

June 19, 2017
Toshio Kodama
President
Japan Atomic Energy Agency

Contamination of Plutonium Fuel Research Facility (PFRF)

From my heart, I apologize for having caused tremendous worry and inconvenience among the Japanese people, especially people in local communities due to the accident having occurred at the Oarai Research Center's PFRF on June 6. This is a serious matter of concern for JAEA, an organization involved in nuclear energy, and I will again extend my apology especially to those who living in the nearby local communities and relevant municipalities for having caused significant anxiety.

We have taken action since immediately after the occurrence of the accident placing the highest priority on prevention of the environmental impact and secondary disaster and response to the five workers who are supposed to have suffered internal exposure. Accordingly, it is confirmed that there is no environmental impact and the five workers are treated in the National Institute of Radiological Sciences (NIRS) with the cooperation of the National Institutes for Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology (QST).

Today, June 19, we compiled the situation, etc. of the accident that are revealed so far as a report required by laws and regulations, and submitted it to the Nuclear Regulation Authority. We will make our best to implement the investigation into the causes and prevention of the similar accident. We admit that the exposure of the workers was caused by low sensitivity to risk and insufficient function for risk prediction of the entire JAEA. We have launched full-scale efforts of the JAEA to improve securing safety and enhance safety through measures to the inadequacy in the maintenance and management at Monju, restructure of the safety management system, development of the safety culture, etc. The accident of PFRF sheets home to us that the efforts we made so far are not enough and that we must still strengthen our efforts for safety. Also, measures should be taken for underlying problems in the organization and attitudes of staff revealed through investigation into the causes of this accident.

We have received a number of requests from nearby municipalities and their councils for improvement of safety management and thorough investigation into the causes of the accident. We will respond to these requests earnestly and strive to recover trust in JAEA, while sincerely respond to the exposed workers and their families.