

Russia already has 16,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel

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MOSCOW, July 13 (RIA Novosti) - Russia already has 16,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel, an official from the Rosatom federal agency for nuclear energy said Wednesday.

Speaking at a conference on comprehensive approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear non-proliferation, Rosatom representative Yevgeny Kudryavtsev said that 11 power units from high-power pressure-tube reactors and 15 power units from water cooled power reactors processed 750 tons of spent nuclear fuel a year.

Kudryavtsev also said that Russia would receive 24,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel for storage by 2015. He said, "The geological isolation of the fuel (until 2015) will cost \$10 billion, and storage will cost \$105.01 million a year." He added that it was therefore necessary to consider how to optimize spending on the storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel.

"We are now looking for alternative technologies for processing spent nuclear fuel and we are investigating the application of new compact technologies for disposing of the fuel," Kudryavtsev said.

He said that every ton of processed spent nuclear fuel produced 100 kg of spent nuclear fuel concentrate for long-term storage in mines and up to 900 kg of regenerated uranium.

Kudryavtsev said the mining and chemical plant (in Zheleznogorsk, 50 km south of Krasnoyarsk, Siberia) was the best place for disposing of and storing spent nuclear fuel at the international level.

"All the nuclear storage platforms at the plant are locked in a mountain. It has a good transportation infrastructure and well trained personnel," said Kudryavtsev.

Participants in the conference, which began in Moscow on Wednesday, are discussing the technological viability of creating an international center for handling spent nuclear fuel at the Zheleznogorsk plant.

