

Symposium Held in Tokyo on Selection Process for Final Disposal Site

On December 1, the Tokyo Institute of Technology's 21st Century COE (Centers of Excellence) Program, "Innovative Nuclear Power to Support Sustainable Global Development," staged a symposium in Tokyo on the theme, "Final Disposal Sites: How Were They Chosen?" Approximately 100 people attended to hear how the process of deciding a final disposal site was carried out in Finland and Korea, with an ensuing panel discussion.

Dr. Antti Vuorinen, senior adviser to the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) of Finland, and Vice Chairman Altti Lucander of the Eurajoki autonomous region assembly, described how the Olkiuoto disposal site was selected. Dr. S. Yun, senior manager of Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power (KHNP), and S. Park of the Economy and Science Promotion Headquarters of Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, explained how a intermediate- and low-level radioactive waste (ILW and LLW) disposal site in Gyeongju City was decided upon.



STUK's Vuorinen explained, "Although there was a time when safety was a point of contention, we were finally able to decide on a site based on the strong determination of the central and local governments that the site not be a burden in the future, and because of efforts to win understanding of the residents on nuclear power, and disclosure of information." KHNP's Yun explained that "the enactment of a special law to assist in the development of the

hosting region, a democratic and highly transparent selection process, multiple PA activities, etc., resulted in a strong majority – 89.5% – of the citizens of Gyeongju supporting the project."

Those four persons were then joined in a panel discussion by Tokio Kano, a member of the Upper House of the Japanese Diet, Kyoji Yoshino, head of the Nuclear Waste Management Office of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE), and Masao Nakamura, adviser to the Central Research Institute of the Electric Power Industry (CRIEPI).

Diet member Kano explained that he had called upon the Japanese government to step forward and explain matters to the citizens, and that he is currently discussing with the government the possibility of increasing grants substantially at the process stage of "studying documents." ANRE's Yoshino said, "Ten municipalities initially showed a willingness to consider the possibility, and four are still actively doing so. When the government explains things in a measured, balanced way, there is no resentment from the communities, but when the mass media report on the issue, an excessive reaction is often seen, not just by the municipalities themselves, but also surrounding areas. I am bothered by the gap between those two types of reactions."

The panelists discussed the importance of having well-known experts, and talked about the way mass media reported the issue. They also said opportunities had to be secured for local residents to personally learn the truth about nuclear power, and that technical explanations had to be made easy to understand.

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