

Supplementary Explanation

- On January 6, 2006, the Japanese utilities announced to the public their utilization plans for the plutonium to be recovered through the operation of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant (RRP), for the first time in accordance with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) paper entitled “Concerning the Basic Position on Japan’s Use of Plutonium” decided in August 2003.
- The Japanese utilities intend to convert plutonium recovered at RRP into MOX fuel at the Rokkasho MOX fabrication plant that will be built adjacent to RRP and is expected to start operation in FY2012. The utilities will then load the MOX fuel into existing light water reactors (Pluthermal Program). The utilization plan will become more specific and detailed as the Pluthermal Program progresses.
- The Japanese utilities have already announced plans to implement Pluthermal Program at 16-18 LWRs by FY2010. In the early stage of the program, only plutonium recovered and fabricated into MOX overseas will be used. Plans for the utilization of the plutonium recovered overseas will be announced when it is fabricated into MOX fuel in Europe. Once the Japanese MOX fabrication plant has been commissioned, domestic plutonium recovered from RRP will also be utilized.
- The plutonium utilization plans of the Japanese electric utilities were reviewed and concluded as appropriate by the AEC on January 24, 2006. On April 11, the AEC also confirmed that this conclusion continued to be effective following a small revision announced on April 3 of numerical values in the table of plutonium utilization plan, which was made to reflect the actual start of active testing.

[Background note]

- According to the AEC’s “Basic Position”, every year each utility is to announce, for public transparency, a plutonium utilization plan before the plutonium concerned is actually separated and recovered at RRP. The utilities have announced their plans at this point on January and FEPC have announced the revised plan on April since spent fuel started to be reprocessed when active tests at RRP began this March.
- The AEC paper entitled “Concerning the Basic Position on Japan’s Use of Plutonium” stipulates that the utilization plan should make it clear who owns the plutonium, how much is in their possession and the purpose of its utilization (i.e. place of use, amount to be used, timing of the start of utilization and the period required for utilization).
- Japan’s nuclear energy programs are in complete compliance with IAEA full scope safeguards and the Additional Protocol. Japan has vigorously promoted transparency in its domestic reprocessing and plutonium usage program through publicity and the responsible management of its plutonium inventory.