

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

Date: 25-26 October 2018

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Co-Chairs:

Mr Masahiro Kawasaki (Ambassador, Deputy Director General,
Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, MOFA, Japan)
Prof Robin Grimes (Adviser, Her Majesty's Government, UK)

Background

The 'Japan-UK Framework on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation', which was annexed to the joint statement at the Japan-UK summit meeting in April 2012, states that Japan and the UK decided to launch an annual dialogue at senior level to strengthen bilateral cooperation across the full range of civil nuclear activities.

The seventh annual meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, Japan on 25th and 26th October 2018.

I. Session One: Decommissioning and Decontamination

Both sides noted the successful collaboration between the UK and Japan in this area.

The UK and Japan updated each other on progress in their respective decommissioning programmes. The UK side noted their experience of the importance of programme management and waste management in reducing the costs of decommissioning. The Japanese side shared updates on progress made at Fukushima Daiichi and on decommissioning in Japan. Sellafield and TEPCO presented on their collaboration and expertise sharing over the past year. The Japanese side presented on Environmental Remediation in Japan.

The Dialogue noted the significant benefits of the ongoing regular co-operation between Sellafield and TEPCO, and the NDA and the NDF, and welcomed the secondment of a TEPCO Engineer to Sellafield.

It was noted that the renewed Memorandum of Understanding between the NDA and JAEA highlights opportunities for shared learning on the decommissioning of different types of nuclear facilities, including fast reactors where lessons learnt from the decommissioning of Dounreay in the UK may have an application at Monju.

Both sides noted the importance of shared learning in tackling complex decommissioning and waste management challenges, and encouraged relevant UK and Japanese organisations to work together on innovative solutions. The opportunity to learn from and apply knowledge from other sectors (such as oil and gas) was recognised.

The difference between difficult decommissioning challenges such as at Fukushima Daiichi and Sellafield, and more routine nuclear power plant decommissioning was discussed. The Dialogue confirmed mutual interest in the latter as well as the former.

II. Session Two: Nuclear Energy Policy

Both sides shared updates on their respective nuclear energy policy. As part of this, the UK introduced its Nuclear Sector Deal and Japan presented on the 5th Strategic Energy Plan and Basic Policy for Nuclear Research and Development. The UK also presented on emergency preparedness and noted this as a particular area in which the UK could learn from Japanese experience.

Both sides mentioned their intention to discuss nuclear materials. The UK confirmed its commitment to the safe and secure management of the Japanese material in the UK and said it will work with the Japanese Government and FEPC to agree a shared approach to the future management of this material.

The UK and Japan noted similarities in its approach to siting a geological disposal facility, and the opportunity to learn from each other throughout this process.

The Dialogue noted the importance of developing skills and encouraging innovation for and within industry in both countries.

Both sides recognised the importance of ensuring continuity in our civil nuclear cooperation following the UK's withdrawal from the European Atomic Energy Community.

III. Session Three: Public Communication

Discussion on public communication focused on waste management and geological disposal with both sides sharing updates on public communication in this area. Both sides recognised the value of sharing information and expertise in this area. The UK presentation illustrated the risks of mis-managing public communications while the Japanese presentation demonstrated current efforts to promote public understanding.

Sellafield and TEPCO presented on their work exchanging expertise and experiences with each other.

IV. Session Four: Nuclear Research and Development

Both sides presented on research programmes and projects that are underway. The Dialogue noted the achievements made to date and supported the concept of new collaborations to address industry-led challenges in the development of novel decommissioning and wider nuclear technologies.

The success of the Joint UK-Japan research fund was noted, and there was encouragement for the participants in successful research projects to find ways to introduce the results of this research to decommissioning sites in the UK and Japan.

The Dialogue explored ways to maximise the benefit of the joint fund and significantly increase the amount of joint research. In addition to the ongoing projects, the existing joint fund could be made more relevant to industry needs in the future. This could create new opportunities, partnerships and expand the relevance of the programme.

It was recognised that both sides will work to increase networking opportunities through the annual Atomic Energy Society of Japan (AESJ) meeting and UK Nuclear Academics Discussion Meeting (UKNADM). Members emphasised the importance of working together, making the best use of each other's resources including research facilities, and developing skills for the future.

V. Session Five: Nuclear Regulation and Safety

Regulators from the UK and Japan shared updates on regulation focus in their respective countries over the past year, and exchange between the two regulators. The Dialogue welcomed the secondment of a regulator from the Japanese NRA to the UK ONR.

The UK side presented on 'Enabling Regulation' as applied to UK new build and decommissioning. The ONR and NRA announced that they had renewed their Information Exchange

Arrangement. The Japanese side shared updates on the status of the NRA's conformity review and preparations for a new domestic inspection system that will start in 2020.

It was noted that in both countries regulators are responsible for regulating a wide range of nuclear facilities, from power stations under construction, to different types of facilities in decommissioning. The opportunity to learn from each other was recognised, and the Dialogue was advised that regulators from both sides had found their collaboration very valuable.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The co-chairs, Mr Masahiro Kawasaki and Prof Robin Grimes, expressed that the Seventh Annual UK-Japan Nuclear Dialogue had seen real progress in collaborative activities in many areas of the civil nuclear relationship and enabled important discussions to set the scene for further UK-Japan cooperation in the area of civil nuclear energy. The strong strategic partnership between both countries in the area of nuclear energy was noted, and it was suggested that this partnership may present further opportunities over the longer term, such as collaboration in third countries. Through the Dialogue, both sides gained official, high-level recognition for the collaborative activities undertaken so far and delegates were able to identify opportunities for further cooperation.

The delegations 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 agreed to hold the next Dialogue in London in 2019 and to continue to promote the positive relationship.

Appendix: List of Acronyms

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)

FEPC – Federation of Electric Power Companies

JAEA – Japan Atomic Energy Agency

MOFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)

NDA – Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (UK)

NDF – Nuclear Damage Compensation and Decommissioning Facilitation Corporation (Japan)

NRA – Nuclear Regulation Authority (Japan)

ONR – Office for Nuclear Regulation (UK)

R&D – research and development

TEPCO – Tokyo Electric Power Company (Japan)