

Statement by Ambassador Hiramatsu
at the Memorial Event on the 5th Anniversary
of the Great East Japan Earthquake
11 March, 2016

Mr. Tarun Vijay, Hon'ble Member of Rajya Sabha

Mr. Shashidhar Reddy, Former Vice Chairman, National Disaster
Management Authority

Mr. Alok Avasthy, Commandant, National Disaster Response Force

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for coming here today and joining us in the moment of
silence.

Five years have passed since the Great East Japan earthquake on
March 11th, 2011. While expressing my deep condolences for the
victims and their bereaved families, I would like to express my
heartfelt gratitude for the support from India. It is truly inestimable
how much encouragement we received from you at that difficult
time.

Mr. Tarun Vijay organized a memorial meeting for the victims in
front of the Embassy. Mr. Shashidhar Reddy took a decision to
dispatch NDRF, the Indian National Disaster Response Force, to
Japan as its very first overseas mission. Mr. Alok Avasthy led the
46-member team of NDRF, conducting search and rescue operations
in Onagawa Town, Miyagi Prefecture.

The relief supplies from Indian government such as blankets,

drinking water and biscuits as well as generous donations from all levels of Indian society were gratefully accepted by the affected people. We will never forget the kindness of India. This has certainly alleviated the pain of all affected people. We felt India is always behind us and renewed our conviction that India is a friend in need. Onagawa Town Mayor will join us later to express his thanks in a video message.

During the last five years, all the people in the affected region have dedicated themselves, working hand in hand, for the recovery and reconstruction of Tohoku despite the harsh conditions. The Government of Japan has executed the recovery and reconstruction measures in the past five years. As a result, there has been much visible progress in infrastructure improvement, reconstruction of school and hospital facilities and removal and disposal of disaster waste. At its peak the number of evacuees amounted to 470,000; however this has now been reduced to 174,000. Residential place for displaced people have been secured, and in three years it is expected to have everyone rehoused.

As of January this year, industrial production recovered more or less to pre-earthquake level in three prefectures. 74% of the Tsunami-affected farmland has recovered and 85% of seafood processing industry has restarted business.

To revitalize the fisheries industry, the world's largest fish market stretching 880 meters has been built in Miyagi Prefecture. All

sorts of new ventures are under way by various actors in various fields with a concept of “New Tohoku,” which envisages a revival of rural community, industries and livelihoods.

In Fukushima Prefecture, there has been step by step, steady progress of reconstruction work. The situation at Fukushima Daiich Nuclear Power Plant has steadily progressed on decommissioning and contaminated water management.

With regard to food safety, Japan is executing a thorough inspection of radioactive substances based on the strictest standard in the world according to scientific basis. Therefore, we hope you will enjoy sweets and Japanese Sake from Tohoku at ease after the ceremony.

We welcome people from all over the world, especially from India, to come to Tohoku and Japan. For this purpose, the Government of Japan has taken a series of measures to ease the Visa issuance process for Indian nationals.

We hope you may see how we are moving forward for the reconstruction of Tohoku. Thank you again. Tohoku is coming back. And Japan is welcoming you.