

OPINION PAGES

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Ambassador Tanaka explains his country's point of view

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It is my honor and pleasure to have an opportunity to contribute to the highly regarded opinion page of the Marshall Islands Journal. As many of you may know that Ms. Yumiko HATA, Director for International Issues/Waste Management of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, Nuclear Accident Response Office, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) came to Majuro from July 15 to 17 to take part in the intensive dialogues agreed on between KISHIDA Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, and delegation of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) last February. Together with her, I had a series of meetings with MICNGOS, MIMA, Hon. Wilbur Heine, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, members of Niujela's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade comprising of two sitting Ministers and three former Presidents, EPA, MIMRA, NNC and Office of the Chief Secretary as well as three interview sessions with Marshall Islands Journal, V7AB, and POWER 103.5 FM. This was regarding Japan's planned discharge of ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) treated water from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (FDNPS) into the sea as a part of the reconstruction of Fukushima affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2011. In each of the occasions, Ms. HATA gave technical explanations on Japan's plan and explained why it would be safe based on scientific evidence. I hereby would like to briefly explain Japan's plan for your

Facts about Japan's planned release of ALPS-treated water

further understanding.

Before getting into the details, as it is the only country to have suffered from the war-time atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan shares the same sentiments regarding the nuclear issue with the Marshallese people. With this in my mind, I would like to convey that ALPS treated water is sufficiently purified and diluted before it is discharged, and it will never cause any harmful effect on the human health and the environment.

Firstly, Japanese experts had comprehensive reviews on handling of ALPS treated water for more than six years, which include evaluation of five disposal methods: geologic injection, ocean release, vapor release, hydrogen release, and underground burial. They concluded that the discharge into the sea can be most reliably implemented because it is commonly practiced in nuclear facilities around the world, and the discharge into the sea can be most accurately monitored.

Secondly, ALPS removes radioactive materials in the water other than tritium. The water to be discharged is sufficiently purified by ALPS until the concentration of radioactive materials other than tritium

is below the regulatory standard, and will be further diluted before its discharge. After the dilution, the concentration of tritium will be 1/40 of the regulatory standard and 1/7 of the WHO drinking water standard.

The following websites give you more detailed information. Particularly Tokyo Electric Power Company's website ("INSIDE Fukushima Daiichi (<https://www.tepco.co.jp/en/insidefukushimadaiichi/index-e.html>)") provides a virtual tour of the decommissioning site of FDNPS. You can find a visual and easy-to-understand overview of the decommissioning process at the site, including preparations for the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea.

Useful links for understanding ALPS treated water:

- "Why is the discharge of ALPS treated water safe?" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU1s2SKe5I>
- "Marine organisms and ALPS treated water" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixDXHPqe9h4>
- "What is ALPS treated water? Is it really safe?" (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan)

https://www.meti.go.jp/earthquake/nuclear/hairo_osensui/english/shirou_alps/no1/

• "DG Meets Pacific Leaders on Fukushima Water" (International Atomic Energy Agency) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSVyUeyA_FS

Thirdly, tritium is a radioactive material which exists in the natural world, and you can find it in rain-water and also in our bodies, but is not accumulated in the body and excreted with water. The assessment of radiological environmental impacts was carefully conducted in line with the international standards and guidelines, taking into account the effect of bioaccumulation and long-term accumulation. It shows that the impact on humans and the environment would be negligible,

considering biological concentration and long-term accumulation. The impact on humans is about one-thousandth of the radiation dose received from a single dental x-ray. On July 4, 2023, the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), the international authority on nuclear safety standards as acknowledged by leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum and of which the RMI is a member, published its Comprehensive Report on the Safety Review

of the ALPS treated water at FD-NPS (https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/iaea_comprehensive_alps_report.pdf). It has concluded that the approach to the discharge of the ALPS treated water into the sea and associated activities are consistent with relevant international safety standards, and the discharge will have a negligible radiological impact on people and the environment. In addition, the IAEA Comprehensive Report states that during and after the discharges occur, the IAEA implements additional reviews and monitoring activities so that it will provide additional transparency and reassurance to the international community by continuously providing for the application of the relevant international safety standards.

The Government of Japan will provide necessary information to the international community, including the RMI and the Pacific Island countries, and also publish monitoring information in a transparent and prompt manner while undergoing the review by the IAEA under the authority of the IAEA statute after the discharge has commenced.

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