

## 5. A Mexican Perspective of Fukushima's Event

Magdalena Gris  
Engineering Materials Supervisor, Laguna Verde NPP, Mexico

### Introduction

I was invited to contribute with this essay and I would like to present a perspective of the Fukushima's situation after the severe earthquake and further tsunami and its effect in the nuclear industry. Particularly I had the opportunity to visit Fukushima-Daiichi Station last year (my grateful to my dear friends of units 5 and 6) and it was one of the reasons for writing these lines. The last 19 years of my professional career I have been working at Laguna Verde NPP, what gave me the opportunity to meet many people in nuclear business by participating in some international efforts to address one of the biggest concerns on this industry, to maintain Nuclear Plants in safe operation for long term, from the materials degradation perspective.

In this essay, I am trying to put together my knowledge with impressions generated after the event experienced by Fukushima this year.

### Knowing the Event

On March 11th this year, after the earthquake in Japan and the further tsunami, the worldwide focus was on the tragedy that Japanese people were suffering. My first concern was to know the situation of my friends at Fukushima-Daiichi NPP. I emailed them asking for their families and co-workers. Fortunately I received an answer from one of the friends who just told me that situation

was really bad, they were working without rest for more than 36 hours trying to control and stabilize the plant situation. We could imagine the gravity of the situation hearing the story from the people who lived the event.

In Mexico, the news were confused and most of the time the information was not reliable. Fortunately for the people in the nuclear business, we had access to more reliable information. Particularly I received communications issued by the NRC in the USA and some others from European organizations, so we knew the sequence of the event, and concluded that the response of the plant and its emergency systems was as expected by design. In summary, there were more than one major event that resulted in systems and components damaged beyond design basis assumptions for this kind of reactors (neither any kind of reactor). In other words, the Japanese event was something against no nuclear power plant was prepared and in my opinion the consequences were not as severe as the Chernobyl accident.

### The Importance of the Right Information

As I stated before, I had access to reliable information and I tried to pass the right information to the people in my circle of friends, family and public in general, because it is important to know the actual event and actions

taken in order to have a well informed opinion. I had heard opinions against the nuclear energy before the Japanese event, and now that negative opinions are increasing and making difficult for the nuclear industry keeping on its evolution. The common opinion is that the nuclear plants are not safe, there is a high risk in its operation, and too much wrong ideas which can lead to deny not only the construction of new plants but also the long term operation. It is happening at least in my country in my opinion. The people take any event as an excuse to throw back the possibility to take the nuclear option for producing energy.

## **Conclusion**

I think it is the responsibility of those who are involved in nuclear business to inform as many people as possible that nuclear option is one of the most reliable ways to produce energy in order to change the perspective that people have after this unexpected event.

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