



Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide

16 March 2011

Message from Rehabilitation International:

Rehabilitation International expresses its sympathy and support for the Japanese people who have suffered and continue to face challenges as a result of Friday's earthquake and tsunami.

As many, if not all of us are aware of, a massive magnitude 9.0 earthquake has hit the Pacific Ocean near Japan on 11 March 2011, causing unprecedented damage to lives and properties resulting from the onslaught of a tsunami.

As accounted by Hiroshi Kawamura, one of RI's members in Japan, waves as high as 20 meters destroyed seawalls, resulting in fires from oil tanks as people scampered and braced themselves from a series of aftershocks as strong as magnitude 7+.

During this most difficult time, the Global Family of Rehabilitation International conveys its sympathy and support to the Japanese people in general and our members in particular, as we profess our admiration for the grace and resilience by which the Japanese have been dealing with their challenges.

Faced by various difficulties, the world has so much admiration with the way our Japanese colleagues are calmly pitching in to help themselves and others, taking life one day at a time. Just like the way they dealt with previous disasters, the Japanese are facing their challenges with a quiet and uncomplaining resolve – a far cry from the public anger and frustration that so often characterize people experiencing such difficulties.

We also express our appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the Japanese DAISY Consortium headed by our colleague, Hiroshi Kawamura, the Japan Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD), RI's National Secretary, Ryo Matsui and others who are doing their best to provide timely and accurate information in accessible formats, among other support to persons with disabilities affected by the disasters.



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Coordinated information, consultation and support is critically needed to assist persons with disabilities to protect themselves from the effects and consequences of a possible nuclear reactor meltdown as well as to assist them cope with the aftermath of both the earthquake and the tsunami.

We reiterate our sympathy and support to our Japanese colleagues together with continued strength of spirit to rise above their current challenges.

**Anne Hawker
President, RI**

**Michael Fox
Chair, RI Foundation**