

Tenth Annual Japan-UK Nuclear Dialogue (Summary of Discussions)

Date: 13 & 14 December 2021

Venue: Virtual meeting

Co-Chairs:

Mr Chris Heffer (Director, Nuclear Power and Decommissioning, BEIS, UK)

Mr Ikematsu Hidehiro (Deputy Director General, MOFA, Japan)

Background

The 'Japan-UK Framework on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation', annexed to the joint statement at the Japan-UK summit meeting in April 2012, stated that Japan and the UK would launch an annual dialogue at senior level to strengthen bilateral cooperation across the full range of civil nuclear activities. The tenth annual meeting was hosted virtually by BEIS on the 13th and 14th December 2021.

Session One: Nuclear Energy Policy

The UK and Japan provided an update on their policies and latest domestic developments with respect to nuclear energy. Both sides noted their net zero by 2050 commitments and emphasised the importance of nuclear energy in achieving these goals, as highlighted at COP26. Both countries noted that many of their goals on the way to reaching net zero, including the use of nuclear, are shared.

The UK and Japan see benefit in collaboration in next generation nuclear energy, especially in the field of small and advanced modular reactors. Both sides discussed the particular importance of HTGRs in supporting future clean energy goals, including through low carbon hydrogen production. Here, Japan's existing knowledge and expertise with the HTTR was recognised.

Session 2: Nuclear Safety and Regulation

Regulators from the UK and Japan shared updates on regulation focus in their respective countries and recent milestones. The UK's nuclear regulator, the ONR, provided an update on their approach to regulation for advanced nuclear technologies and Generic Design Assessments that are complete or ongoing. Japan's NRA presented on recent results of nuclear regulatory inspections.

Both sides shared their views on communication with industry and the interface between safety and security. The speakers covered existing and future collaboration programmes including secondments and bilateral meetings between ONR and NRA to take place in 2022.

Session 3: Nuclear Research and Development

The UK updated on UK-Japan Joint Research Projects including various successful collaborations. The UK also updated on the forward plan and announcements on funding for future nuclear R&D and the UK NDA outlined their Grand Challenges for technical innovation. Japan updated on MEXT's and JAEA's activities including the restart of the HTTR, and stressed the importance of keeping research skills in the nuclear industry and the

need to maintain knowledge. Both sides recognised the need to promote nuclear to the younger generation to attract a diverse workforce.

The UK and Japan recognised the benefits gained from collaboration on shared research projects and will continue to explore further areas for collaboration in areas of shared needs.

Session 4: Decommissioning and Environmental Remediation

There was recognition of the extensive successful collaboration between the UK and Japan in this area including between NDA and NDF, TEPCO and Sellafield Ltd, NDA and JAEA, and between regulators, and the significant mutual benefits this collaboration has brought. The current situation of off-site environmental remediation was also shared by the MOE.

Both sides provided an update on the decommissioning and waste management situation in their respective countries and recognised that both countries shared many similar challenges. The UK and Japan noted the benefits of further deepening knowledge sharing and collaboration to reduce cost and increase effectiveness. It was noted that collaboration on normal reactor decommissioning and waste management has been more limited than in other areas, and an ambition was raised to collaborate more deeply in this area.

Japan provided a detailed update on the current situation at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi, including the process for the discharge of the ALPS treated water at the site. The UK noted it respects and agrees with the science behind such a step and outlined that it sees no reason why the treated water should not be discharged, provided consideration is given to appropriate dilution and rate of discharge. The UK welcomes the close collaboration with the IAEA on this matter.

Session 5: Public Communication on Nuclear

Both sides recognised the importance of transparency and clarity with the public on nuclear energy, and the need to listen carefully to diverse views including those opposed to nuclear energy. BEIS provided an update on their Public Attitudes Tracker which showed a generally positive attitude to civil nuclear. BEIS also reflected on the positive nuclear presence at COP26, and the experience of holding public consultations on advanced nuclear and siting for the GDF. METI outlined the channels Japan has used to communicate nuclear-related topics including providing updates to the international community at various fora and engaging with local stakeholders via meetings and public dialogues. JAEC presented a basic policy on dialogue to the public and shared some examples based on the policy.

Both sides noted the benefits from collaborating internationally as like-minded countries to promote the role nuclear can play in achieving net zero.

Closing Remarks

The co-chairs, Mr Chris Heffer and Mr Ikematsu Hidehiro, expressed that the Tenth Dialogue had seen an increase in the number of successful collaboration activities between both countries, most prominently in the areas of nuclear regulation, research and development, decommissioning and advanced nuclear technology development.

The co-chairs also reaffirmed that the UK and Japan share common values and see each other as natural partners to pursue further opportunities and deepen what is a historic relationship for the long term. The delegations hoped they would be able to hold an in-person Dialogue in 2022 and to continue to promote the positive relationship.

Acronym list

ALPS: Advanced Liquid Processing System

BEIS: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

GDF: Geological Disposal Facility

HTGR: High Temperature Gas-Cooled Reactor

HTTR: High Temperature Test Reactor

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

JAEA: Japan Atomic Energy Agency

JAEC: Japan Atomic Energy Commission

METI: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

MOE: Ministry of Environment

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NDA: Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

NDF: Nuclear Damage Compensation and Decommissioning Facilitation Corporation

NRA: Nuclear Regulation Authority

ONR: Office for Nuclear Regulation

TEPCO: Tokyo Electric Power Company