

NISA and JNES Hold Symposium on NPP Safety – Realizing More Stable NPP Operation through Streamlined Regulations

On October 28, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency and the Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) held a joint symposium in Tokyo called “Mutual Understanding and Taking Action: Forming the Links to Secure Safety,” discussing and reviewing various issues relating to safety assurance, as well as ways to resolve them. The symposium included three sessions, treating the topics of (1) applying risk information to regulations, (2) clearance systems, and (3) protective measures for nuclear materials. There was also a panel discussion dealing with aging countermeasures.

The symposium kicked off with introductory addresses by the sponsors. Director General Kenkichi Hirose of the NISA declared that “securing safety in nuclear power is not a defensive job but an unceasing advance,” thus urging the necessity of the related parties to unite and tackle the issues at hand actively and aggressively.

The introductory address was ensued by a speech before the general audience by Director Michio Ishikawa of the Japan Nuclear Technology Institute (JANTI), just launched in April of this year. He declaimed about the role of his institution, explaining that it would be a “private-sector regulatory organization regulating in a way that was faithful to technology,” thus drawing a distinction between it and JNES, which carries out regulatory activities based on the law. In addition, he introduced JANTI’s stance on securing safety, referring to the three-pronged spirit of its fledgling activities as follows: (1) revising the parochial “nuclear village” consciousness, (2) placing regulators and “regulatees” in the same position, and (3) having peer reviews carried out by foreigners.

Also, Ishikawa touched on the need for Japan to intensify its efforts to implement safe NPP operation through streamlined regulations based on the actual situation and data, pointing out that average number of days that NPPs in Japan were shut down was around four times as long as that in the United States: 34.4 days (1999-2004 average) and 7.4 days (2004), respectively.

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