

## **Factsheet: First Inaugural Meeting of the United States-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

At their April 30, 2012 meeting, President Obama and Prime Minister Noda announced the establishment of a U.S.-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation, in order to further strengthen bilateral cooperation, building on the close U.S.-Japan collaborative relationship following Japan's March 2011 nuclear accident. This Bilateral Commission serves as a senior-level, standing forum for bilateral consultation and cooperation on issues affecting the global development of civilian nuclear energy, including bilateral priorities and challenges facing both countries as well as policy issues addressed in multilateral policy venues, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Nuclear Security Summits, and other fora. By providing this strategic and practical coordination, the Bilateral Commission will facilitate discussions on future nuclear energy cooperation; and advance shared interests in nuclear safety and security, nonproliferation, counterterrorism, decommissioning and decontamination, emergency preparedness and response, and research and development.

The first inaugural meeting of the Bilateral Commission was held on July 24, 2012, in Tokyo, Japan. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel B. Poneman and Japan's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Koro Bessho led discussions. U.S. and Japanese agencies with responsibilities in nuclear safety and security and energy development participated in this meeting to discuss promoting independence and transparency of regulatory systems; decommissioning of the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) and decontamination; strengthening the international institutional framework for the safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants; increasing joint civil nuclear energy research and development; preparedness against future nuclear emergencies and terrorist threats; and sharing nuclear nonproliferation, safety and security goals in global nuclear energy cooperation.

During the Commission meeting, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with Japan after the March 2011 accident at TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station, especially in the efforts by the latter to establish an independent nuclear regulatory agency. Japan reiterated its commitment to continue to share the knowledge and lessons learned from the nuclear accident with the United States and the international community. Japan explained to the United States that a thorough review process of its national energy and nuclear policy was ongoing. The United States offered to continue to provide relevant support for Japan's efforts to strengthen its national nuclear safety and security, and its regulatory framework. Both countries remain committed to ensuring the broadest possible global application of stringent nuclear nonproliferation, safety and security norms and practices.

The Bilateral Commission also decided to establish under its auspices five Working Groups in the areas of Civil Nuclear Energy Research and Development, Decommissioning of TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station and Environmental Management, Emergency Management, Nuclear Security, and Safety and Regulatory Issues. Some of these Working Groups encompass work that already had been established between the United States and Japan. As a next step, these Working Groups will convene to discuss priorities and activities in their respective areas, in advance of the next Bilateral Commission meeting to be held in 2013 in the United States.