

## **NSC Meets With TEPCO Executives on Safety Culture**

**On December 9 and 10, representatives of the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) met with Pres. Tsunehisa Katsumata and other top executives of Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) at the company's head office in Tokyo to exchange views on nuclear safety culture. NSC staff had also visited the head office of Chubu Electric Power Co. in Nagoya (Aichi Pref.) on December 8, for a similar discussion with Pres. Fumio Kawaguchi and others.**

On the morning of December 9, NSC Chairman Shojiro Matsuura met with TEPCO's top executives, including Pres. Katsumata, Vice-president Ryoichi Shirato, and Senior Managing Director Ichiro Takekuro. On the afternoon of the following day, he joined NSC Vice-chairman Atsuyuki Suzuki in meeting 14 representatives (directors to section managers) from Toden Kogyo Co., Ltd., Tokyo Electric Power Environmental Engineering Co., Inc., Tokyo Energy & System Inc., and Kandenko Co., Ltd. All those companies are affiliated or are working closely with TEPCO.



**TEPCO executives at a meeting with the NSC  
(center: TEPCO Pres. Katsumata)**

Matsuura and Suzuki later held a press conference, at which they said that TEPCO, like Chubu Electric, was striving to implement a corrective action program, resulting in improved communication at work sites and activities to ensure safety. As for TEPCO's dealings with its affiliates and partners, they said that the conventional top-down relationships between TEPCO and the others have become more "horizontal" in nature, creating an environment where those companies can speak out more freely. That, too, has contributed to ensuring safety, they said.

Meanwhile, the two NSC leaders said that both TEPCO and its partners cooperating companies cited the same problem regarding the dissemination of information: the reluctance of those on-site to disclose "trivial matters" to the public - i.e., their lack of appreciation of the need to do so. As the public does in fact desire such information, the lack of understanding on the part of the industry about what the public expects has caused tension and unease. In time, that could negatively affect activities to ensure safety.

Referring to the practice of periodic inspections at nuclear power plants (NPPs), Matsuura and Suzuki said that while there is a large amount of work during such inspections, there was "substantially less to do" when the NPPs are in operation. That results in a highly unstable employment situation for workers, which in turn could affect safety negatively. The executives of electric power companies are eager to improve worker stability in the future.

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