

JAIF Has First Liaison Meeting with Science Officers from Tokyo Embassies

On September 14, the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum (JAIF) had its first liaison meeting with personnel responsible for science and technology at foreign embassies and representative offices in Japan. Officers from 18 nations and regions, including the United States, Europe, Russia and South America, were present.



At the meeting, JAIF President Takuya Hattori explained the effects of the July 16 Niigata-Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake on the Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPS. Emphasizing that “four reactors in operation at the time of the quake automatically shut down,” he added that “because the transmission systems were working, reactor cooling was managed using power sources outside of the plant – i.e., without depending on emergency diesel power generators – achieving a cold shutdown state, with coolant temperature at 100°C or lower.”

Strong quake waves lasted for about 10 seconds (15 seconds for all the waves), and the strength of the quake above the bedrock beneath Unit 1 was about 2.5 times the design value.

President Hattori said that with all seven units at its Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPS currently out of operation, TEPCO faced a serious supply-and-demand situation in its supply area, ultimately having to ask some power users in the area to cut back on their use of electricity on August 22 – the first time it done so in 17 years.

Admitting that TEPCO’s handling of the situation immediately after the earthquake was inadequate, in part because employees and their families were also affected, President Hattori noted several points requiring analysis and consideration, including the following: (1) the fire at a transformer was not extinguished for two hours; (2) an internal disaster prevention system was not properly in place; and (3) communications with the local community were not sufficient.

At the same time, he said it was a national holiday and there were only about 100 workers in the plants, which was in a way fortunate. Had it been a workday, around 1,000 workers would have been there, and there could have been many injuries.

Questions from the participants concerned the handling of the media and responses by regulatory authorities. President Hattori said, “It is important not just to release an initial report to the regulatory authorities, but also to the public. But that is sometimes easier said than done.”

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