

OECD chief says nuclear energy still important

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File photo of a giant mock nuclear waste barrel built by Greenpeace anti-nuclear activists in Rome on June 10, 2011. Nuclear power is still a viable source of global energy despite the crisis in Japan, the OECD chief said Monday.

Nuclear power is still a viable source of global energy despite the crisis in Japan, the OECD chief said Monday.

Angel Gurría, head of the Organisation for [Economic Cooperation and Development](#), said nuclear power remains necessary to meet growing energy needs but also voiced support for fuel sources such as solar and water power.

"The question is not to abandon the (nuclear) programmes... safety indeed is a great concern, but we believe very strongly nuclear continues to be a part of the solution," he told a press conference on the sidelines

of a "Green Growth" summit.

Gurria said human error -- one of the most common causes of nuclear accidents -- can be overcome.

"We can learn from our own mistakes. That's the conclusion," he said, adding that a nuclear energy agency within the OECD is helping Japan review [safety measures](#) at its [nuclear plants](#).

The OECD, a group of 34 countries committed to democracy and the market economy, last month presented green growth strategies to coordinate with each other on renewable energy.

The OECD will provide country-specific and industry-specific guidance, Gurria said.

Masayoshi Son, the chief of Japanese Internet and [telecom giant](#) Softbank, urged nations to focus more on green energy.

The crisis at the Fukushima nuclear plant was sparked by an earthquake and tsunami but could have happened in quake-free zones, he said.

"Most of the severe accidents in nuclear power were caused by human error, not because of earthquakes... human error can happen anywhere in the world," Son told the forum.

Son said 34 out of 47 local governments in Japan had joined his campaign to steer the country away from [atomic power](#) to [renewable energy sources](#) such as solar, wind and geothermal.

Japan's richest man recently announced the construction of 10 large [solar power plants](#) across the country.

The Fukushima accident has sparked a renewed global debate about the safety of nuclear power.

Germany in May became the first major industrialised power to agree an end to nuclear power, with a phase-out to be completed by 2022 for the world's number four economy.

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