Executive Director Makoto Akashi Delivers Presentation at World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization (WHO) held its 64th World Health Assembly at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland from May 16 to 24. Japanese delegates at the assembly included Dr.Kohei Otsuka, Senior Vice Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Makoto Akashi, Executive Director of the National Institute of Radiological Sciences.

The World Health Assembly is attended by delegates from 193 member nations and is the highest decision-making body in the WHO with responsibility for deciding on important health-related policies as well as approving program plans and budgets.

On May 17 (local time), Senior Vice Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare Kohei Otsuka gave a technical briefing on the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and the subsequent response. This was followed by a presentation from Executive Director Makoto Akashi who is also Director of the Research Center for Radiation Emergency Medicine.

Because of the high level of interest in the technical briefing and presentation, they were held during lunch time when no other sessions were in progress to allow more people to attend. The numerous attendees from many countries included media from Japan as well as WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan.

Mr. Akashi's presentation covered radiation exposure and its effects, the scale of the earthquake and the damage it caused, the nature and extent of release of radioactive material from Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, air dose rates in surrounding regions, the criteria for restrictions on agricultural products and seafood and the scope of surveys, and details of web sites where information about the accident is available in English. He was also responded to questions from the audience on topics such as whether cancer risk would increase.

Details of Mr. Akashi's presentation are available below.

WHO Presentation