



Advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities worldwide

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Post-Earthquake Situation in Japan:
*In the Wake of Devastation RI Urges to Keep Persons with Disabilities in Mind***

New York, March 15, 2011: Rehabilitation International (RI), a global disability network, expresses our deepest sympathy and concern for our Japanese members, colleges and friends in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami. As recovery and aid efforts continue among growing nuclear concerns RI would like to take a moment to implore that the unique needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account in all relief and disaster management efforts.

According to United Nations Enable:

“Common experience reveals that persons with disabilities are more likely to be left behind or abandoned during evacuation in disasters and conflicts due to a lack of preparation and planning, as well as inaccessible facilities and services and transportation systems. Most shelters are not accessible and ... disruption to physical, social, economic, and environmental networks and support systems affect persons with disabilities much more than the general population. There is also a potential for discrimination on the basis of disability when resources are scarce. Furthermore, the needs of persons with disabilities continue to be excluded over the more long-term recovery and reconstruction efforts, thus missing another opportunity to ensure that cities are accessible and inclusively resilient to future disasters.”

RI appeals to all organizations and governments providing emergency relief and aid to not forget persons with disabilities or persons who have become disabled as a result of the disasters in their efforts. As new emergency policies are developed and executed they should incorporate persons with disabilities in the planning and implementation stages. We urge organizations to work with NGOs and disabled persons organizations in Japan to educate staff on the appropriate medical equipment, supplies, and training to address the immediate needs of persons with disabilities, and ensure that disaster facilities, evacuation plans and services remain accessible.

List of RI members and disability experts in Japan:

The Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities

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Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (JEED)

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For more information or contact details of disability experts and national disabled persons organizations within the RI membership, please contact the RI Secretariat, at ri@riglobal.org or +1-212-420-1500.

Founded in 1922, Rehabilitation International (RI) is a diverse, global network of experts, professionals and advocates to empower persons with disabilities and provide sustainable solutions for a more inclusive and accessible society. Founded in 1922, RI has been a key player in the disability field developing the International Symbol of Access – which has  now become the most widely recognized symbol for disability worldwide- and leading efforts in advocating for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. RI is currently active in around 100 nations, in all regions of the world. For more information about RI, please visit our accessible website: <http://www.riglobal.org>.