

## **Statement of Protest against Discharge of "ALPS Treated Water" into the Ocean**

The Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace strongly protests the government's decision to discharge into the ocean a large amount of contaminated water from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant after it has been treated through the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS Treated Water).

The government states that the "ALPS Treated Water" from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, is not a problem even though it still contains radionuclide tritium. They explain that there is no problem because tritium exists in nature and all nuclear power plants in operation discharge some.

However, critics have pointed out that tritium enters the bodies of living organisms and has the same chemical properties as hydrogen. Therefore, tritium taken into cells stays for a long time, this can cause internal radiation exposure and can destroy DNA. Tritium discharged into the ocean continuously enters the ecological environment where it accumulates and concentrates in the food chain. Tritium should no longer be discharged into the ocean for any reason.

Some media outlets, sympathetic to the government's decision, report that some neighboring countries, while bashing the decision to discharge "ALPS Treated Water" from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, are at the same time discharging tritium from their own nuclear power plants.

However, it should be stated that "ALPS Treated Water" from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is contaminated water that has been in direct contact with debris from melted-down fuel. In fact, in August 2018, the media revealed that not only tritium but also various other radioactive substances that could not be removed by the ALPS method remained in the "ALPS Treated Water" at concentrations exceeding the legally mandated emission limits. Moreover, it was later revealed that approximately 70% of the "ALPS Treated Water" currently stored in tanks contained radionuclides that exceeded discharge standards\*. The government should humbly listen to the protests of residents, fishermen and others in Japan. Furthermore, they should consider the opinions of the people of East Asia, the Pacific Islands, and other countries.

Despite the many problems with the "ALPS Treated Water," the government

repeatedly claims that there is no problem because the residual radioactive materials are sufficiently diluted.

However, when considering environmental contamination from “ALPS Treated Water”, how much radioactive material will end up in the ocean, and for how long a period will radioactive material be continually discharged into the ocean, are much more important issues than the concentration of radioactive material in the seawater.

Moreover, the amount of contaminated water stored at the nuclear plant is still increasing. Cooling water is still needed until the fuel debris removal is completed. However, that work has been delayed considerably, and even the construction method has not been finalized. The inflow of groundwater and rainwater, the biggest sources of contaminated water, has not been stopped. The total amount of radioactive materials being discharged into the ocean has not been determined.

All kinds of environmental destruction are caused by our negligence. Our way of thinking that, “a little pollution is all right”, is the real problem. Radioactive materials are not safe because the dose per fish or per day is small! Without

smelling anything, without feeling any pain, unbeknownst to us, radioactive materials will erode our lives little by little and will eventually cause irreversible damage to the ecological environment. The discharge of “ALPS Treated Water” into the ocean is doing violence against the earth. The blue seas, the rich mountains and fields, the earth itself is our “home”. Our determination not to allow this outrage is a matter of ethics and our responsibility to the future of the earth and the future of our children.

The Catholic Church believes that God created this world; and it is very good. Everything that God created is connected and it is needed because it is all interdependent. We, the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, as a weaver of that connection and as a part of the web of life of our common home, strongly protest the government’s release of “ALPS Treated Water” into the ocean.

“Son of man, sing a song of lamentation for Tyre, who rules over the gateways of the sea, and travels through many islands, and trades with the nations.”

(Ezekiel 27.2-3), We are encouraged by this scriptural passage.

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\* The government states that water with residual radionuclides other than tritium will be discharged into the ocean after a secondary treatment and dilution to bring it to a level that is below the regulatory standard for environmental release.

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