

## Fukushima releases one-tenth of those from Chernobyl: France's IRSN

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Releases up to now from Japan's Fukushima I nuclear power plant are about a tenth of what was released from the Chernobyl-France's Institute of Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety, IRSN, said Thursday.

But Thierry Charles, IRSN's head expert on the Japanese crisis, said at a midday CET briefing there was a "ray of hope" for the the "very pessimistic" outlook at the same time on Wednesday, because firefighters had managed to spray water onto spent fuel. Electric Power Co. said it expected to restore regular electric power later Thursday to emergency cooling systems for the three damaged.

Tepco "has regained a certain control over the situation" at Fukushima I, Charles said. "Not everything is under control," he said reconnect equipment and that the restored power source might not be completely reliable.

"But it's the first reassuring information we've had since Saturday," he said, referring to the day after when the six-unit Fukushima earthquake and subsequent tsunami that knocked out all power sources.

Charles said that if the spent fuel pools at reactors 3 and 4 should be emptied of water, the dose rates on the site would be so high that workers could not work there. But that doesn't seem to be the case, contrary to some reports on Wednesday, he said.

At the site's reactor 3, where a containment breach had been suspected, Tepco has measured pressure in the reactor vessel, as high as had been feared, he said.

But what's important is continuous cooling by any means available of both the reactor cores and the spent fuel pools, he said.

Patrick Gourmelon, IRSN's medical expert, said that there was no need for any member of the public to take stable iodine tablets because they can create other health problems.

IRSN's calculations are based on the volatile radioelements most important for health impact, essentially iodine, cesium and tellurium.

Chernobyl released about 6 Exabecquerels or  $6 \times 10^{18}$  becquerels of those elements, according to IRSN. Fukushima released under  $7.5 \times 10^{17}$  becquerels of those elements.

--Ann MacLachlan, ann\_maclachlan@platts.com

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