

Foreword

I would like to express my deepest condolences to the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake and their families.

Immediately after the March 11 earthquake struck Japan, JICA swung into action, working as a liaison for the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and international relief teams from various countries and extending assistance to disaster victims at the Nihonmatsu Training Center and other JICA facilities. Relief activities were also conducted by JICA and JOCV relevant staff in disaster-affected areas.

Japan received support from more than 160 countries and regions worldwide. They included not only Asian nations with which Japan has strong economic ties, but also many Middle East and African nations which themselves have suffered natural disasters, conflict or enduring poverty. I believe the great support Japan received reflects the high opinion held by the world of Japan's earnest aid for developing countries and the existence of humanism, which manifests itself in human security efforts to offer dedicated support to people in crisis no matter where they are.

After World War II, Japan achieved dramatic reconstruction and growth with the support of the international community, beginning with assistance from the United States. Several decades have passed since Japan went from being an aid recipient to an aid donor. But now, once again, we have received aid from the international community. The recent earthquake reminds us that we are truly connected with everyone across the globe, that aid is not a one-way street but a mutually interdependent system which is essential for achieving prosperity for all.

The world praised the people of Tohoku who stood strong at the very center of the disaster area, maintaining order and helping each other. I believe these actions of depending on and helping each other were the highest expression of appreciation these people could have given to the countries which extended a helping hand despite their own difficult situations.

In the rest of the world, many new developments unfolded in 2011, including democratization movements in the Middle East and North Africa and the independence of South Sudan following a prolonged conflict. Many people continue to be in need of assistance and numerous issues still need to be addressed, including efforts to meet Japan's assistance pledges for Afghanistan and Africa, reducing income disparities and poverty in Asia, and tackling climate change on a global scale.

JICA will forge partnerships and make its utmost efforts to address these issues with a diverse range of actors, including various countries and international organizations, companies, universities, and NGOs.

The *JICA Annual Report 2011* presents the agency's activities during the fiscal year 2010 (from April 2010 to March 2011). I hope it will contribute to your further support and encouragement for JICA's activities.

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