



## *Embassy of Japan in Israel*

### *Ambassador's Newsletter #2, 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 second Ambassador's Newsletter to share with you the up-to-date status of Japan's reconstruction efforts and express our renewed appreciation for the warm support extended from the people of Israel 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*

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### **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.

Israel, amongst many countries, sent an Israel Aid Delegation as one of the very first medical support teams from overseas. Minamisanriku Town, where the team exercised their relief operations, was one of the areas most heavily affected by the tsunami. Their selfless support and the relief goods supplied by the Government of Israel will always be remembered not only by those who benefited, but also the entire people of Japan. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that so many citizens in Israel, in the wake of the disaster, exerted themselves to raise financial support or to host various charity events. Those NGOs such as IsraAID and ZAKA, which swiftly dispatched experts and volunteers to the sites, must be noted here as well.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express our renewed and deepest appreciation for the heartwarming support from all of you.



*An Israeli medical team examines disaster victims*

### **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

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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.

Lastly, let me emphasize again the importance that this year presents to our bilateral relations, not only because it marks the historical first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, but also as it commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Israel. Some events in commemoration of our friendship have already taken place with major successes, and many more await in the coming months. We will be sure to keep you updated of the upcoming events through our website and leaflets. Let us hope that the *kizuna* which was reaffirmed through your relief support last year will further be fostered in the hopeful year of 2012.



*Sendai Tanabata Festival: These ornaments, hand-made with wishes and hope by the affected locals are donated to Israel for decoration throughout the country this year.*

Sincerely yours,



Hideo Sato

Ambassador of Japan

For further facts and data, please see appendices:

[Appendix 1](#): Framework of the law for Special Zone for Reconstruction

[Appendix 2](#): Summary of Step 2 Completion of “Roadmap towards Settlement of the Accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, TEPCO”

[Appendix 3](#): Mid-and-long-Term Roadmap towards the Decommissioning of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Units 1-4, TEPCO (Digest Version)

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

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