all stages of policy making, execution, and monitoring. This includes energy policy making and national reconstruction planning.
- ④ Japanese government to encourage formation of the Research and Taskforce to include various stakeholders, including NGO’s, civil societies and scientists, in order

to come up with a solution to the issues resulting from radioactive water being released into the ocean. It directly affects the farmer and fishers and government must show a clear vision for the economical reconstruction.

- ⑤ Government to review the risk aversion and management process for every nuclear power plants, taking into consideration the needs of people who are most likely to be effected by the radiation, namely, expecting or nursing mothers, children, the elderly, and all those with special medical conditions. The option of completely shutting down all existing nuclear power plants in the future should not be exclude from discussions. In addition, an adequate information disclosure policy must be put into effect and implemented.
- ⑥ Government to spend the resources necessary on promoting a new energy policy centered around renewable energy sources as well as on advocating a more independent and sustainable local community building process, fully utilizing local resources.
- ⑦ Government to take into consideration the influence that the nuclear accident has on its citizens, not only at the physical level, but also at the mental and psychological aspects. Numerically and logically accurate correspondences are important but they are not enough to address the psychological damages from spreading.
- ⑧ Government to confront its distorted information disclosure habit and start building a national economic policy that respects life and its diversity. Government must also respect the concept of CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) as defined in the Convention of the Biological Diversity.

The Convention of the Biological Diversity is also refered to as the “Convention for all life on Earth”. It is our government’s role and responsibility to protect the life of their citizens. We must not forget to be thankful as well as to fear and the respect the nature if we truly want to realize politics to respect life.

25-years have passed since the Chernobyl, an accident regarded as the worst man-made disaster the world has experienced in the history of humankind. Even today, the radioactive materials released during the incident continues to damage the environment. And now, the history is repeating itself again here in Japan. Overconfidence and the aggressive utilization of science and technology have brought the immeasurable amount of harm onto life Yet, we humans have wisdom on our side. We can all learn from the history and be empowered to build a new society. Let us stand

up and stop the negative circle that has plagued our society and let us stand up together to build a society and an economic system that respect life.

Finally, we would like to pray for all those who lost their lives on 3.11 and in the unfortunate series of events that followed. To make sure that we would never repeat this atrocity, of losing loved ones, and of being deprived of homeland, we vow ourselves to protect life and to not be indifferent and ignorant any longer., We hereby declare that we firmly believe that our hope for the future lies in our ability to imagine a different, a better society, and to build a mutual understanding amongst people of different backgrounds to be united and to move things forward in order to overcome the “great contradiction” that had been ignored for too long.

Draft prepared by Voluntary Member of Japan Civil Network for CBD

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