

## Human Rights Now

### Oral statement on agenda Item 3

**Interactive Dialogue on Report of the SR on the management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes and Report of SR on human right to safe drinking water and sanitation**

**UN Human Rights Council 27<sup>th</sup> Session,  
Geneva, 8-26 2014 Speaker: Ms. Miho Kozawa**



### **Situation of disposal of hazardous substance and water contamination after nuclear disaster**

Thank you Mr. President,

Three and a half years have passed since the nuclear accident in Fukushima. The Japanese government's response to the treatment of radioactive waste and contaminated water generated as a result of the accident is slow and inconclusive. The radioactive contamination poses serious health risks to the population, in particular to pregnant women, infants and children. We are gravely concerned with the government's recent decision on the construction of an interim nuclear waste storage facility in Fukushima and irreparable situation of contaminated water cleanup by Tokyo Electric Power Company.

It was recently announced that Fukushima prefecture would accept the central government's plan to construct an interim storage facility in two towns near the crippled nuclear power plant for radioactive debris from cleanup work.<sup>1</sup> At the moment, radioactive soil and debris from decontamination work have been temporarily dumped in over 50,000 different sites including school yards and residential areas. This poses grave health risks to the population. At the interim storage facility, radioactive waste will be stored up to 30 years<sup>2</sup> while the site of the final waste disposal facility has not been decided yet.<sup>3</sup> In our view, highly hazardous radioactive waste must be stored in the premise adjacent to the stricken nuclear plant for an extended period of time to avoid further expansion of radioactive contamination.

There is also a grave concern of contamination of groundwater and the ocean due to radioactive water continuously dumped into the environment at the crippled nuclear plant.<sup>4</sup> The magnitude of the contamination and its impact on environment and human life is immeasurable. The scale of contamination must urgently be assessed by experts and the international society.

Mr. President, nuclear hazards are global concern. A nuclear accident would severely affect the enjoyment of the most fundamental human rights of a number of people such as rights to life, rights to health, and the right to safe drinking water. We expect that this council will continue to closely monitor the situation and act accordingly.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/0311disaster/fukushima/AJ201408310016>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/08/30/national/fukushima-governor-all-but-accepts-radioactive-storage-plan/#.VASC0GflqM9>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/09/01/national/chiba-cities-prepare-to-take-back-dispose-of-their-radioactive-waste/#.VAR2-mflqM8>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/0311disaster/fukushima/AJ201408070060>