

Regional Cooperation in Nuclear Safety

- Session:** Grand Ballroom 3
Date/Time: February 20, 2013 / 15:30-16:45
- Moderator:** Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association
- Speakers:** Gun-Aajav Manlaijav, Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Authority
Kim Sang Yun, Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety
Sato Heigo, Takushoku University
- Rapporteur:** Samuel Brinton, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Session Sketch

Kelsey Davenport, nonproliferation analyst for the Arms Control Association, opened the panel by noting that regional cooperation on nuclear safety is a timely issue due to the Fukushima disaster. She noted that the session would need to consider the need to coordinate emergency response and mitigate possible emergencies with advanced sharing of information.

Gun-Aajav Manlaijav of the Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Authority began the discussion by stating that since Fukushima, nuclear power plants and all nuclear applications are under heightened scrutiny. In response to the accident the member states of the NPT under the auspice of the IAEA should seek to strengthen the safety culture of the nuclear regime. A significant challenge in this strengthening is the large difference in the region in terms of socioeconomic development. He stated that the variety of expertise has caused a need to harmonize and fill the legal gaps of the frameworks ruling the cooperation of nuclear communities. Although every country is responsible for its own nuclear safety, Mr. Manlaijav reminded the audience that Chernobyl has shown that a nuclear accident has no national border. To address the gaps, the public trust should be built on public education at all levels and in many dimensions. This will lead each country, such as Mongolia, to meet its own nuclear science and engineering policy and human resource capability.

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Kim Sang Yun, director of the Research and Policy Division at the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety, continued by highlighting the need for post-Fukushima regional cooperation to solve the problems faced by the nuclear safety community. His remarks concentrated on the creation and expansion of the Top Regulators' Meeting. The Top Regulators' Meeting on Nuclear Safety among Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China was established in 2008 to promote exchanging information on nuclear safety as well as enhancing regional cooperation in emergency preparedness and response in Northeast Asia. The meeting is working to take initiative in nuclear safety with multiple meetings held with experiences shared on construction and operation of nuclear power plants along with Fukushima response data. Mr. Kim introduced the goal of an information exchange framework which is still in discussion with a goal of trilateral sharing of emergency and non-emergency data.

Sato Heigo, professor at Takushoku University, was proud to state that the nuclear industry is now deeply involved in the region with expansion seeming imminent despite the Fukushima disaster. It seems evident, he mentioned, that nuclear safety is crucial for this expansion. Beginning with a citation of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament report, Mr. Sato urged the need for stronger cooperation among the nations in the region. Although there has been success in sharing data relating to the construction and initial operation for nuclear power plants but information relating to emergency conditions and human errors leading to these emergencies is lacking. An example of the complacency can be seen in the that security measures for nuclear power plants must be repeatedly updated and applied. However, Mr. Sato mentioned, once a nuclear power plant is started the public is self-convinced that its safety is guaranteed. His comments concluded with the point that the nuclear energy community has become reluctant to update its security since this updating seems to be in conflict with idea that the nuclear power plant must be inherently safe in order to be operating.

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