

Japan: Greenpeace condemns move to raise radiation exposure levels for Japanese children

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Tokyo, Japan, 22 April, 2011 – Greenpeace today called on the Japanese government to drop plans to raise the official limits of radiation exposure for children in Fukushima Prefecture, 20 milliSievert per year (1) – the same level as nuclear power plant workers, and twenty times the internationally recognised annual allowable dose for adults.

The international environmental organisation has also asked the governments of nations including Germany, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Canada, Greece, India, France and Italy (2), to raise the issue with Japan.

“It is utterly outrageous to raise the exposure levels for children to twenty times the maximum limit for adults. The Japanese government cannot simply increase safety limits for the sake political convenience or to give the impression of normality”, said Junichi Sato, Greenpeace Japan Executive Director. “One of the lessons learned from Chernobyl was that children are far more vulnerable to the effects of radiation, and the Fukushima nuclear crisis will expose them to much higher risks of developing radiation related diseases due to contamination (3)”.

“While the declaration of a 20km no-entry zone around Fukushima Daiichi is a legitimate, if late response to the crisis, the Japanese authorities are still underplaying the risks to human health throughout the greater Fukushima area”.

“Greenpeace radiation monitoring teams found highly contaminated hot spots in densely-populated areas of Fukushima City and Koriyama City (4). These areas need to be cleaned up immediately or evacuated, and the people made acutely aware of the risks they face – not made to think everything is ok with new safety limits”, said Sato.

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Photography and video from the radiation monitoring are available: Greenpeace Picture Desk (Amsterdam): jnovis@greenpeace.org, +31(0) 629001152 Greenpeace International Video Desk (Amsterdam): lucy.campbell.jackson@greenpeace.org, +31 6 46 16 2015

For more on Greenpeace’s work in Fukushima, visit: <http://t.co/csFsCvF> Receive Greenpeace International press releases via Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/greenpeacepress> Raw data sheets from field monitoring: <http://www.greenpeace.org/fukushima-data>

NOTES

(1) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announcement: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/23/04/1305174.htm

(2) Greenpeace letter calling for plans to raise radiation limits to be dropped: <http://bit.ly/dUtmY0>

(3) Greenpeace report: The Chernobyl Catastrophe. Consequences on Human Health: <http://bit.ly/6I2qwQ> pp. 47-49; 57-58

(4) Greenpeace radiation monitoring teams recorded radiation levels of 4 microSieverts per hour in a playground in Fukushima City, and 2.8 microSieverts per hour at a shrine in Koriyama. These levels are high enough to expose people to the maximum yearly dose of radiation allowable in a matter of weeks.

GPS data for Fukushima playground with 4uSv/h: N37°45.087 E140°28.005 and Koriyama Shrine with 2.8uSv/h: N37 23.798 E140 22.933.

Soil analysis by Kyoto University's Research Reactor Institute Iitate report (<http://www.rri.kyoto-u.ac.jp/NSRG/seminar/No110/iitate-report11-4-4.pdf>) indicates that more than 80 percent of the radiation in these hotspots is from caesium isotopes, which will persist in the local environment for several years.

A detailed and annotated Google map of locations and radiation readings compiled by the Greenpeace team can be found here <http://bit.ly/gaMGnf>

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