

Japan, S. Korea to probe effects of Fukushima radiation on surrounding ocean

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Japan will launch a joint investigation with South Korea and other neighbors into how radioactively contaminated water accumulating on the premises of the tsunami-hit Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant is affecting the surrounding ocean, Japan's chief nuclear safety regulator said.

Shunichi Tanaka, chairman of the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), announced the development at a meeting of the House of Councillors' Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry on Oct. 7, which was held while the Diet is not in session.

The joint investigation is aimed at dispelling the growing concerns of the international community that the radioactive water is contaminating the sea, as the South Korean government has placed a total ban on imports of marine products from Fukushima and its seven neighboring prefectures.

Tanaka said that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Yukiya Amano told him during an IAEA general meeting in September that radioactive water should be monitored jointly with South Korea and other relevant countries.

"We're preparing to launch a joint probe through the Foreign Ministry. We're considering ways to invite South Korea and Southeast Asian countries, which are concerned about the effect of the crisis, to participate in the monitoring, with the IAEA serving as a coordinator," Tanaka told the Diet panel.

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* <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131008p2a00m0na013000c.html>