Government’s Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake

May 2011
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Cabinet Office
Seismic Intensity
Main Tremor, 14:46 JST, 11 March 2011

Japan Meteorological Agency
Tsunami Warning
As at 3:20 JST, 12 March 2011 (after several aftershocks)
The Tsunami Surpassed Breakwaters
Miyako City, Miyagi Prefecture, 11 March 2011

Photo Taken at Miyako City, Miyagi Prefecture
Courtesy of Tarocho Fisheries Cooperative Association
Catastrophic Damage to Buildings
Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture, 14 March 2011
Widespread Inundation
Aerial Photo around Iwate Prefecture, 12 March 2011
Casualties and Damages
As of 30 May 2011

- 15,270 people confirmed death
- 8,499 people missing
- 107,696 buildings completely damaged
- An area of 561 square kilometers flooded

Source: Cabinet Office (data taken from the webpages of prefectural governments and the National Policy Agency)
The Death Toll Diminishes Past Disasters

Number of death/missing

- Great East Japan Earthquake: 15,270 confirmed dead (as of 30 May)
  - 8,499 missing

- Mikawa Earthquake (2,306 people) and Makurazaki Typhoon (3,756 people)

- Kathleen Typhoon (1,930 people)

- Fukui Earthquake (3,769 people)

- Isewan Typhoon (5,098 people)

- Nanki Torrential Rain (1,124 people)

- Typhoon Toyamaru (1,761 people)

Source: Rika-Nempyo, Nihon Kisho-Saigai Nempo, National Policy Agency and Fire and Disaster Management Agency.
2011 Figure includes the figures from the Great East Japan Earthquake only.
Government’s Initial Response

1. Initial Tremor (2:46pm, 11 March)
2. Extreme Disaster Management Headquarters established by a Cabinet Decision (3:14pm)
3. First meeting of the DM Headquarters (3:37pm)
4. Field Visit dispatched (6:42pm)
5. DM Headquarters ordered ministries to help stranded commuters in Tokyo (7:23pm)
6. Emergency Coordination Team established in the DM Headquarters (on the same day)
7. On-site Government Office established (6:00am, 12 March)
Government’s Emergency Relief

Search and Rescue:
- A total of 39,800 police officers, 6,099 emergency fire response team personnel, 28,500 fire fighters and 1,382 coastal guard personnel dispatched by end of May.
- Dispatched 107,000 personnel at maximum.

Emergency Medical Treatment:
- 193 DMATs (Disaster Medical Assistance Team) dispatched by end of March.

Relief Goods:
- Unprecedented operation by the National Government to directly procure and deliver food, water and other essentials for the evacuees in the affected area.
Food Distribution by Japan Self-Defense Force

Photo taken at Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture on 7 April 2011
Government’s Emergency Relief (cont’d)

Removal of Debris:
- Debris of estimated 24.9 million ton generated in three prefectures. Government provided legal guidance and financial support to local governments.

Temporary Housing and Other ‘Secondary’ Shelters:
- 15,000 housing completed and 34,000 under construction by 23 May. Also, public housing, private apartments and hotels have been provided to evacuees.

Support to Local Governments:
- Various special laws enacted to financially support relief and recovery efforts. Dispatch of national and local government staff to support affected local governments.
International Assistance

United States Forces in Japan
  • Operation Tomodachi with more than 16,000 personnel.

SAR, Medical and Recovery Teams:
  • Republic of Korea, Singapore, Germany, Switzerland, United States, China, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Mexico, Australia, France, Taiwan, Russia, Mongolia, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, Israel, India, Jordan, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

Other Technical Assistance:
  • UNDAC Team, UNOCHA, IAEA, WFP and FAO.

Relief Goods:
  • Received from 109 countries, regions and organizations.
International Assistance (cont’d)

Issues for hosting SAR Teams:
• Requires extremely quick response (within few hours).
• Coordination with relief-related ministries and local governments.
• Self-sufficiency of the SAR teams.
• Expertise needed to the host.

Issues for receiving relief goods:
• Balancing demand and supply for foreign relief goods.
• Shipping time.
• Temporary storage and domestic transportation.
Towards Recovery and Reconstruction

1. Construction of Temporary Housing
2. Removal and Disposal of Debris
3. Revitalization of Local Economy
4. “Reconstruction Design Council” – Deliberation of the vision for an innovative reconstruction

Photo by Japan Prefabricated Construction Suppliers & Manufacturers Association
Reflecting Lessons to National Policy

1. Initiated deliberation at the Central Disaster Management Council (first meeting held on 29 May)

2. Toward the development of a revised national policy against earthquake and tsunami disasters
Local Good Practices For Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Aneyoshi District, Miyako City: Move of the settlement to the higher ground brought no damage to the residents and houses.

2. Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture: Evacuation drill for school children effectively worked at the time of disaster.
Stone Monument says: “Never build houses below this point”
Villagers who kept ancestors’ precept survived from the tsunami

Aneyoshi District, Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture
Photo taken by Minako Saito
Junior High School Students Helped Elementary School Students to Evacuate

On 11 March 2011, before the strike of the tsunami

Courtesy of Prof. Toshitaka Katada, Gunma University
Photo taken by a local resident in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture
Relief and Recovery: Issues for Discussion

1. **Roles of governments at different levels:**
   What roles should local, national and middle-level governments play for disaster recovery?

2. **Various measures to reduce risks:**
   How to best mix structural measures and non-structural measures?

3. **Inheriting disaster lessons:**
   How can we inherit the lessons learned from a disaster experience to next generations?

4. **Coordination of International Assistance:**
   How can we promote coordination of international assistance?
Thank you for your attention