

News

Deliberative opinion poll conducted on future energy choices

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A small-group discussion session held on August 4

TOKYO --The Japanese government held a deliberative opinion poll for two days on August 4 and 5 in Tokyo to discuss the country's energy options for the future. About 300 people participated in the deliberative poll out of the about 6,800 people who responded to a telephone poll conducted in advance. Questionnaires asking the participants their views on priorities in choosing energy options, the future use of nuclear power and other issues were also conducted before and after the deliberative poll to analyze any shift in the opinions of the participants. The government will use the results in deciding the country's energy policy. The results of the questionnaires are scheduled to be put together by mid-August.

The deliberative poll was conducted over two days and included two rounds of discussions. Each round consisted of a small-group session, which was

carried out in groups of about 15 participants, and a plenary session, where participants put questions to experts. The discussions were held for a total of six hours in two days with the themes of "deliberating on energy, environment and selection criteria" on the first day and "deliberating on scenarios for energy choices for 2030" on the second day.

The small-group discussion held on the afternoon of August 4 saw many varying opinions expressed by the participants, including, "Although I support the future direction to eventually phase out nuclear power, I question whether it is reasonable to terminate it in such a short time frame as 10 or 20 years," "If nuclear power plants were not to be restarted, I have a feeling that I could bear to pay up to about twice the current electricity rate," "We have to share the feelings of the 160,000 people from Fukushima who are forced to evacuate because of the nuclear accident," and "First and foremost is ensuring safety. Nuclear plants may pose the risk of not only causing disasters but also becoming targets for terrorists and other threats." At the plenary session, participants put to university professors and other nuclear experts the questions that they had narrowed down at the earlier small-group discussion session.