

## **FUKUSHIMA ALREADY LEVEL 7 CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT**

### **Greenpeace analysis concludes**

March 24<sup>th</sup> Berlin...The accident that began at the Fukushima nuclear power plant on March 11<sup>th</sup> has already released radioactivity that requires it to be classified as level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale INES, Greenpeace today stated. A new analysis has been prepared for Greenpeace Germany by Dr Helmut Hirsch. His assessment is based on data published by the French government's radiation protection agency (IRSN) and the Austrian governments Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG). The total amount of radionuclides iodine-131 and caesium-137 released since the start of the accident until March 23<sup>rd</sup>, as reported by the two institutes require the Fukushima accident to be reclassified to the same level as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster twenty five years ago in April 1986. In fact so high are the releases that they are amount to three INES 7 accidents.

In contrast to the Chernobyl accident which involved one nuclear reactor, Fukushima has suffered major failures at four. Three reactors have suffered loss of coolant to a scale that has led to nuclear fuel melting. In addition, nuclear reactor spent fuel stored at the site has lost coolant, caught fire and in one case suffered a hydrogen gas explosion which destroyed unit 4 at Fukushima.

Dr Hirsch concludes, "Taking all the releases from the Fukushima-daiichi reactors together this even obviously an INES 7 with the possibility that it is three INES 7's, taking each reactor separately which results in a release of 100,000 Tbq each."

"From the very beginning this accident looked potentially devastating in terms of radiation release. It is far from over, and today we have further evidence of a very real risk of reactor core meltdown with potentially catastrophic effects. The nuclear industry and the IAEA have claimed since Chernobyl that such an event would not take place in a western reactor. Their dangerous complacency over decades has now led us to an utter catastrophe for the people of Japan, and the accident is not over," said Heinz Smital nuclear expert of Greenpeace Germany.

Hirsch and Greenpeace are also scathing of the INES scale as the basis on which nuclear accidents are assessed by national governments and the IAEA. The INES scale was intended to be applied in the case of one accident at one site. At Fukushima, the accidents have been at multiple nuclear reactors, suffering two critical failures – reactor cooling and spent fuel storage. The INES scale was never designed for such an eventuality because the nuclear industry and the IAEA considered such things not possible. In an example of their distorted logic INES classifies each event at the Fukushima power plant separately. Yet the releases of high levels of radioactivity do not discriminate in terms of who they affect once they are released.

"The implications of INES are that when considering the dose a person receives each source should be looked at separately – but it is the overall dose they receive that will determine what type of health consequences they will suffer. Chernobyl has proven a nightmare for its many hundreds of thousands of victims. Twenty-five years later we are witness to an on-going accident of at least the same proportions, with the potential to be even more damaging. Nuclear power should have had no future after Chernobyl, this really has to be the end of this catastrophic industry," said Shaun Burnie nuclear consultant to Greenpeace Germany.

Greenpeace is particularly concerned with the effects radioactive fallout will have on the densely populated landmass of Japan. A large proportion of the Chernobyl radioactivity fell on Belarus, with a population density of 40 persons per square kilometre. Japan by contrast has an average of 800 persons sq/km. Metropolitan Tokyo has density of over 1200 persons sq/km. The implications for collective dose of radiation to the population and human health are enormous.

A copy of the Greenpeace analysis will be sent to the IAEA in Vienna.

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Notes:

The releases of Fukushima are according to IRSN – <http://www.irsn.fr/FR/Documents/home.htm>  
The releases from Fukushima are according to Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG)  
- [http://www.zamg.ac.at/aktuell/index.php?seite=1&artikel=ZAMG\\_2011-03-21GMT10:22](http://www.zamg.ac.at/aktuell/index.php?seite=1&artikel=ZAMG_2011-03-21GMT10:22)