

Conclusion

The Great East Japan Earthquake caused extensive earthquake and tsunami damage across a wide area, primarily in the Tohoku region, and turned into an unprecedented compounded disaster involving the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident. This disaster not only claimed numerous lives and destroyed the foundations of regional livelihoods but also had a profound impact on Japan's economy and industry. However, thanks to the tireless efforts of the Japanese government, local governments in the disaster-affected areas, and the residents themselves, reconstruction in the earthquake- and tsunami-affected areas has steadily progressed. Reconstruction policies have entered the final phase to fulfill their intended role.

At the same time, as we find ourselves in the second reconstruction/revitalization period, various challenges remain, such as continued mental health care and recovery of sales in the seafood processing industry. Furthermore, the areas affected by the nuclear disaster are only now entering the stage of full-scale reconstruction and revitalization, requiring medium- to long-term measures going forward. Addressing new challenges and diverse needs, such as the establishment of the Fukushima Institute for Research, Education and Innovation (F-REI) as a core center for creative reconstruction, the development of the specified reconstruction and revitalization bases area (SRRBA), and efforts to support return and settlement outside these designated areas, the government is fully committed to advancing the full-scale reconstruction and revitalization efforts.

The compilation of this document was made possible through the cooperation of numerous individuals.

The members of the “Expert Panel on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy” attended all four meetings despite their busy schedules. They provided invaluable, high-level insights based on their expertise and experience. Additionally, during the second to fourth meetings, leaders from the three affected prefectures and three municipalities, as well as representatives from private companies and organizations, shared their perspectives. Their candid feedback reflected the realities on the ground and viewpoints distinct from those of government officials. Furthermore, the 42 coastal municipalities collaborated by participating in a survey conducted prior to the third meeting.

We also received support from distinguished experts, including Dr. Makoto Iokibe, Dr. Takashi Mikuriya, and Dr. Jun Iio, who were members of the Reconstruction Design Council, the Reconstruction Promotion Council, and the Working Group on Reviewing Reconstruction Policies for the Great East Japan Earthquake. Through individual interviews, they provided insights into past developments and shared invaluable perspectives. Past government officials, including former vice-ministers of the Reconstruction Agency, also contributed substantial information and advice regarding historical context and lessons to be included in this report.

Officials from related ministries, agencies, and the Reconstruction Agency contributed significant effort despite their demanding workloads. They searched for and provided old records and reviewed this extensive report multiple times, demonstrating exceptional cooperation and diligence.

Additionally, Mitsubishi Research Institute provided critical support in drafting and preparing various materials under an investigative commission.

Moreover, official government documents and numerous essays and articles authored by those

involved at the time offered detailed accounts of the circumstances and backgrounds, supplementing this report with essential information.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the creation of this report.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the valuable lessons learned through the immense sacrifices caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake are not forgotten but are instead passed down to future generations and used to build a more disaster-resilient nation. The review of reconstruction policies in this document does not signify the end of such reflections. The Reconstruction Agency continues to exist, and reconstruction policies are ongoing. Furthermore, as time passes, even the policies implemented during the first decade may be subject to different evaluations in the future. Additionally, with the publication of this document, it is possible that facts or opinions not included here may be newly highlighted by external parties. Even now, there have been instances during the preparation of this report where the dispersal of records and the fading of memories made it challenging to collect materials or verify facts. Considering these issues, it is desirable to continue conducting such reviews at appropriate intervals in the future. This document has been compiled primarily based on official records. However, the experiences and memories of individuals who have been involved in reconstruction efforts, though not easily captured in documents like this, may serve as invaluable resources for future generations. As time goes on, collecting such diverse materials and conducting more comprehensive reviews will be important.

Finally, we hope that this document will serve as a vital lesson for future reconstruction efforts following major disasters and contribute broadly to enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience.

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