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Restoration of trust and activities for public consensus toward installation of newly added units

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Japan Atomic Power Company, as a pioneer of nuclear power generation in Japan, owns 4 units in total in Tokai Mura, Ibaraki Prefecture and Tsuruga City, Fukui Prefecture. The Tokai Power Plant installed at Tokai Mura has ceased its commercial operation, now in preparation for decommissioning.

It is necessary for Japan to promote nuclear power generation with such factors taken into consideration as self-reliance and stable supply of energy, reduction of CO₂ emissions for prevention of global warming, etc., despite fallen confidence in nuclear energy due to various troubles like the JCO accident.

Under such circumstances, our Company has the plan to add 2 Units of Advanced Pressurised Water Reactor (APWR) as Units No. 3 and 4 of the Tsuruga Power Generating Station, each rated to be 1,530 MWe, the world largest capacity , totalling 3,070 MWe. at this nuclear site.

This paper presents the basic Corporate principles for promotion of understanding of nuclear energy itself, and the Corporate activities for promotion of understanding by the community people on adding the Tsuruga Units 3 and 4, in pursuant to the basic principles, discussing how the public trust in nuclear energy should be restored in the toughest situation against nuclear energy, and how the added installation of the nuclear units should be promoted.

1. For Restoration of Trust in Nuclear Energy

It is imperative for restoration of trust in nuclear energy that each individual engaged in atomic power business ought to be trusted by the general public. What matters in this respect is for every employee of our Company to make a sincere and determined response to any concern or doubt concerning nuclear power by sufficient communications with the people in the local communities.

In order to raise corporate credibility, it really counts that we should further improve corporate transparency, keeping openness without any enclosure, and, for this end, we should give top priority to advancement of disclosure of information.

The survey made by our company two years ago with citizens in Fukui Prefecture indicated that the higher the degree of favour to our company is, the higher the degree of favour to nuclear power generation is. It was also shown that the higher the degree of favour for nuclear power generation is, the higher the positive intent for addition of the nuclear units is.

When the local people make conversations over nuclear issues, most of them talk more with “acquaintances or inhabitants in the local community” than “family members or friends in work places or schools”. The inhabitants living close to the nuclear site have their family members, friends or acquaintances engaged in nuclear work at higher percents of association than in other areas.

This is to suggest that the smooth communications of our employees with the local community people in daily life will possibly lead to the higher degree of favour for nuclear power. It will lead to promotion of

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understanding of nuclear energy that each employee of our company will sincerely contact with the local community people by sufficient communications.

Hence, the fundamental of PA activities is a face to face communication by each employee of our Company. It is an ideal PA that each employee will play a major role rather than public relations staff alone will do.

We think it is essential to take actions for promotion of understanding to our employees so that they may be provided with ability of playing their own role in PA activities. In other words, it is important that “PA for outside” should start with “PA for inside”, namely, the understanding of PA for employees. It is a vital role of Public Relations Operations to feed the employees with necessary information at the time of need, enhance their own consciousness, and support their communications with the general public being done with their confidence.

How should every employee of our Company make a sincere and determined response to the toughest climate around nuclear energy? How should our Company further improve corporate transparency? Let me present some examples of our activities to materialise these challenges.

2. Specific Examples of Activities

(1) Message from President

On commencement of public relations activities for addition of units No. 3 and 4, our President sent a letter to each employee and its family in May, 2000 to enhance employees' consciousness for addition of units. President addressed in his letter “We now stand on the start line for Tsuruga Units 3 and 4 just under the most difficult circumstances. Your company will make such chances as we can study altogether the necessity and safety of nuclear power generation. Please invite your friends or acquaintances to our explanatory meetings held in Fukui Prefecture. Let us collaborate to have our community people understand together with you”. This letter was a manifestation of President's determination that his thought might be shared by each family of the employees, and that he would get together with us to move to the goal. Actually this letter helped every employee get aspired to such an extent as to have a common consciousness of how important the Tsuruga Units 3 and 4 project is, as well as a sense of unity was born between the Top Management and our family.

(2) Grass Roots Explanatory Meeting

We have been holding “A Meeting on Topics of Energy and for Hearing of Opinions” all over the areas in Fukui Prefecture since August, 2000, with the objectives of hearing frank opinion of the local community people and serving them with our sincere answers to their concerns about energy including nuclear power. These meetings are designed in such a way as to make female speakers give briefing of the whole issues of energy, with nuclear tips, in simple and familiar words, to get rid of the hard image characteristic of an electric power company.

Meeting hours are set to be 7 to 9 PM in the evening in consideration of easier participation by as many people as possible. Presentation is made primarily with photos or pictures on a large screen for the first one hour. The latter one hour is allocated to the closest communications with the participants. The Meetings have been held at 44 (including 3 times of NPP observation tour) with approximately 2,500 participants .

The results of questionnaires simultaneously made show that almost all participants appreciate such Meetings, and 82% of participants are in favour of installation of additional units, 11% in opposition , and 7 % with no answers. Let me say that this result does not necessarily represent the whole population of Fukui prefecture because the majority of the participants in the JAPC's explanatory meeting were from among the people in favour of such meeting.

The Meetings are planned and operated hand-made totally by our employees, and a great number of employees have been engaged in these Meetings. Such steady project has played a great role in

enhancement of PA consciousness of our employee as well as functioned to promote nuclear understanding by the inhabitants.

(3) Door to Door Visit Dialogue Campaign

The “Door to Door Visit Dialogue Campaign” was initiated about 7 years ago to solve the criticism of “JAPC face is not visible” by means of visiting and dialoguing with each family in Tsuruga City where our Tsuruga Nuclear Power Station is located. The total number of households in Tsuruga City is 27,000. By the end of last year, every household has been once or more visited. This year alone, 14,000 families, or 50 % of total, have been already visited. One pair of employees call on each house bringing pamphlets without appointment. These visits are precious opportunities for face to face talks even if the home presence percentage does not reach 50% .

There are some people who turn their pent-up doubts or discontent against us, but our neat answers with sincerity sometimes dispel their misunderstanding. In the case of absence from home, we make it a rule to leave a memo of our visit with a pamphlet. Such grass roots campaign counts on continuity. We are confident that our attitude for sustained association with a certain family will win their trust. This activity is also effective for build up of PA consciousness among our employees. The more every employee of ours learns the pleasure of dialogue with citizens, the closer we get to the ideal PA goal.

(4) Corporate Transparency—Disclosure of Information, etc.

The transparency of a corporate itself is as well important as the sincere attitude of an individual employee. It can lead to restoration of trust in the entire nuclear energy that the nuclear industries, which have been often called a closed society, get more transparent. Further disclosure of information is most important to this end.

In July 1999, an accident of primary coolant’s leak occurred at the Tsuruga Unit No. 2. With this accident, our employee’s consciousness of disclosure of information to the general society has been drastically improved. Right after the accident happened, a number of press people rushed to the Power Plant, and our Company started to respond to the mass media, setting a press center at our visitor center. On basis of the top management policy of “ Open all information to public “ under the password of ”Never make an incident a social affair”, speedy release of information was made to the mass media at the judgement of the site for exact convey of rapidly changing situation. The VTR information was handed to the mass media without editing. It contained a scene of operators wiping out the water leaks on the floor with rags. The reaction of the general public to this scene was so serious, “ Rags at Nuclear Accident!” or “ Radiation Exposure of Operators Feared! “ Though some data were a few times changed, the accident did not turn into Affair, and soon converged.

3. Conclusion

Our activities for public consent toward the added installation of Tsuruga Units No. 3 and 4 are just at the beginning stages. Officially the procedure is under doing environmental survey for licence of construction. And we have still a long way to go to the ideal public relations. At each step there can be various challenges which we must overcome. Under such circumstances, our achievement of the goal will mostly depend on each employee’s determination of communications, with sincere listening to the voices of our community people at all times. If we want to have our neighbours turn their mind to us, it is so important to change the employee’s consciousness. With its importance in mind, we would like to aim at construction of such a nuclear power station as we can be proud of all over the world.