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KYODO

Lessons learned help to bolster disaster resilience

Yoshihide Suga
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

March 11 marks the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which precipitated an unprecedented catastrophe. The 9.0 magnitude earthquake, the strongest ever recorded in Japan, was also the fourth-strongest worldwide since 1900. With its focus spanning a wide swath below the seabed, it triggered massive tsunamis that wreaked untold damage and devastation across a vast area, especially along Japan's Pacific coast. The number of victims – those who died directly or indirectly as a consequence of the earthquake in addition to missing persons – exceeded 20,000, and approximately 400,000 houses were damaged or destroyed.

In response, 163 countries and regions, 43 international organizations and innumerable private organizations offered Japan a helping hand. Rescue teams from around the world performed lifesaving and first-aid activities in the wake of the quake. As we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the disaster, I, on

behalf of the Japanese people, would like to express once again our sincere appreciation to all the people, countries, regions, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations and others that supported us.

By virtue of that goodwill, the disaster-ravaged areas made headway toward reconstruction, progressing step by step. Reconstruction has advanced tremendously thanks to this decade of efforts.

In the earthquake- and tsunami-stricken areas, to a great extent housing has been rebuilt, roads and railroads restored, and community development achieved. We will exert renewed effort to support those affected, including by providing psychological care and helping communities crystallize and flourish.

In the area affected by the nuclear disaster resulting from the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc.'s Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant meltdowns, efforts toward reconstruction and revitalization have entered full swing. The government will continue to stand on the front line as it responds to outstanding challenges, working to prepare a living environment that facilitates the return of evacuees to their hometowns while



also dispelling unfounded rumors.

To transform the experience of this catastrophe into lessons for the future, Japan, which has historically been prone to large natural disasters, has scrutinized the issues that emerged as the disaster was transpiring and in its aftermath, including in rescue and recovery operations, procurement and transportation of relief supplies, support for the affected and restoration and reconstruction. Tapping these experiences, it has incorpo-

rated them into its post-disaster response measures. The public and private sectors are working hand in hand to build up a disaster-resilient nation from a long-term perspective, utilizing drone technology in disaster-stricken areas, enhancing the earthquake resistance of buildings and forecasting disasters with the use of supercomputers, among other endeavors.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games are scheduled to be held this year. We would like to make this an opportunity to showcase to the world our recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake. We are pressing forward in our preparations for the games, determined to have them deliver hope and encouragement around the world, with all possible precautions in place to avoid the spreading of COVID-19.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the disaster, we once again extend our appreciation for the support we received from all around the world. In reciprocation of the goodwill extended to us, we will accelerate our international cooperation in disaster preparedness, sharing the knowledge and technologies Japan has acquired as a result of the earthquake.

Support for tragedy seen in generosity, dedication to charitable efforts

U.S.-Japan Council
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

Irene Hirano Inouye dedicated her life to major philanthropic and social causes in America, but perhaps her greatest legacy is her role in strengthening the U.S.-Japan relationship, including support for Tohoku's recovery and an initiative created to benefit young people in the aftermath of the earthquake.

A sansei, she served as the founding CEO and president of the Japanese American National Museum for 20 years. Her own family's history in America was shaped by the country's wartime internment of Japanese Americans, including her paternal grandfather and her aunts and uncles. In 2009, she became the founding president of the U.S.-Japan Council (USJC), which was established with her late husband, U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, and other prominent Japanese Americans to develop and connect diverse leaders in Japan and the United States.



Irene Hirano Inouye
KYODO

Ten years ago, she was in Tokyo leading USJC's Japanese American Leadership Delegation (JALD), a program that each year organizes a delegation of Japanese Americans to engage with top leaders in Japan. On March 11, the earthquake struck. A meeting scheduled between the 2011 JALD delegation and then-Prime Minister Naoto Kan was canceled and Inouye immediately shifted her attention. Within a day of the tragedy, she was actively exploring ways to support Japan's devastated Northeast.

Inouye would soon launch the USJC Earthquake Relief Fund for Tohoku's recovery efforts, raising \$350,000 within the first 24 hours of the fund's establishment. By the end of 2011, the fund grew to more than \$2.5 million, with 100% of the donations sent to sup-

port Japanese nonprofit organizations, nongovernmental organizations and programs dedicated to Tohoku's aid. Within the USJC network, many Japanese Americans took on leadership roles within their local communities in fundraising and directing contributions from America. USJC's leaders and board members visited Japan in subsequent months to partner and work with Japanese nonprofit organizations on the front lines.

USJC's Tohoku relief efforts also yielded another one of Inouye's signature achievements: the Tomodachi Initiative, a public-private partnership between USJC and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo with the support of the Japanese government. The effort came on the heels of Operation Tomodachi, a joint mission between the U.S. military and Japan's Self-Defense Forces to provide humanitarian aid in Tohoku. Inouye worked closely with then-U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos to create the Tomodachi Initiative, seeking to inspire young people in the region through unique exchange opportunities with the

United States.

She developed partnerships with major corporations so that the Tomodachi Initiative could offer a number of programs, including career mentoring for young Japanese women, STEM education, and leadership skills for young people with disabilities. It would eventually expand beyond the Tohoku region to bring young Americans to study in Japan, making it a two-way exchange initiative. Inouye believed that empowering the "Tomodachi generation" was vital to the lasting friendship between the two nations. Ten years later, more than 9,000 young people have participated in over 300 Tomodachi Initiative programs.

After Inouye died on April 7, 2020, the Japanese government posthumously awarded her the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, for her enduring contributions to the U.S.-Japan relationship, including USJC's support for Tohoku and the next generation of Japanese and American leaders.

NUCLEAR AFTERMATH

Fukushima No. 1 cleanup plan only getting tougher

Junko Horiuchi
KYODO

The decades-long challenge to scrap the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, crippled by the massive earthquake and tsunami that struck northeastern Japan in 2011, is becoming more complex as new probes highlight just how damaged the reactors are.

Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc., operator of the six-reactor plant, aims to scrap it between 2041 and 2051. But critics have cast doubt on the schedule, citing not only the extremely high radiation levels, but also problems associated with delayed probes, as well as underdeveloped robotics and other technologies needed to extract close to 900 tons of melted fuel debris estimated to exist under the wrecked reactors.

Decommissioning of the plant, scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986, is crucial for Japan if it wants to stick to nuclear power and show the world that the crisis is under control.

"It is likely that the road map will not be completed as scheduled," said Tetsuro Tsutsui, a member of the Citizens' Commission on Nuclear Energy, a group comprising academics and nuclear experts.

He added the "melted debris is mixed with fractured parts of buildings and concrete material and is highly radioactive, making it hard for robots to clear the debris."

Scraping the plant involves the daunting decision on how to dispose of the subsequent radioactive waste. No municipality in Japan has ever offered to become the final disposal site, even when the plant was operating.

Following the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that hit the plant on March 11, 2011, reactor Nos. 1 to 3 suffered meltdowns, leading to massive hydrogen explosions in the buildings housing reactors 1, 3 and 4.

Due to the inherent instability of renewable energy, the government projects atomic power will remain one of Japan's major power sources, accounting for 20 to 22 percent of all electricity generated in fiscal 2030. Given the emissions-free aspect of atomic power, Japan may even push for the further use of it as it aims to become carbon neutral in 2050.



Tetsuro Tsutsui, a member of the Citizens' Commission on Nuclear Energy, walks in Namie, Fukushima Prefecture, to survey the tsunami-hit area in February 2014. KYODO

Of the 33 reactors in Japan, excluding those set to be scrapped, just four are currently in operation, partly because they need to clear stricter safety regulations prompted by the Fukushima crisis.

Tsutsui, a former petrochemical engineer, points to how the risks of the debris extraction project have become clearer compared to when the road map for decommissioning the plant was first compiled in December 2011. With that in mind, he urged the government to act responsibly and review the road map.

"Nearly 10 years have passed following the Fukushima accident but with respect to the long decommissioning process, we are still hovering around the start line. We have a long journey ahead," Fukushima Gov. Masao Uchibori said in a recent briefing.

"The most difficult step is the safe and stable retrieval of the debris but we don't know what state it is in," he said.

Despite the use of computer simulations



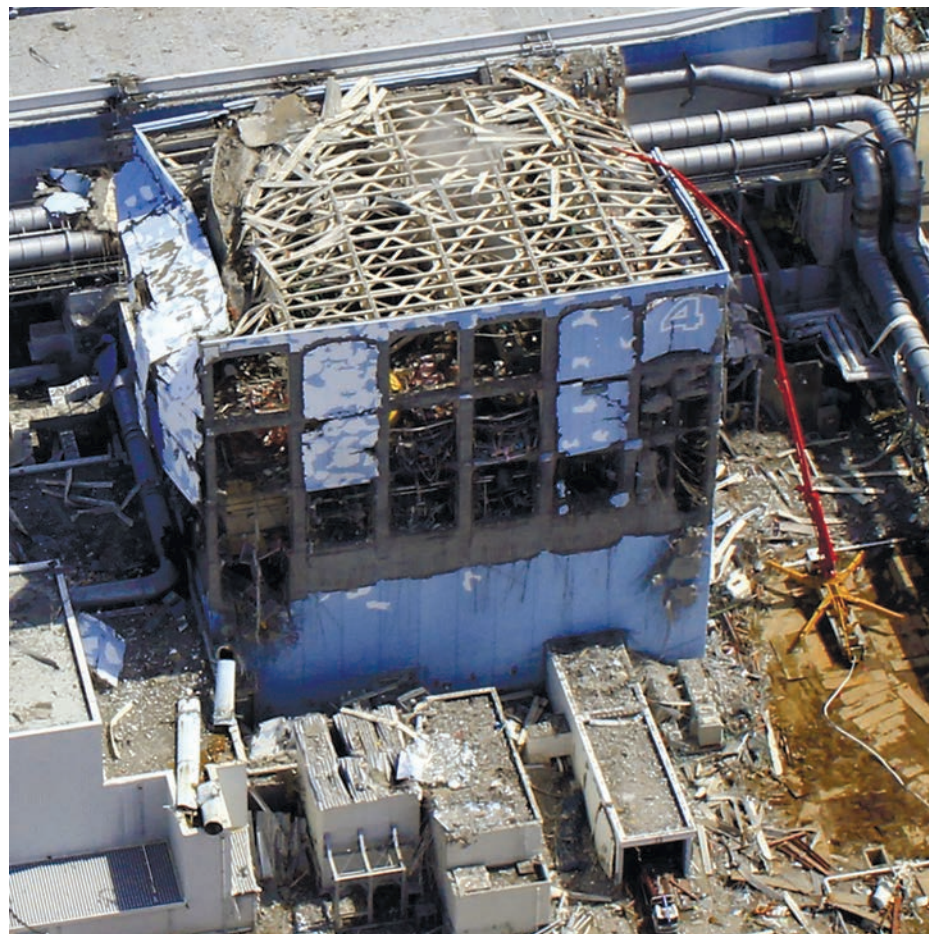
Tokyo Electric Power Co. crews work to clean debris at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant's No. 3 reactor on Sept. 4, 2015. KYODO

and small internal probes using remote cameras, data on the exact location and other details of the melted fuel — information crucial for determining the retrieval methods and technology needed for the mission — remains scarce. Robot probes conducted at reactors 2 and 3 have captured images of large amounts of material that appear to be melted fuel, but similar attempts at reactor 1 have so far come up short.

Tepco has opted to start the fuel-removal

process at the No. 2 reactor because that is where it has the best grasp of the internal conditions. No time frame has been set for fuel removal at the other two units.

In a setback, however, the utility said in late December that fuel removal at the No. 2 unit, which was slated to begin this year, would be delayed by at least a year because the coronavirus pandemic has stalled the development in Britain of a robotic arm to be used in the extraction process.



The gutted building that housed reactor No. 4 at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant is viewed from the air on March 30, 2011. TOKYO ELECTRIC POWER CO. / KYODO

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TOHOKU RECOVERY

(Sponsored content)

Northeast marks 10 years since devastation from 3/11 quake, tsunami and nuclear crisis

Ten years have passed since the Tohoku region was rocked by the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011. Reconstruction has steadily been in progress in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, the three prefectures that were most affected by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis. People have been rebuilding their devastated towns, reviving their industries, and advocating food safety to combat the spread of harmful rumors. Through interviews with key people in various fields, the progress of reconstruction in the three prefectures and their hopes for the future have come to light.

Iwate: Growth with grace

The unprecedented earthquake and tsunami shocked the world, and many reached out to the affected areas not only from within Japan, but also from abroad to offer assistance. After its entire train line was ravaged by the tsunami, the Sanriku Railway was able to resume operations in three years with help from Kuwait and other countries and now serves as a symbol of the area's recovery. Ichiro Nakamura, representative director and president of Sanriku Railway Co., expressed his gratitude for the support from across the globe. "I hope people from all over Japan and the world will visit Sanriku, take a ride on the fully rebuilt Sanriku Railway and enjoy what we can offer," Nakamura said.

The material damage looks catastrophic, yet the invisible damage caused by rumors can be more harmful. Although consumer trust is being regained through rigorous radiation testing, it will take time to recover from the decline in the number of farmers and the industry as a whole. To achieve a "true recovery," Yukinori Shitautsubo, who runs a local fishery in the town of Hirono, is striving to open up the future of the region for the next generation. "Customers are beginning to understand and re-evaluate the safety and quality of our marine products. We are now aiming to develop a fishing industry known to the world for its quality products."

Shiawase Farm in the city of Miyako was one of the first local businesses to start radiation testing in the immediate aftermath of the disaster and is now free from the obligation. Looking over his pasture where animals are peacefully grazing, Representative Director Chikara Sato is envisioning new possibilities in agriculture, such as farm stays and environmentally friendly farming.

Miyagi: Bloom in adversity

Although the fishing port in Kesennuma suffered severe damage from the tsunami, marine products around the area were not affected by radioactive materials. With nationwide support, such as the dispatch of fishermen, and strong solidarity in the local community, they managed to maintain their position as Japan's largest producer of fresh bonito. The oyster farming industry, which was once in danger, is now producing better oysters than before, as the disaster provided an opportunity to rethink conventional production methods. "Our farm used to be overcrowded, which reduced our productivity. It



Student volunteers and young artisans work to convert a vacant home into a guest house in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, in June.

was only when we lost them that we truly appreciated the blessings of nature," oyster farmer Kiyohiro Goto said. Starting anew, they invented a method to grow oysters in a shorter time frame in the year, which resulted in lower costs and improved taste. In Ishinomaki, which suffered the most in the prefecture, local volunteers launched the Ishinomaki 2.0 project with the aim of creating "the world's most interesting city." The driving force generated by the creativity of the youth has attracted different talents and connected them to various projects, from a startup training IT engineers to a design firm renovating vacant houses. In addition, local furniture brand Ishinomaki Laboratory Inc. is advocating a do-it-yourself influenced design ethos, connecting the town to an ever-increasing roster of international designers and production partners. Gota Matsumura, representative of the Ishinomaki 2.0 project, shared his vision, "In order to be the world's most interesting city, we need a culture that attracts interesting people and inspires them to carve out the future with their own hands." Shifting from a disaster-stricken city to a model city for regional revitalization, those young forces embody the hopes of Ishinomaki.

Fukushima: Hope in the hurt

Fukushima Prefecture experienced an unprecedented combined disaster: earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis. To prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again and to showcase reconstruction efforts, the prefecture built the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum, a facility to pass on the records and memories of the disaster to future generations. Through exhibitions showing the transition of the number of tourists before and after the disaster and radiation tests for rice, visitors can grasp the

enormity of the impact of the nuclear accident and the efforts being made to recover from it. To combat the reputational damage, Kato Farm Co., in Iwaki, has continued shipping bags of rice proven to be safe for consumption. Since 2015, very strict radiation safety levels have not been exceeded in Fukushima rice. On the other hand, nearly 4,000 people are still working to decommission the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Regular inspection and tests of radioactive materials in the air and ocean are conducted to monitor radiation levels around the plant and ensure they will not affect the rest of the world. According to one senior executive of TEPCO Holdings Co., there are more places where workers can go on plant premises without protective gear, but it will take 30 years to completely decommission the reactors. The Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework aims to develop industries in six key areas as drivers for Fukushima's recovery. These are: nuclear decommissioning; robotics and drones; energy, environment and recycling; agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries; medical technologies and health care; and aerospace. Within the framework, the Fukushima Robot Test Field was established as a base for the development, demonstration and rule-making for field robots for land, sea and air. Some companies use the site to test a newly developed flying car that can support manned flight, while other companies test drones that can inspect and repair bridges with the help of artificial intelligence. Terra Laboratory Co., which recently moved to the area from another prefecture, is a beacon of hope for the local industry that is promoting research and development of long-range unmanned aerial vehicles for use during disasters. The company's CEO Takahide Matsuura said: "By introducing long-range unmanned

airplanes at low cost, gathering information will be much quicker even when a disaster occurs in an area where it is difficult to deploy airplanes. This is the place where the dreams of scholars and researchers, who aspire to save people from disasters with robot technology, come together. This dream should not end just as a dream. We must strive to create a major robotics industry here in Fukushima."

People in Tohoku are known for their patience. In the 10 years since the calamity, the reconstruction efforts in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima have exemplified their indomitable spirit written about by the renowned Iwate poet and writer Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933) in his masterpiece "Ame ni mo Makezu" ("Unbeaten by Rain"). For them, reconstruction is no longer a goal, but a milestone on the road to the further development and bright future of the region.

For more information on reconstruction efforts, please visit: <https://www.fukko-pr.reconstruction.go.jp/2021/imagining/index.html>

This article is sponsored by the Reconstruction Agency, which has launched a dedicated web portal that provides a variety of content, including online symposiums, to express its gratitude for the support Japan has received from all over the world and to share the current status and future prospects for the disaster-stricken areas. This will also help in promoting reconstruction and the lessons learned from those experiences to prepare for future disasters. For more information, please access the website below.

Web portal commemorating ten years since the Great East Japan Earthquake

URL: <https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/10year/en/index.html>



Commemorating ten years since the Great East Japan Earthquake

Online Symposium

~Ten years later Tohoku Today and in the Future~

URL: <https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/10year/en/online-symposium/>



Takahide Matsuura, CEO of Terra Laboratory Co., tests a long-range drone at the Fukushima Robot Test Field in Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture, in November.



Messages of appreciation in Arabic, English and Japanese adorn the new train cars of Sanriku Railway.

3/11 AFTERMATH

Scenes in northeastern Japan 10 years after 3/11

KYODO

A decade has passed since a record earthquake, devastating tsunami and the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986 struck Tohoku on March 11, 2011, causing extensive damage in Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate prefectures.

Kyodo photographers' visits to disaster-hit coastal areas show how they have been transformed by local municipalities since 2011, when piles of debris lay around. Photos, both aerial and on the ground, show the changes in the landscape from 2011 to now.

At 2:46 p.m. that day, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck northeastern Japan, triggering tsunami waves exceeding 10 meters that hit areas on the Pacific coast and inflicted damage on cities, towns and villages.

The 2011 tragedy killed 15,899 people, with 2,526 people listed as missing. Authorities have been cleaning up the wreckage since then, and there are signs of recovery with roads rebuilt and railway services resuming operation.

Huge seawalls now seem to cover the scars left by the tsunami, while in some areas, one can see a mix of newly reconstructed city centers and vacant lots.

Various new parks, monuments and sites memorializing the disasters have also been built, such as Minamisanriku Memorial Park of Earthquake Disaster, which fully opened in the town of Minamisanriku in October in Miyagi Prefecture.

A photo also shows the ongoing construction of a memorial park in the city of Kesenuma, another hard-hit area, set to open in March, while an aerial photo shows the area where the so-called miracle pine tree stood, the lone tsunami survivor of the many pine trees in Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture.

The quake and tsunami disasters also triggered the accident at the six-reactor Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant that caused melt-downs in three of the reactors, releasing radioactive materials. The disaster had a severity level rated at the maximum of 7 on an international scale, on a par with the 1986 Chernobyl accident.

At one point, around 160,000 people were evacuated as neighboring towns and areas around the plant became no-go zones.

In some areas of Fukushima Prefecture residents are still unable to return to their homes. Some photos taken by Kyodo News showed decaying buildings and furniture, as if time was frozen.

Around 42,000 people remain evacuees.



Houses remain submerged (top) in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, on March 29, 2011. Ten years later, the houses have been cleared away and a breakwater (bottom) protects the area. KYODO



Top: Tsunami-ravaged Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture, on March 11, 2011. The land has since been raised to fend off tsunami and the area remains vacant. KYODO



Top: The gutted disaster control center of Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture, where 43 people were washed away by tsunami, is shown on April 4, 2011. Bottom: The remains now stand in stark contrast to its surroundings following debris removal and will be maintained and managed by the prefecture until 2031 as part of Minamisanriku Memorial Park of Earthquake Disaster, which opened in October. KYODO

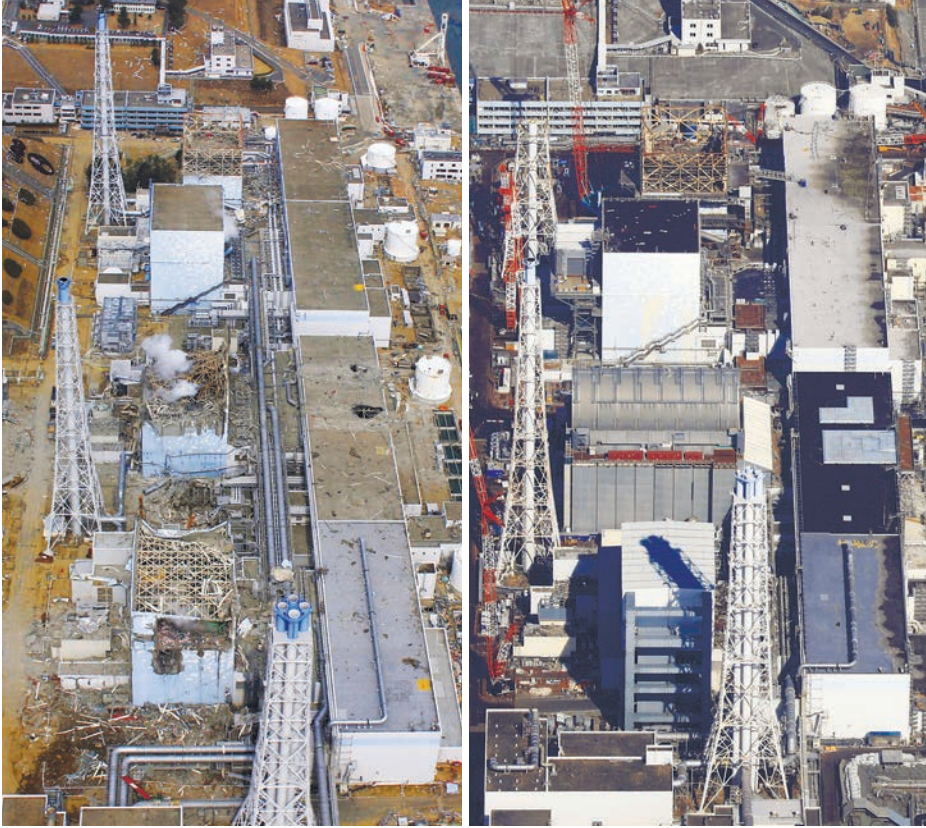


Left: The remnants of the tsunami-devastated Okawa Elementary School stand in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, on March 23, 2011. Right: A decade later, the structure of the now-defunct school, shown on Feb. 14, awaits preservation as a reminder of the 74 students and 10 school officials who lost their lives. KYODO



The Hamayuri sightseeing boat (top) sits on the roof of a guesthouse in Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, on April 1, 2011, three weeks after being washed ashore by the tsunami disaster. After a project to build a monument there failed, wreckers began to demolish the inn (below) on Feb. 1. KYODO

3/11 AFTERMATH



The Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant is shown on March 20, 2011 (left) and on Feb. 14 this year. KYODO



The buildings for reactors 1, 2, 3 and 4 at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant are shown in Fukushima Prefecture on March 17, 2011 (top), and on Feb. 14 with hundreds of tanks in the background holding contaminated cooling water awaiting disposal. KYODO



Top: Tsunami overwhelm the breakwater in Miyako, Iwate Prefecture, on March 11, 2011. Bottom: Construction of a replacement breakwater commenced on Feb. 25. KYODO



Kamaishi Higashi Junior High School and Unosumai Elementary School, are shown on March 22, 2011, in the wake of the tsunami in Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture. Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium (bottom, shown in December) was built in their place and shown in the bottom photo taken last December, was built where the schools were and hosted a Rugby World Cup game in 2019. KYODO



Top: Tsunami debris blocks the Sanriku Railway near Horei Station in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture, on March 13, 2011. Bottom: A train rolls along the rebuilt tracks in the same area on Jan. 29.

SANRIKU RAILWAY / KYODO

MICHINOKU FUTURE FUND

Helping Tohoku's youth aim higher

Hiroshi Ikezawa
STAFF WRITER

The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, caused the deaths of 15,899 people and left 2,529 unaccounted for, mostly in Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures in the Tohoku region.

It also left 1,756 children without a father or mother, or both, according to a 2015 report by the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry.

In response, Rohto Pharmaceutical Co. teamed up with Kagome Co. and Calbee Inc. to establish the Michinoku Future Fund, which supports those children financially so they can move on to attain higher education after graduating from high school.

"Our company is based in Osaka and experienced the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (in 1995). At that time, our Chairman, Kunio Yamada, felt so sad to see a lot of kids choose not to return to the damaged area even after the recovery," said Haruna Shibata of Rohto's Public Relations and Creating Shared Value Division, who was temporarily transferred to

the fund's office from 2015 to 2017. "When the 3/11 disaster happened, Yamada wanted to support children who would be the center of the recovery effort in the future."

Rohto built a support team in March 2011 to research the needs of the disaster-hit areas in Tohoku. Then they determined that supporting children financially and helping them advance to university or vocational school after high school was the most significant thing they could do as a private company.

The Michinoku Future Fund is designed to provide up to ¥3 million per year of the children's university fees. The fund also supports children who had not yet been born at the time of the quake, meaning the fund's support will cover a span of about 25 years from 2011 until all eligible children graduate from their chosen institutions. Those students who receive the support do not have to pay the money back.

The fund was helping 901 children as of December, and an estimated 500 more will receive it in the next 15 years.

By Sept. 30 last year, the fund had gathered about ¥4.8 billion for the fund from about 3,200 companies and organizations,



Rohto Pharmaceutical Chairman and CEO Kunio Yamada (center) joins hands with then-Kagome Chairman Koji Kioka (left) and then-Calbee Chairman and CEO Akira Matsumoto, at a news conference to announce the establishment of the Michinoku Future Fund in September 2011. ROHTO PHARMACEUTICAL CO.

as well as 16,000 individuals. This is enough to surpass the estimated ¥4.4 billion needed to support the Tohoku children for 25 years. The fund stopped accepting donations on Feb. 20.

"It is so crucial that the financial support not get interrupted (during the 25-year span)," said Shibata's colleague Shintaro Fujita, who helped establish the fund in 2011. "The cooperation by multiple companies was necessary so the support would not be affected by a company's financial performance. We're happy that we have gotten so many compa-

nies to join our fund. Establishing that plan is one of the successes of the past 10 years.

"The children we have supported had clear memories of the disaster, but among those who we'll support in the next 25 years, some don't remember the quake much or don't remember even their parents' faces," Fujita added. "We want them to enjoy normal school life without any financial concerns. Our support does not need to stand out. We just would like them to grow up as well as those who still have parents to take care of them."

We offer our support and solidarity to those in disaster-stricken areas

the japan times

Minako Suematsu *Chairperson and Publisher*

We offer our support and solidarity to those in disaster-stricken areas



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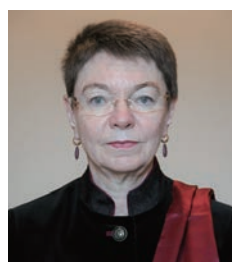
Embassy of Spain

H.E. Jorge Toledo *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



Delegation of the European Union to Japan

The Great East Japan Earthquake caused tragedy and loss of lives. Honoring the victims, the European Union stands by the people of Japan in continuing support of a green, inclusive recovery.



H.E. Patricia Flor
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



Embassy of the Republic of Haiti

On behalf of Haiti, I extend my sincerest sympathies to those affected by the March 11, 2011, tragedy. May Japanese people's resilience be a source of inspiration for my country.



H.E. Helph Monod Honorat
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

SOLIDARITY

(Sponsored content)

Ten years of concerts help enhance circle of support

By producing high-quality timepieces that have been closely linked with people's lives, the Seiko Holdings Group has shared time with people, in sorrow and in joy, throughout its history.

Commemorating 10 years since the tragedy, Seiko will organize a special concert at Nippon Budokan Hall in Tokyo on March 11 to bring together those affected by the disasters and those who have offered support for reconstruction, including pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii.

Looking back, when the disasters hit the Tohoku region in 2011, Seiko was about to mark its 130th year in business. The company canceled all scheduled events to celebrate the milestone anniversary. Instead, in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, it conducted a series of activities called the Seiko 130 Actions, which included fundraising, sending relief goods, cleaning of the tsunami-damaged photos and helping with decontamination work, to facilitate the recovery. In three years, the number of support activities climbed to 138.

As part of the Seiko 130 Actions, the company supported two charity concerts led by the late jazz pianist Norio Maeda in August 2011 in Fukushima and Iwate prefectures to show solidarity with those affected by offering emotional support through music, rather than material assistance.

Seiko Holdings Group CEO and Chief Culture Officer Shinji Hattori, who attended both concerts, was moved by Maeda's performances on the tsunami-hit piano that lost some of its tune. Hattori realized that it is the power of music that moves and unites people's hearts, and became more determined to have the company further extend such activities to assist reconstruction.

To broaden the scope of its support, Seiko established an executive committee headed by Hattori to organize a string of events under the "Sound of 'Wa' Concert to Support Eastern Japan" in September 2013, resulting in six concerts in the affected areas in Tohoku region.

The Japanese word *wa* in the title has various meanings ranging from circles and harmony to things Japanese: a circle of support for reconstruction activities, a circle of hands joining those who suffered in the disasters with their supporters, a circle of hope for the future, a spirit of harmony that fosters the togetherness of those working for reconstruction and a spirit of vibrant Japan. The Wa concerts embrace such spirits and express a strong wish to develop bonds among people.

Originally, the concert was organized as an occasion for supporters, including artists, to show their support for disaster victims. Before long, the concerts developed into stages for the victims themselves to express their hopes for progress with reconstruction. From local elementary schools to junior high and high schools, many students who are members of their choirs and wind ensembles are showing a willingness to join the concert.

In March 2014, a Wa concert was held in Tokyo for the first time to enlarge the circle of support nationwide.

Since then, Seiko has been organizing the annual Wa concert in Tokyo, in addition to concerts in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima pre-



Left: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, a "Sound of 'Wa' Concert to Support Eastern Japan" was held in Tokyo on Oct. 5 without an audience and livestreamed for free. Below: Pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii will join the March 11 concert in Tokyo. SEIKO HOLDINGS GROUP, YUJI HORI

fectures, for 36 concerts so far. The Wa concert in Tokyo provides an opportunity for those who moved from Tohoku to Tokyo to offer their prayers, as well as for supporters in Tokyo to show their solidarity with everyone who was affected.

Although it may be not easy to prevent the memories of the disasters from fading, Seiko believes in the importance of continuing to support reconstruction efforts.

As part of such efforts, Seiko has collected message from both victims and supporters from around Japan in the form of flags, headbands or cards. Among them was a message from Mr. and Mrs. Suzuki, who lost their beloved children in the disasters and attended the 2019 concert in Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture. The couple were moved to tears by the concert and wrote down their feelings on a card.

Every year in early March, those emotional messages are presented in a display window at the Wako specialty store, part of the Seiko Holdings Group and a landmark building that faces the main intersection of Tokyo's Ginza shopping district.

From 2012, Wako tolled the bells of the building's clock tower every March 11 at 2:46 p.m., the exact time the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, to offer prayers of repose for the souls of those lost in the disasters and to give people hope for the future.

In addition, a large clock, which is in a Wako display window and points to 2:46, starts moving today, after this year's tolling.

Located in the heart of Tokyo, Nippon Budokan Hall, where the upcoming Wa concert will take place, has been the scene of many emotional moments, serving as a symbol of hope in Japan.

One of the highlights of the 10th anniversary concert is a choir project that brings together videos of the renowned song "Ue o Muite Aruko" ("I look up as I walk"), also known as "Sukiyaki." By mid-February, the committee received over 100 videos recorded by groups and individuals from

around Japan. These will be screened at Budokan hall as part of a live performance during the concert.

The screening at Budokan hall also presents messages from around Japan to support the reconstruction toward the future.

Also, the concert will play a new song that was composed in collaboration with local students. When one of the wa concerts was held in Tagajo, Miyagi Prefecture, in 2018, the students of Tagajo Junior High School were actively involved in the event, which paved the way to writing the lyrics to a melody composed by Seiko CEO Hattori. Thanks to the participation of all 400 students at the school, as well as help from popular lyricist Yoko Aki, this project bore fruit. Japanese vocal group Circus and volunteers from Seiko will sing "Hope and Bonds" onstage.

Out of respect for concert originator Maeda, who died in 2018, composer Akira Miyagawa supervises the program that features musicians, including Circus, Australian vocalist and violinist Sarah Alainn, Japanese singers Machiko Watanabe, Junko Ohashi and Sara Kobayashi, and saxophonist Kohei Ueno.

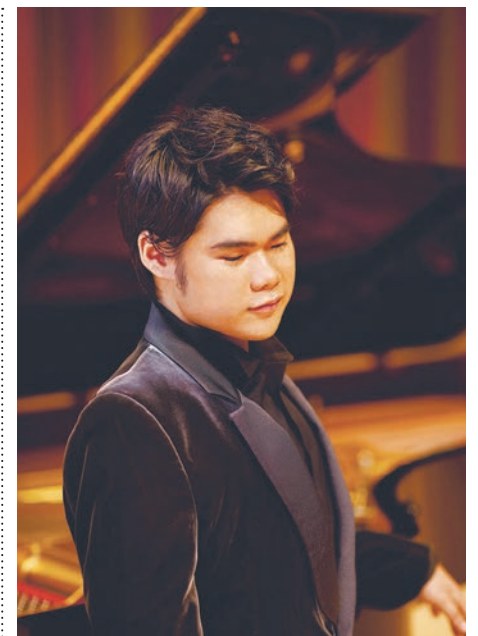
In addition to performers from past Wa concerts, pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii will join for the first time.

Born blind, Tsujii has exceptional musical talent and has actively performed internationally, including his first performance at New York's Carnegie Hall in 2011.

Tsujii has been sending hearty cheers to the people of Tohoku both through his moving performances and the touching composition "Soredemo Ikite Iku" ("Nevertheless I live on.") "I struggled with a sense of powerlessness in the aftermath, asking myself what I could do and what could be done by music," Tsujii said in a recent interview.

Nevertheless, he believes that music has the power to heal grief and fill people with courage.

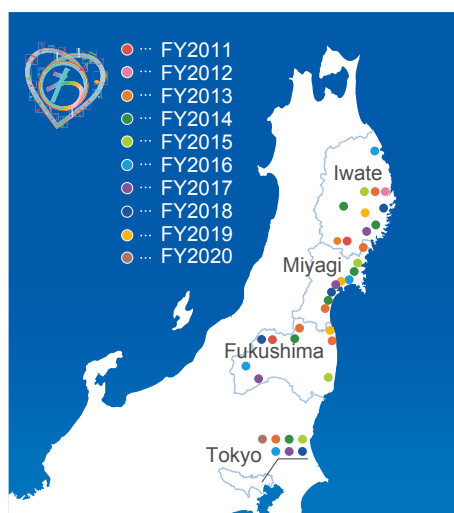
"For 10 years since the tragedy, I've been performing so that I can stand by as many



people as possible with the power of music. Sharing such feelings in common, it's my honor to take part in the upcoming concert," Tsujii said. "I hope that my performance will touch the audience."

As the corporate slogan "Moving ahead. Touching hearts" demonstrates, Seiko is determined to touch and unite people's hearts with the power of music and further enhance their sense of hope for the times to come.

"The Sound of 'Wa' Concert to Support Eastern Japan 2021 in Nippon Budokan" will take place at Nippon Budokan Hall on March 11 at 5:30 p.m. Due to COVID-19, the concert will take place without an audience and will be livestreamed for free at www.seiko.co.jp/sports_music/music/wa/concert2021.



Left: Iterations of "Sound of 'Wa' Concerts to Support Eastern Japan" have taken place across a wide area. Above left: Mr. and Mrs. Suzuki, who lost their beloved children in the disasters, attended a "Sound of 'Wa' Concert to Support Eastern Japan" in Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture, in September 2019. Above right: Displayed in a window at the Wako specialty store in Tokyo's Ginza shopping district, a large clock that reads 2:46, the exact time the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, starts moving today. SEIKO HOLDINGS GROUP



Democrat vs. Republican

America vs. China

White vs. Black

Economy vs. Ecology

Wealth vs. Health

Urban vs. Rural

Government vs. People

Dogs vs. Cats

Coffee vs. Tea

Man vs. Woman

Monopoly vs. Share

Privacy vs. Surveillance

Politics vs. Science

Think vs. Do

Reject vs. Embrace

You vs. Me

Argument vs. Dialogue

Where there's division,
there's an opportunity for progress.

#BeyondVS

Dialogue matters.

the japan times