



Representative Office of Japan to the PA

Representative's Newsletter #5, March 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are soon approaching the 11th of March, which will mark the first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck our nation last year. I am pleased to send my fifth Representative's Newsletter to share with you the up-to-date status of Japan's reconstruction efforts and express our renewed appreciation for the warm solidarity and support extended from the people of Palestine and all around the world.

Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction

For the past year, the people of Japan suffered poignant grief at the losses caused by the tragic earthquake and subsequent tsunami. United in one, however, they began walking again toward a new bright future of Japan. Such relentless efforts have generated just outcomes with the steady progress of reconstruction, and the people have regained a ray of hope.

The affected areas, including their infrastructure and economies, are firmly on their way to recovery. Most areas in Japan, except some restricted areas, returned to normal with all positive figures indicating a firm recovery in the fields of business, tourism and student exchanges. A full 96% of once scattered debris has been removed. Most of the evacuees, which totaled up to approximately 470,000 three days after the outbreak of the disaster, have already moved into temporary houses or rented accommodation. Many Japanese companies have recovered at an astonishing speed, with their supply chains fully restored. The value of agricultural and fishery product exports year-on-year plummeted by 14.7% in April, but it demonstrated steady recovery to an overall 6-month decline of 5.1% in November of the same year. Similarly, the margin of decrease in visitor arrivals year-on-year, which was 62.5% in April 2011, gradually shrank down to 11.7% in December. I would like to take this chance and encourage you to visit the country without undue worries and see for yourself the new, revitalized Japan.



Shinkansen from Sendai to Tokyo resumed operations by April 25

Support from the International Community

Had it not been for the heartfelt support from all around the world, however, Japan's reconstruction thus far could not have been realized. To date, 163 countries/regions and 43 international organizations have offered assistance. The tragedy made us realize once again the importance of *kizuna* (bond of friendship) that we had always cherished with the international community. Immediately after the outbreak of the disaster, many representatives of the Palestinian Government including President Dr. Abbas and Prime Minister Dr. Fayyad extended us heartwarming condolence messages. Also, many civilians exerted themselves to run a number of charity events that gave us a great sense of solidarity. The children's selfless acts, despite their own circumstances, strongly struck our hearts. Let me assure you that such sincerity will always be remembered not only by those like us who are in day-to-day contact with Palestinian counterparts, but also by the entire people of Japan. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express our renewed and deepest appreciation for the dedicated support from all of you.



A hundred of children in the Gaza Strip sent solidarity messages to Japan on March 29

TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station Accident

Reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) have reached a condition equivalent to cold shutdown, bringing the accident to a conclusion, as announced on December 16, 2011. Although the fight against the nuclear accident will continue for such purposes as reconstructing the living environment, it no longer presents major obstacles to business operations in Japan.

Since the wake of the disaster, Japan has been assigned with a critical role in tackling the biggest challenge presented by the state-of-the-art technology of our own creation. We will make sure to carry out our responsibility to share with the international community the experiences and lessons learned from the accident, and continue to contribute to enhancing international nuclear safety. As part of these endeavors, the Government of Japan just announced that it would organize the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety from December 15 through 17 this year in Fukushima Prefecture. Co-sponsored by the IAEA, it will provide yet another opportunity for us to share with the international community our lessons learned, and to discuss progress of the international efforts in strengthening nuclear

safety.

The fateful year has ended. Now we shall look to the bright future for a new, revitalized Japan. Let us hope that our *Kizuna*, which was reaffirmed through your heartfelt support, will be further strengthened in this hopeful year of 2012.

Sincerely yours,

Naofumi Hashimoto
Representative of Japan

For further facts and data, please see appendix:

[Appendix: Framework of the law for Special Zone for Reconstruction](#)

For inquiries, comments and suggestions about this newsletter, please kindly refer to contact information below