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## IAEA, Fukushima Prefecture to set up joint decontamination program

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By TAKASHI KIDA/ Correspondent

VIENNA--The International Atomic Energy Agency said it will set up a joint program on decontamination next year with the Fukushima prefectural government as efforts continue at the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

The IAEA also pledged to regularly send experts to Fukushima to hold seminars and share global technologies.

"We still have many lessons to learn from the disaster," IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano told an Asahi Shimbun reporter and other media on Dec. 1, ahead of a ministerial conference on nuclear safety to be held Dec. 15-17 in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture. "(We should) assume the role of a bridge for the world to share lessons from the (Fukushima) disaster."

Amano also encouraged Japan to actively discuss the future of its nuclear energy policy, which is a major issue of contention in the run-up to the Lower House election to be held Dec. 16.

"The eyes of the world are on Japan, home to the third largest number of nuclear reactors on the planet, to see what direction it takes," he said. "I would like Japan to engage in discussions that are not inward-looking."

In response to a question, Amano spoke on the energy policy of the Noda administration, which says that Japan should strive to pull the plug on all nuclear energy by the end of the 2030s.

"The policy will have broad ramifications on global warming, oil and gas markets, nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear security," the IAEA director-general said. "I think there is a need to take time to listen to world opinions in coming up with a policy."

Although Amano said it is up to each IAEA member country to decide whether it will use atomic energy, his remarks betrayed a dismay over Japan's abrupt turn in nuclear power policy.

The ministerial conference in Fukushima Prefecture, to be co-hosted by the central government and the IAEA, will discuss nuclear safety initiatives taken by different nations.

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