

11 April 2014

## Japan Renewable Energy Foundation

### A Statement on the Basic Energy Plan of Japan

#### **1. Adherence to nuclear and coal-fired power generation**

The government has adopted the Basic Energy Plan of Japan today at a Cabinet meeting. What was originally expected of the government in this revision of the Basic Energy Plan was to make a major policy decision to pull out of nuclear power generation in accordance with the will of the majority of Japanese people after the Fukushima nuclear accident and to present a policy of switching to a society with greatly reduced dependence on fossil fuels while looking squarely at the progression of climate change.

In the basic plan adopted, however, the government has relinquished its expected roles and not promoted the switch from conventional energy policies, as clearly shown by its positioning of both nuclear and coal-fired power generation as “important base-load electricity sources.”

#### **2. A too modest target for renewable electricity introduction**

The target for renewable energy introduction in power generation added to the basic plan in the final stage of its preparation is vague in wording: to aim to introduce renewable energy at a level exceeding the level presented in view of the past basic energy plans. As the past targets “13.5% in 2020” and “about 20% in 2030” are cited for reference in a footnote, the goal is believed to mean an upward revision of these targets.

More than 7 GW of new renewable electricity facilities have been introduced since the start of the feed-in tariff system. When their production of electricity is included, renewable energy is estimated to already account for approximately 12.7% of the total electricity produced. Under such circumstances, the goal of “exceeding 13.5%” in 2020 cannot be appreciated as a pioneering target.

To counter the urgency of climate change, developed nations, among others, are required to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with some governments in Europe and the U.S. setting proactive targets for renewable energy toward 2030. The European Commission sets out a target of increasing the proportion of renewables in the total energy consumption to at least 27%, specifically that in the total electricity production to at least 45%, in 2030. In the U.S., the State of California raised its 2020 target from 20% to 33% and is now discussing raising it to about 50% toward 2030.

Given the recent acceleration of renewable energy deployment in Japan and trends in Europe and the U.S., the target for renewable electricity by 2030 stated in the basic plan cannot help but be criticized as being too modest.

#### **3. Revitalizing Japan by switching energy sources**

Through the catastrophic experience of the Fukushima nuclear accident, energy efficiency improvement and renewable energy deployment are accelerating in Japan. If the Basic Energy Plan had clearly set out a goal of realizing a society independent of nuclear power and



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declared a switch in energy policies, efforts already undertaken in many areas and by many companies would have been further promoted and the realization of Japan's independence from both dangerous nuclear power and expensive, unstable fossil fuels could have been accelerated.

Although the Basic Energy Plan adhering to conventional policies lost the chance to achieve it, the move toward switching energy sources cannot be stopped. Japan Renewable Energy Foundation will continue the efforts to develop new strategies for revitalizing Japan in collaboration with many individuals, companies and organizations hoping for the realization of safe and sustainable energy systems.

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