

The 15th N-20 Joint Statement

1. The Group N-20, consisting of nuclear experts from France and Japan, held its 15th meeting in Nice, France, on October 2 and 3, 2008. During the two-day meeting, the French and Japanese experts exchanged information and confirmed the interest of enhancing their cooperation on the following topics:

- Progress reports and national policy
- Fast reactor development
- International situation
- Fuel cycle

2. Both sides reconfirmed that nuclear energy is essential not only in Japan and in France, but also for the future of the world, from the viewpoint of energy security, prevention of global warming and sustainable energy prices.

The 2008 G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit formally recognized for the first time in its G8 leaders' declaration the effectiveness of nuclear power in tackling Global Warming. The summit, under Japan's leadership, adopted a resolution calling for the launch of an international initiative built on the 3S principles: non-proliferation/Safeguards, Safety and Security. Most importantly, this clarifies the role of nuclear power in the international community. Japan and France should play a major role in this initiative, being the two leading countries in nuclear power.

3. Both sides presented their National programs for limiting Global Warming, including Nuclear Policy and the objectives to decrease the greenhouse gas emissions.

The Japanese government decided at a Cabinet meeting in July 2008 on "An Action Plan to Create a Low-carbon Society".

Japanese side mentioned the objective of 50% of non carbon electricity production by 2020 for which nuclear power will play a major role.

French side presented the "Grenelle de l'environnement", which is a programme decided by the government and debated with experts and NGOs to "Wrestle with the climate changes and master the energy".

The announcement by the French President of a second EPR was mentioned.

4. Both sides stressed the importance of the meeting in Japan on April 11 2008 between the Japanese and French Prime Ministers and of the joint statement on France-Japan cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Japanese side expressed gratitude for the French Prime Minister's visit to the Rokkasho site.

5. Japanese side presented the Status of Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Station after the earthquake of July 2007. The analyses of the event and the consequences on the safety analysis for other nuclear facilities were discussed. In the prospect of the nuclear renaissance, the necessity of a harmonization of regulation norms around the world was also underlined.

6. Both sides confirmed again that transparency is essential to promote a better understanding of nuclear energy by the general public. They underlined that it is essential to keep the public confidence, including ones living next to nuclear facilities, as shown by recent experiences.

It is primordial to increase transparency and improve crisis management, even when the consequences for people and environment are negligible.

7. Both sides presented the R&D programs on fast reactors and confirmed the importance to reinforce the collaboration between the two countries on the development of fast reactors, making use of Japan's fast breeder prototype reactor Monju, especially after the final shut-down of Phenix.

Cooperation using Monju, scheduled to resume operation in February 2009, is expected to contribute to improvement of operation technology of fast reactors and to pursue irradiations.

8. Both sides confirmed that GNEP initiated by the United States is an important forum for international discussions on fuel cycle issues and that France and Japan jointly participate in this program to promote it. Both sides confirmed that France and Japan should promote development by mutually cooperating and making good use of each experience accumulated.

9. Both sides agreed that the trilateral France-Japan-USA (CEA-JAEA-DOE) cooperation on Fast Reactor R&D is important. The three organizations are planning mutual utilization of R&D facilities, and have signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding in January 2008 in order to harmonise the prototypes of Generation IV reactors.

Important issues are being discussed and both sides asked for a progress report at the next N20 meeting.

10. Considering the development of electronuclear project in many emerging countries in this century, both sides had a common understanding that it is important that these countries be aware of their responsibilities in the management of spent nuclear fuel produced from their future reactors.

International public governance will be required: It is essential to secure nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security while exporting nuclear power generation

equipment and services to the emerging countries.

This expansion of newcomers will need a plan for sustainable development, long-term government commitment and a plan for human resources and training.

Both sides confirmed that France and Japan, as nuclear advanced countries, should contribute to help countries willing to develop nuclear energy.

11. The French side presented the “Agence France Nucléaire Internationale”, which will promote and organize assistance of French public bodies for all technical competences needed for countries which do not have yet nuclear energy, but which want to develop this energy source.

12. Both sides agreed that Education & Training is essential, to renew and develop the skills, in the context of Nuclear Renaissance, for all the countries and especially for the emerging ones. IAEA could play a role in centralizing all these countries' needs.

13. Concerning front-end activities, both sides underlined the importance to invest continuously in resources and technology to maintain a sustainable and steady nuclear front-end supply.

14. Concerning the back-end activities, the Rokkasho reprocessing plant, which will complete its construction works and test operation in November 2008, crowns the fruitful collaboration between France and Japan, as underlined by French Prime Minister in April 2008. A cooperation agreement between La Hague and Rokkasho Plants (called “sister plants”) was signed, to share the operational feedback from each other.

France and Japan made the choice of closing the fuel cycle, answering the question of spent fuel management and nuclear waste disposal, while optimizing natural resources, which is the basis of sustainable development, and while fighting proliferation. Both countries have to improve the communication and the pedagogy to valorise the recycling activities.

15. Both sides underlined that nuclear material transport issues will be a cornerstone to nuclear renaissance sustainability and decided to establish, in the framework of N20 meeting, a working group of experts from both countries to study the transport issues.