



## BEYOND NUCLEAR PRESS RELEASE

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#### **Japanese families and activists call for proper protection – and evacuation –of Fukushima children and a global end to nuclear power.**

WASHINGTON, DC, September 20, 2011 – Two organic farmers from Japan, their children and fellow Japanese anti-nuclear campaigners made a plea for the safety of Fukushima’s children at a press conference in Washington, DC today.

“Our hearts have been torn apart in the Fukushima community because of the nuclear disaster,” said Sachiko Sato, a natural farmer from Fukushima Prefecture, who evacuated four of her six children two days after the March 11 Fukushima nuclear reactor catastrophe began. “The community is split among those who evacuated and those who stayed, creating a chasm between former neighbors. This is the first health effect of this catastrophe.”

Mrs. Sato described how, not trusting official figures, she herself measured radiation levels at local schools, finding that 75% of schools should be considered radiation control areas and therefore dangerous for children. Meanwhile, the government raised the allowable radiation dose rate by 20 times to 20 microsieverts per year including for children. “Do they imagine that people can suddenly withstand doses of radiation 20 times greater than were previously allowed?” she asked. Many people cannot evacuate as they would leave behind aging, frail parents, Sato said. “Or they don’t want to lose their job or tear their children away from everything they know. Families have been ripped apart.”

She also described how the government misled communities about safety. “Some were evacuated from Fukushima to places where the radiation levels were even higher, but they were not told,” she said.

Yukiko Anzai, an organic farmer from Hokkaido 603km away from the Fukushima-Daiichi accident, saw her honey business destroyed and her family’s livelihood wiped out by the multiple reactor meltdowns. “We stopped using the word ‘safe’ for our vegetables,” she said. My husband said that if we find the chicken feed is radioactive, we will have to stop farming altogether.”

Sato’s farm also shut down although many around her have continued to farm. Both women began farming traditionally without using chemicals to mirror “the old ways.” But, with their land laced with radioactivity, their dreams - and farming livelihoods – are destroyed.

“On March 11 our lives changed completely,” Anzai said. “Yet the government continues to ignore the truth and expects us to continue farming like nothing happened.”

Sato’s two children, Mina, 13 and Yuuki, 17, described how their lives were changed after March 11, leaving their home, their friends and everything they knew after being evacuated far from danger. “If only those nuclear power plants hadn’t existed,” Mina Sato said. “Things wouldn’t have turned out this way.”

Aileen Mioko Smith, executive director of Green Action, and Kaori Izumi, director of Shut Tomari (the first reactor to re-start after the Fukushima-Daiichi meltdowns), both called for a global ban on nuclear power as the only rational lesson to be learned from Fukushima.

“Otherwise this will happen again, in Japan, at Indian Point or anywhere,” Izumi said. “This is not Japan’s problem, it’s the world’s problem. The radiation from Fukushima is everywhere. We cannot afford another Fukushima.”

Smith has submitted a petition to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for the rights of children of Fukushima to evacuate. Only families living within the 12.4 mile official evacuation zone are supported financially if they evacuate. Those living beyond that range who choose to evacuate must do so at their own expense, which many cannot afford, Smith

explained. “What the children of Fukushima need is safe food, a safe place to live, and somewhere where they can safely play outdoors,” she said.

Speaking on behalf of hosting organization, Beyond Nuclear, Kevin Kamps reminded the audience that the Fermi 2 reactor in Michigan, the same GE Mark I Boiling Water Reactor design as those at Fukushima-Daiichi, “is the biggest of that design in the world, and stores more than 500 tons of radioactive waste in its fuel pool – far more than all four Fukushima-Daiichi reactors put together. The consequences downwind of a fuel pool fire at Fermi 2 would be multiple times worse than at Fukushima,” he said.

“What I learned about nuclear power,” said Sato’s son Yuuko, “is that protecting nuclear power plants is seemingly more important than protecting our lives.”

The group will travel to New York City on September 21 for public presentations and a 5pm demonstration on September 22 at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza outside the UN.

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*Beyond Nuclear aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future. Beyond Nuclear advocates for an energy future that is sustainable, benign and democratic. Beyond Nuclear: 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 400, Takoma Park, MD 20912. [www.BeyondNuclear.org](http://www.BeyondNuclear.org). Tel: 301.270.2209. Email: [info@beyondnuclear.org](mailto:info@beyondnuclear.org).*