

MEDIA RELEASE

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Green Cross Switzerland publishing the 2015 Fukushima Report:

32 million people in Japan are exposed to radiation from the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

The 2015 Fukushima Report provides information about the number of people in Japan who have been negatively impacted by the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. These are individuals who were exposed to radiation or other stress factors resulting from the accident and are consequently at potential risk from long-term and short-term consequences of these exposures. Based on these criteria, approximately 32 million people in Japan are affected by the radioactive fallout from the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. As with the Chernobyl nuclear accident that impacted 10 million people, neuropsychological long-term health consequences are expected in Japan, in addition to cancer. The stress-related effects resulting from the evacuation and the subsequent relocation are of concern. The evacuation involved a total of over 400,000 individuals. Of these, 160,000 were relocated as a result of the accident in Fukushima. The number of deaths from the nuclear disaster attributed to stress, fatigue and hardship of living as evacuees is estimated to be around 1,700.

Based on the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES) both the Chernobyl and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disasters were categorized as level 7 events. Compared to Chernobyl, the radiation released by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was largely concentrated in Japan and over the Pacific Ocean. According to estimates, 80 percent of the released radiation was deposited in the ocean and the other 20 percent was mostly dispersed within a 50 km radius to the northwest of the power plant in the Fukushima Prefecture. While the expected cancer risks to humans caused by the radiation released over the Pacific Ocean are small, trace amounts of radiation have already reached the North American continent and, in particular, parts of the northern West Coast of the United States. The risk of cancer overall will increase, especially for those individuals who were still children at the time of the accident. Their health will be at risk over their entire lifetime as a result of the radiation released by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Based on calculations by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) the total atmospheric release of radioactive material from the Fukushima nuclear disaster (iodine-131, cesium-134, cesium-137, and noble gases) was estimated to be less than 15 percent of the total radiation emitted by the Chernobyl accident. "However, the number of people affected by radiation in Japan has tripled compared to Chernobyl", according to Nathalie Gysi of Green Cross Switzerland.

In addition to the radioactive material initially released in the ocean, water leakage at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant continues to be problem four years after the accident. Reports of pipes breaking and water escaping from containment tanks in the months and years after the accident remain a source of worry for the workers and the public. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) reported that radioactive material had been released as late as May of 2013. There continues to be concern causing additional psychological stress and raising doubts about the safety of seafood, such as the radioactivity levels in tuna and other fish. The threshold for cesium in Japan is 100 Becquerel per kilogram. Flounders caught close to the Fukushima Daiichi

power plant were found to have high cesium levels, exceeding the allowable limit of 100 Becquerel.

This is the outcome of the Fukushima Report, which was prepared under the direction of Prof. Jonathan M. Samet, Director of the Institute for Global Health at the University of Southern California (USC), at the initiative of Green Cross Switzerland. For the Fukushima Report a systematic approach was taken to gather information regarding the number of people affected by the Fukushima nuclear disaster. In this context, "being affected" was interpreted the same way as in the 2012 Chernobyl study.

The 2015 Fukushima Report is available for download in English at <http://www.greencross.ch/de/news-info/studien/fukushima-report.html>

The lives of approximately 42 million people have been permanently affected by radioactive contamination caused by the accidents in the Chernobyl and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants. The continued exposure to low level radiation entering the human body on a daily basis through food intake is of particular consequence. Green Cross Switzerland is committed to conquering the long-term effects of industrial and military disasters and the pollution from the period of the Cold War through its international programmes Social and Medical Care and Legacy of the Cold War. Top priorities are the improvement of the quality of life of people impacted by chemical, radioactive and other kinds of contamination and the promotion of sustainable advancements in the spirit of cooperation instead of confrontation. The goals of the Zewo-certified environmental organisation are supported by the Green Cross parliamentary group consisting of 25 members of the Swiss Council of States and 82 members of the Swiss National Council working across party lines.

Green Cross Switzerland is committed to phasing out nuclear energy worldwide. The organisation is also concerned with the effects of military use of nuclear materials on the environment and health. Round tables and other activities are planned to expand the scope of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, specifically focusing on nuclear weapon-free zones. As a result of the worldwide effects of climate change and nuclear disasters it is urgently necessary for the global community to work together on the development and use of renewable energies, on boosting energy efficiency and on a controlled global stop of the production of nuclear power.

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