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Subject: OIE/FAO/WHO: Japan High Radiation Levels in Seawater - Global Ocean Circulation

Dear Colleagues:

A testing team dispatched by the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Association Monday reported radiation levels 1,600 times above normal 12 miles from the Fukushima plant. -- Japan says high seawater radiation levels are no cause for alarm, CSM, 22 March 2011. [1]

It was with great alarm that I read this article that include references to high radiation levels in seawater that has circulated through non-contained nuclear materials at the Fukushima plant. In conjunction with surveillance, containment and control measures in the region directly impacted by the earthquake, tsunami and radiological emergency, impact analysis must now include global ocean circulation, impact on wildlife, human and animal health.

Though experts in Japan have stated that contamination of seawater was not a problem following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I don't believe we have a historical reference point for a nuclear power plant with (1) direct environmental exposure of the core and associated hazardous materials and (2) the use of seawater for cooling of the reactors/plant, with recirculation back into the environment without containment of this nuclear contaminated hazardous material.

Global atmospheric radiological contamination combined with global ocean circulation of contaminated seawater, further complicates/intensifies the immediate need for containment via collaboration of the international community. As noted on the EPA's Radiation Health Effects web site "There is no firm basis for setting a "safe" level of exposure above background for stochastic effects." [2]

Looking forward to your feedback.

References:

1. Japan says high seawater radiation levels are no cause for alarm, CSM, 22 March 2011. Url:
http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20110322/wl_csm/371407
2. Health Effects: Radiation Protection: U.S. EPA Url:
http://www.epa.gov/radiation/understand/health_effects.html

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