

## APPEAL

**Appeal from Citizens and Consumer Organizations in Central Japan to the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting**

Kobe, Japan

May 24-26, 2008

### **To G8 Environment Ministers: How can Japan take leadership on environmental issues when it legalizes massive radioactive pollution of the Pacific Ocean and Asian atmosphere?**

**Rokkasho, a massive commercial reprocessing plant for radioactive spent fuel, is about to start commercial operation this summer in Aomori Prefecture, northern Japan.**

**The radioactive releases from Rokkasho into the Pacific Ocean would be illegal under the London Convention<sup>1</sup> if disposal took place from a ship at sea. But a loophole in international law allows what would be illegal at sea, in the case of a land-based pipe extending into the ocean.**

**Aerial releases of radioactive gases (krypton) from Rokkasho will also circulate around the world.**

The Japanese government is allowing Rokkasho to release  $1.8 \times 10^{16}$  becquerels of radioactive waste — equivalent to the lethal dose for 47,000 human beings — annually into the Pacific Ocean from a pipe extending 3 kilometers from land into the sea. The Japanese government's argument to legally sanction this environmental pollution is that the radioactive material will "dilute" sufficiently in the Pacific Ocean.

In the case of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant, the Japanese government has eliminated the regulatory requirement placed on nuclear facilities in Japan that limits the concentration of radioactive materials that can be legally released into the marine environment.

**The Japanese government may not be informing G8 environment ministers that there is a great deal of opposition in Japan to legalization of this wanton radioactive pollution.**

Cities, towns, and villages in northern Japan have petitioned the national government to pass a law making it illegal for radioactive materials to be released from Rokkasho into the marine environment. A petition organized by consumer organizations, food cooperatives and fishery unions demanding a ban on radioactive releases from Rokkasho, signed by more than 810,000 people, was submitted to the Japanese government in February. Questionnaires to large supermarket chains by consumer and citizen organizations have already shown that some large supermarket chains do not want to purchase agricultural and marine products from northern Japan if and when they become contaminated with radioactive materials from Rokkasho.

Government demands to halt radioactive emissions into the marine environment are already well-established internationally. Twelve nations in Europe have condemned these emissions from reprocessing plants in the UK and France and are demanding that emissions be eliminated by 2020 under the OSPAR Convention.<sup>2</sup>

On May 25th, in Osaka, citizens and consumer organizations from central Japan (Hyogo, Osaka, Kyoto, Shiga, Nara, and Wakayama prefectures) are holding a public meeting to demand that Rokkasho be prevented from operating. Japanese citizens want to protect agricultural and marine products of northern Japan from radioactive contamination.

## **APPEAL**

**We appeal to you, the G8 Environment Ministers, to condemn the radioactive pollution of the Pacific Ocean and the world's atmosphere from the Rokkasho reprocessing plant.**

**We appeal to you to adopt a convention confirming the illegality of what is already illegal under the London Convention. Dumping is dumping, and the effects on the marine environment are the same, whether the source is an ocean-going vessel or a pipe protruding into the sea from land.**

May 21, 2008

Organizing Committee for May 25th Central Japan Meeting,  
Tobetainen Aomori, Irannen Rokkasho ("Yes" to Eating Aomori Agricultural and Marine Products, "No" to Rokkasho), Osaka, Japan

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- 1 London Convention: "Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972." International Maritime Organization (IMO), UN. The 1993 amendments adoption in 12 November 1993 which entered into force on 20 February 1994 bans the dumping into sea of low-level radioactive wastes.
- 2 OSPAR: The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. The convention is the current instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

On 29 June 2000, a legally-binding decision adopted by OSPAR says "that the current authorisations for discharges or releases of radioactive substances from nuclear reprocessing facilities shall be reviewed as a matter of priority... with a view to... implementing the non-reprocessing option (for example, dry storage) for spent nuclear fuel management at appropriate facilities."