



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

## **Remembering Fukushima – time for the building of an alternative energy policy?**

Yesterday, the 11<sup>th</sup> March, was the first anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) will be remembering all those who died or were injured due to the devastating effect of the earthquake and tsunami at its forthcoming meeting, and remains concerned over those who may die in the long-term due to exposure to the radiation from the stricken nuclear reactors (1). In an interview with the Financial Times, the head of the International Atomic Energy Authority notes that the nuclear industry got a “little complacent” in the period up to the Fukushima disaster – such “complacency” has led to the evacuation of over 100,000 people and left a significant part of north eastern Japan uninhabitable for years to come (2).

One year on, the NFLA notes the concerns of the public to nuclear power around the world. 45,000 people demonstrated in Japan yesterday, and the country may not have any of its 54 nuclear reactors operating (due to enforced closures or stress tests) by the beginning of the May, though the lights still remain on. 60,000 people demonstrated in France and 50,000 people demonstrated in Germany (3).

In the UK, a significant demonstration took place around the Hinkley Point reactor, to remind the public about the proposed development of a new reactor on the site. A similar demonstration was held outside the Heysham and Wylfa sites, whilst an event was held in Cumbria to raise deep concerns about the proposed development of a huge underground radioactive waste repository in the county.

The NFLA supports the Greenpeace International joint letter signed by over 50 organisations and prominent figures, and sent to world leaders to carefully consider the issues that the Fukushima disaster raises. The letter also urges world leaders to develop an alternative energy policy of a wide renewable energy mix and increased energy efficiency as the common-sense response to national and international energy needs (4).

The NFLA is greatly concerned to read the DEFRA study that all of the proposed new UK nuclear reactor sites could well be susceptible to significant flooding risk in the future. It is also alarmed to read that the UK Government is telling the European Commission that it “cannot support a 30% renewables target for 2030” as it wishes to see strong competition in the European market with new nuclear power and carbon capture and storage facilities (5).

In the NFLA’s view, a wide renewable energy mix, coupled with energy efficiency and local community-led microgeneration could bring us what the UK public constantly ask for in opinion surveys (6) – sustainable, clean, waste-free low carbon energy which could never bring us the possibility of a Fukushima-type disaster affecting UK communities (7).

NFLA Chair Councillor Brian Goodall said:

“The earthquake, tsunami and the Fukushima reactor meltdowns was one of the most shocking and destructive disasters of the past 12 months. I have passed on the NFLA’s deepest sympathies to our friends in Japan through the Japanese National Council of Nuclear Free Local Authorities. For me, Fukushima is as much a game-changer in the energy debate as Chernobyl was in the 1980s. I am staggered the UK Government is seeking to speed up new nuclear build here when all the issues that Fukushima raises are still not known, and many important facts are only just starting to come to light. I urge it to reconsider energy policy in light of Fukushima and I promise that the NFLA will continue to work with others to lobby for the enlightened, jobs, economic benefits and local community control

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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that would come from an alternative energy policy concentrated on renewables, microgeneration and energy efficiency.”

Ends

**Further information** - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.

## **Notes to editors:**

- (1) The NFLA Steering Committee is meeting on March 30th 2012 in Manchester Town Hall.
- (2) Interview with Yukiya Amano, Head of the International Atomic Energy Authority, Financial Times, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2012.  
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/63cd3612-6b88-11e1-8337-00144feab49a.html>
- (3) AFP, Nuclear protests around the world on Fukushima anniversary, March 12th, 2012.  
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j2A3r4xeVi3tGK1bRQPRPiwcqliCA?docId=CNG.31f8de9a58d069f4c137be66715677b6.641>
- (4) See Greenpeace International letter to world leaders, March 8<sup>th</sup> 2012.  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/fukushima-open-letter>
- (5) UK wants 2030 renewable energy target scrapped, The Guardian, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2012.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/11/uk-renewable-energy-targets-nuclear-power>
- (6) Guardian / ICM public opinion survey on energy, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, can be found at:  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/01/local-opposition-onshore-winds-tripled>
- (7) The NFLA have developed a series of energy briefings for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales which can be found on its website <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>

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THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES