



Nuclear Disaster and Global Ethics
Speech Made on March 16, 2015 at the
UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai

Preface

It goes without saying that genuine denuclearization, both military and civilian, makes the greatest contribution to disaster risk reduction.

The increased menace of nuclear terrorism has awakened the world to the urgent task of abolishing all nuclear reactors in the world. It is no longer an ideal, but an imperative necessity to realize the vision of President Obama for a “World without Nuclear Weapons” just as soon as possible.

Global ethics and human rights

Nowadays the drawbacks of nuclear power are evident, and many even consider this method to generate power a high risk. Nuclear technology was born in a period of paternal civilisation and in the belief, that this technology would solve all problems. Today a maternal civilisation, which is based on solidarity and tolerance, should replace the paternal system of risk taking and sole reliance on technology.

In the past years I had numerous discussions on the option of introducing a “UN Ethics Summit” as forum for a high level dialogue on ethical issues, convinced that the true cause of the crisis facing the world is the lack of ethics.

.Considering the ongoing progressive nuclearisation of the earth, future generations will be

innocent victims of radioactive contamination. Measures are definitely required to open the way for eventual and potential radiation victims to file a legal suite before an international institution. It is a serious human rights issue.

In this connection, it should be noted that the permissible annual level of radiation exposure has been dangerously heightened in Japan after the March 11th accident. 1 millisievert (mSv) has been elevated to 20 mSv for residents in affected areas. The government increased the annual limit for nuclear workers' radiation exposure from 100 mSv to 250 mSv in "emergency situations". The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is reported to have suggested raising the limit to 500 mSv!

The situation of the Fukushima nuclear plant ~not under control

Units 1, 2 and 3 remain inaccessible because of lethal levels of radiation in the buildings. Their containment vessels need a constant flow of nitrogen to maintain low levels of oxygen in order to prevent hydrogen explosions.

The Japanese Nuclear Regulation Agency is reported to envisage the release of treated contaminated water (241,000 tons out of 590,000 tons) into the sea. The dangers of tritium remind us of its legal releases from the reprocessing plants (Rokkasho-mura and Tokai-mura) that, if operated at nominal capacity, surpass by far the current release from Fukushima.

In the joint petition made in 2003 against the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) issued by Dr. Masatoshi Koshihara, Nobel Prize Laureate, and Prof. Akira Hasegawa, Maxwell Prize Laureate, we notice that ITER containing two kilograms of tritium could kill up to two million people.

In spite of all this, the Japanese government is now vigorously promoting the restart of nuclear reactors shut down after the Fukushima disaster.

The world needs to be reminded of the warning of the late German President Richard von Weizsaecker: "Those who close their eyes to the past will remain blind regarding the future."

Nuclear reactors threaten global security

After Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Fukushima, it has become Japan's historic role to contribute to the true denuclearization of the earth, both civilian and military.

In Belgium, a steam turbine of the Doel-4 reactor was severely damaged by an act of sabotage last August. The same month, a number of rockets were fired at facilities in Israel (Reuters). These facts alone are sufficient to support the assertion that the mere existence of more than 430 nuclear reactors in the world constitutes the most serious global safety and security problem. Nuclear reactors are no less dangerous than nuclear weapons.

After discovering thousands of additional fault indications in two Belgian reactor pressure vessels, the head of the Belgian safety authorities stated in February 2015: "This is possibly a worldwide problem for the whole nuclear sector. The solution lies in carrying out detailed inspections in all 430 nuclear reactors worldwide".

*Fukushima has shown that the existence
of a nuclear reactor itself constitutes a security problem*



Consequently, it is required to strengthen the international control over the safety of more than 430 reactors in the world.

Moreover, we should establish international control over the nuclear policies of the concerned countries and the manner in which these policies are executed.

The fate of the world will be decided by the utility or electric power companies, if no drastic change takes place, learning the lessons of Fukushima.

Japan knows more than any other country the real and present dangers of nuclear reactors. It is a serious security problem that much of the world continues to promote nuclear power generation even after Fukushima, totally ignoring its lessons.

Even after the March 11th disaster, Japan has not revised the basic nuclear law intended to promote nuclear power generation as a national policy! Japan's governability is now questioned.

It is increasingly pointed out that Fukushima is being forgotten!

Chernobyl is facing a new crisis. The period of durability of the decaying sarcophagus ends in 2016. The building of the shelter being constructed through international cooperation will not be accomplished in time for shortage of fund (615million EUR). Ukraine is faced with serious financial difficulties, in addition to its internal strife with pro-Russian citizens.

A new international system needed

We need a new international system that obliges all the governments struck by a nuclear disaster to consecrate maximum efforts to solve the crisis and to mobilize human wisdom on the widest possible scope to concretize international cooperation.

Fukushima is revealing the limitations of a government facing a national crisis, its longevity being but several years. Nuclear accidents have shown the necessity of coping with their consequences quasi- permanently.

The current Japanese system of coping with the consequences of Fukushima is faulty and needs a drastic change. Japan is in need of international solidarity and powerful international cooperation.

The reform of the IAEA

The IOC continues to ignore the legitimate requests by the public to have an independent assessment team of experts to reassure the safety of Tokyo. The not forthcoming reply from the IOC is based on the official assertions of the Japanese Government whose credibility is more and more questioned. They are in conformity with the position of the IAEA.

It represents the interests of the utility, minimizing the dangers of radioactive contamination and the consequences of nuclear accidents.

The IAEA needs urgent reforms and much better funding in order to accomplish its mission of control of all existing nuclear installations world- wide.

The reform of the IAEA has now been requested both by a Former Japanese Prime Minister and a Former Swiss President. They assert that international control over the safety of existing nuclear plants must be strengthened. Their plea deserves wide international support.

They support the decision of the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations to make March 11th an International Day for Global Ethics.

Maximum efforts needed to cope with Fukushima crisis

After the Chernobyl accident, a sarcophagus was constructed within 7 months. Actually, a huge shelter is being built by dint of international cooperation.

Actually, the average number of daily workers at the site is more than 7000 at present. The difficulty of procuring workers at the site is beyond imagination. Homeless people have been hired off the streets to do dangerous decontamination work. The lack of the sense of crisis over Fukushima is in stark contrast to the gravity of the crisis.

Maximum efforts must be made by Japan to stop the worsening of the actual situation. The honorable retreat from Tokyo Olympic Games to enable this seems imperative. Japanese civil society will not allow the irresponsibility of organizing the Tokyo Olympic Games without prior reassurance of the safety of Tokyo by the International Olympic Committee.

Fukushima is a crisis for Japan as a nation. It is a crisis of the global environment for the international community. It is surprisingly being treated as a crisis for the management of electric companies. The total assumption of responsibilities by the State is indispensable.

It is noteworthy that a proposal to establish an International Task Force Fukushima (ITFF) is gaining substantial support abroad.

UN Ethics Summit

Attributing far higher value to ethical thinking and doing so on a global level would best guarantee human rights. It will give ready evidence to the lack of ethics inherent in the technology of nuclear energy.

I am convinced that the adequately reformed IAEA, in association with the national Japanese organizations, can and should play a greater role in coping with the disaster of Fukushima”.

I join many others in calling for a UN Ethics Summit that paves the way for global ethics, maternal civilization and true denuclearization.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote me in his letter dated March 2, 2012 that he would gladly support such a summit if member-states submit it to the General Assembly.

Thank you for your kind attention.

