



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 11th March 2013

NFLA remembers the second anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster and its legacy on nuclear policy in the UK & Ireland

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) commemorates the 11th March 2013 as the second anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. It welcomes the large number of people who attended a 'Remembering Fukushima' event and rally in London over the weekend (1) which coincided with a considerable number of events held around the world. It particularly notes the tens of thousands who commemorated official events in Japan (2) and over 100,000 people who commemorated the disaster and raised major public concerns over the building of new nuclear reactors in Taiwan (3).

The NFLA will hold a minutes silence to remember all of those affected by the disaster at its next Steering Committee meeting in Manchester on the 22nd March.

The NFLA particularly wishes to support the many Japanese people who have had their lives turned upside down by the Fukushima reactor leak. The thousands of people who are still in temporary accommodation, the land that has been devastated and uninhabitable for many years to come, and the long-term health effects that is likely to come from exposure to radioactive particles arising from the disaster. Recent reports from journalists who have been allowed to enter the evacuated zone around Fukushima all confirm that there remain huge issues in the cleaning-up and reconstruction of the stricken nuclear facility and wider area (4).

In the UK & Ireland, the legacy of the Fukushima disaster is still having profound effects on nuclear policy. It should be remembered that RWE Npower, E-on, Scottish and Southern Electric and Centrica have all pulled out of building new nuclear power stations in England and Wales, and media reports suggest that Iberdrola and GDF Suez are considering pulling out of developing a new nuclear reactor at Sellafield Moorside. Much of this has to do with the increased costs of building such reactors arising from the official reports of the Fukushima disaster, as well as the bad publicity and image of nuclear power following the fourth major incident in the history of nuclear power – Windscale in 1957, Three Mile Island in 1979 and Chernobyl in 1986 being the others.

The NFLA remain concerned over the lack of openness and transparency over the current negotiations between the UK Government and EDF around a 'strike price' for new nuclear power, which could give a huge public subsidy of many billions of pounds to the nuclear industry. Weekend media reports suggesting a deal has been agreed should galvanise Parliamentarians of all political parties to publicly question the details of such a deal, whilst querying whether it is legitimate 'state aid' under European Commission rules (5).

On the second anniversary of the Fukushima disaster the NFLA asserts that there is a better way forward – an energy policy which combines a wide range of renewable energy sources linked with a concerted energy efficiency and microgeneration policy can provide both the UK & Ireland with its future energy needs (6); whilst there should be a greater emphasis on the reduction of nuclear weapons in the UK and a challenge to all the political parties to sensibly debate the issues around potentially spending even more tens of billions of pounds on a Trident replacement programme (7).

NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"My thoughts are with the people of the Fukushima region that have been so badly affected by the nuclear reactor leak of the 11th March 2011. I urge the Japanese Government and civil society groups to increase their efforts in supporting and helping these communities and compensating them fully for

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

the problems they have had to endure over the past 2 years. I also urge the UK Government to take heed of the policies of its main economic competitors to move away from nuclear power. Billions of pounds of public money should not be spent on building new reactors but rather on a clean, sustainable, safe and low carbon renewable energy future. That should be the abiding legacy from the Fukushima disaster. ”

Ends

Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary - 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930196.

Notes to editors:

- (1) Morning Star 10th March 2013
<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/news/content/view/full/130394>
- (2) Reuters 11th March 2013
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/10/us-japan-protest-idUSBRE92903Y20130310>
- (3) Financial Times 9th March 2013
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a85b6050-88a7-11e2-bcbd-00144feabdc0.html>
- (4) See for example:
Daily Mail 9th March 2013
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2290786/The-radioactive-Japanese-ghost-towns-uninhabitable-years-tsunami-destroyed-Fukushima-nuclear-plant.html>
Guardian 6th March 2013
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/mar/06/fukushima-nuclear-decommissioning-plant-safety>
- (5) Independent 10th March 2013
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/edf-subsidy-to-put-uk-on-nuclear-path-8527606.html>
- (6) NFLA Policy Briefing on Future Energy Scenarios 2020 - 2030, 6th February 2013
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A220_\(NB106\)_Energy_scenarios_2020-2030.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A220_(NB106)_Energy_scenarios_2020-2030.pdf)
- (7) See, for example, NFLA Policy Briefing on Barrow and the Trident Alternatives Review, 31st October 2012
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/NFLA_NB_102_NET_Trident_survey.pdf

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES