

April 2011

Embassy of Japan in Rwanda

Contents:

1. The Great East Japan Earthquake
2. G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting

1 The Great East Japan Earthquake: Thank You, We Will Do Our Best, and Everything Will Be Alright

1. Thank You

Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your country's generous assistance and the words of sympathy and support from H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President, Hon. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and Hon. Mr. John Rwangombwa, and others after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The Government of Japan is working with the residents of the affected region and the people of Japan, expending all efforts to overcome the present difficulties and secure safety for the disaster victims, including foreigners, and an early recovery for the region.

You can see the text of H.M. the Emperor's speech on the earthquake (March 16), and Prime Minister Kan's message regarding the support received from many countries (April 11) at the internet addresses below:

- H.M. the Emperor's Speech (English version, Imperial Household Agency site):
<http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e-okotoba/01/address/okotoba-h23e.html>
- Prime Minister Kan's Message (English version, Prime Minister's Office site):
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kan/statement/201104/11kizuna_e.html

2. Providing Peace of Mind

Regarding the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, we have strived to publish the most updated information in a timely manner, including through reports from Japan to the IAEA, briefings for diplomatic corps in Tokyo, information from Japanese Embassies in each country, and updates on Japanese Government internet sites. We will continue to provide the international community with timely and accurate information in as transparent a manner as possible.

The provisional classification of this accident as a Level 7 event on the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES) absolutely does not reflect any actual worsening of the situation in the power station, but rather reflects the application of international standards to the results of calculations based on the cumulative data on the total amount of released radioactive material. Also, the vast majority of radioactive material released in the event was released in the short span of days

immediately following the accident itself, and the actual amount of radiation in the atmosphere is gradually decreasing. For example, in Tokyo the radiation levels have never reached a level where they would constitute a threat to human health, and they have also steadily dropped to a point where current measurements are almost at normal. We will continue to monitor the radioactive material.

The Chernobyl nuclear accident was different both in its causes and in its situational aspects. In the Chernobyl incident, the reactor itself exploded, whereas in Fukushima the reactor underwent an automatic shutdown, no large-scale fires occurred, and there was only a limited release of radioactive material. The IAEA also points out that the accidents are different in this regard. The amount of radioactive material calculated to have been released up to this point in this incident is far less than that released during the Chernobyl incident. No individuals have died from the radiation from Fukushima, and no incidents of radiation-related ailments have been reported, even amongst the residents of the areas near the station.

International organizations such as the ICAO, the IMO, and the WHO have objectively assessed the situation and said that some measures, such as limitations on travel to Japan, are not needed. We hope that all will trust reliable information such as this and react calmly to the situation, basing decisions upon established facts. Fortunately, it is safe to spend time in the many regions of Japan that were completely unaffected by the disasters, and we hope that many will visit these areas of Japan on tourism, for study, or for other activities.

3. Working Towards Recovery

Over one month has passed since the earthquake, and Japan is steadily advancing along the path to recovery. For instance, the transportation infrastructure in the affected areas has for the most part returned to normal operations, with some exceptions. Sendai Airport, which was closed after suffering extensive damage from the disaster, reopened on April 13. Other main international airports were already functioning normally. The Shinkansen bullet train system is also functioning normally with the exception of the Tohoku Shinkansen line, and even the Tohoku line has resumed partial operations, with the rest scheduled to be restored by late April or early May. As for the highways, all roads are operating as usual, with the exception of roads near Fukushima Power Station that are under restriction (30.2 kilo meters).

Prime Minister Kan set three principles to follow in working towards full recovery. First, respect the wishes and voices of the residents in the disaster area. Second, collect the wisdom of all sectors of society, including scholars, the private sector, NPO's, and others, and not just that of the official and political sectors. Third, aim for a forward-looking recovery, one that takes steps towards the dreams of the

future. Following these principles, the Prime Minister has decided to create a "Reconstruction Plan Meeting," which will have a core of experts and incorporate the inputs of Governors from the affected prefectures. At this meeting, the participants will hold a wide-ranging discussion on the creation of guidelines and plans to achieve recovery, the results of which will be reflected in the official guidelines for recovery.

In response to Prime Minister Kan's instructions on April 12, on the afternoon of April 17 Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) announced the Roadmap towards Restoration from the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. TEPCO aims to achieve "Step 1" of the roadmap in around three months, which is "achieving a steady trend of reduction in radiation levels." TEPCO will aim to achieve "Step 2", which is "managing the release of radioactive materials, greatly reducing radiation levels", within around three to six months after "Step 1" is completed. With this roadmap as a start, the Government of Japan will use this opportunity to move from an "Emergency Response Stage" to a "Planned and Stabilization Response Stage" of activity.

<<Roadmap towards Restoration from the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis>>

	Step 1 (About 3 months)	Step 2 (About 6-9 months from now)
Objective	Steady reduction in radioactivity	Management of release, major reduction in radioactivity
Reactor	Stable Cooling (filled with water)	Cold shutdown
Spent Fuel Pool	Stable Cooling	Stable water level (remotely controlled)
Contaminated Water	Preventing leaks to the outside environment	Decontamination/Reduction of contaminated water
Mitigation of Release	Prevention of dispersion	Covering entire structures

There is no doubt that Japan will recover, become vibrant again, and become an even more marvellous country. In living up to the cordial encouragement and solidarity extended to us by the international community, we consider walking down the road to such a rebirth to be incumbent upon us, and the best way for Japan to reciprocate your kind concern. It is our firm conviction that through the fundamental strengths inherent to the Japanese people and the cordial cooperation of the international community, we can achieve this without fail.

We are also determined that Japan will certainly repay, through our continuous contributions to the international community, the cordial assistance we have received from around the world. To that end, we will work to the best of our ability to realize the reconstruction of Japan.

2. G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting: Japan Expressed Gratitude for the Sympathy Conveyed and Support Offered by Many Countries after the Disaster

The G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Paris on 14–15 March, with Foreign Minister Takeaki Matsumoto in attendance from Japan.

At the beginning of the meeting, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé (G8 Chairman) expressed his sympathy and condolences to Japan for the extensive damage the country and its people suffered in the earthquake that occurred on 11 March. Minister Matsumoto expressed his gratitude for the sympathies conveyed and the offers of support from many countries, and stated that:

- a) even for Japan as an earthquake-prone country the recent earthquake and tsunami were of an unprecedented scale beyond all imagination and have resulted in an extremely large amount of damage and loss of life;
- b) the Japanese government is making utmost efforts on rebuilding activities; and
- c) he wished to overcome this tremendous disaster through the strength of the Japanese people and the cooperation of foreign countries.

He also gave an explanation that covered the latest situation regarding the current state of the nuclear power plant accident brought on by the earthquake and tsunami and the measures being taken, stating that Japan is handling the wholly unanticipated situation with a sense of vigilance.

The foreign ministers also discussed the following issues: Libya and the Middle East; nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including North Korea; and Africa.

Concerning the situation in Libya, the ministers agreed to increase pressure on Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and his officials and to continue discussing effective responses at the UN Security Council and other venues. With regard to the situation in the broader Middle East and North Africa, ministers expressed their intent to support the holding of fair elections in Egypt and Tunisia, as well as their concerns about the current stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process. Minister Matsumoto concurred with the importance of pursuing freedom and democracy, presented examples of Asian countries that have experience of gradual transitions to democracy through growth, and noted the importance for democracy to lead to

political stability.

In the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Minister Matsumoto stated that in order to promote global disarmament amid the continuing advancement of follow-up on the NPT Review Conference of May 2010, Japan formed a cross-regional group of non-nuclear-weapon states and is continuing efforts to propose realistic solutions toward mitigating nuclear risks. Concerning North Korea, Minister Matsumoto requested other countries' support and expressed Japan's intent to maintain persistent efforts toward comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues of concern, including abductions as well as nuclear and missile development. He also pointed out the necessity of steady implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions in a concerted manner by the international community. He further pointed out that North Korea needs to demonstrate, through concrete actions, its will to fulfil its promises heretofore in a serious manner. The Chairman's Summary for the meeting expressly condemns North Korea's uranium enrichment activities as a violation of Security Council Resolutions. Regarding Iran, Minister Matsumoto stated that the dual-track approach of dialogue and pressure remains valid, and that Japan intends to support the efforts of the EU3+3.

As regards Africa, Minister Matsumoto described Japan's promotion of Africa's development, consolidation of peace, advancement of good governance, and other aspects of the TICAD process, emphasizing human resources development. He also stated that Japan is cooperating in the strengthening of judicial capabilities for countries surrounding Somalia through its contributions to a related trust fund as an anti-piracy measure.

For more information on Japan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan <http://www.mofa.go.jp>

Embassy of Japan in Rwanda <http://www.rw.emb-japan.go.jp>

Japan Echo Web <http://www.japanechowebsite.jp/>

Web Japan <http://web-japan.org/>