

Special Committee to Study Safety of Monju Holds First Meeting

On November 1, the first meeting was held of the Working Committee on Nuclear Reactor Safety's special committee to study the safety of the FBR Monju, under the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee for Natural Resources and Energy. It began its inquiry into the efforts of the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA), the regulative activities of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA), and so forth, aimed at ensuring the safety of Monju. From now on, the committee will meet according to the progress of various activities and obtain a broad range of opinions.

At the meeting, NISA representatives presented that organization's plan for immediate activities, including pre-service inspections, examination and approval of changes to safety preservation rules, and confirmation by nuclear safety inspectors. JAEA representatives, meanwhile, explained the nature and scope of remodeling work and measures to ensure safety.

Along with general discussions on whether the viewpoints and activities of the two organizations cover the necessary points, the working committee will consider the following items from various aspects: (1) establishing organizational operation and management, including the top management of JAEA and organizational ethics; (2) establishing quality-assurance systems related to safety preservation activities; (3) ensuring and fostering technological capabilities and human resources; (4) reviewing the remodeling work and measures to ensure safety, and confirming the soundness of facilities and equipment that have either been suspended for a while or are being maintained in service; (5) confirming the soundness of fuel; (6) establishing operational and maintenance management; and (7) maintaining external communications. With the committee members voicing their opinions based on their respective wide-ranging, professional viewpoints, the transparency of safety-related activities ought to be further enhanced in the course of deliberations.

JAEA gave a presentation on safety measures, thorough quality management, ways to achieve unity and integration at the site, and the cultivation of human resources and information disclosure – all of which are prioritized policies in the remodeling work. On September 1, JAEA commenced the remodeling of the central portion of Monju. Tests to confirm that work will begin around December 2006, with plant confirmation tests to be implemented around July 2007.

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