

committees, which responsible for the examination of plans on the central managerial entities in the regional agriculture and how the regional agriculture should be in the future, should be women, thereby guaranteeing that a female perspective would be adopted in the reconstructive process of regional agriculture.

In addition, the government launched the “Japan as One” Work Project’ as a comprehensive policy response to the need to support work and create employment opportunities in disaster affected areas. By April 28 2011, “Japan as One” Work Councils were established in all prefectures. Participants of these councils included local government bodies, local agencies, and industrial groups, and the diverse nature of the actors involved ensured that the councils were platforms for information exchange on recovery and reconstruction projects in affected areas as well as across multiple industries. The councils worked to promote the stabilization of the lives of persons who lost employment as a result of the disaster, and to provide recruitment support.

The implementation of provisions for the promotion of employment in the reconstruction phase of disaster recovery requires an understanding of the fact that women are currently facing an extremely difficult employment environment, as well as the fact that the provisions of the Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake require that the participation of women is actively encouraged. In December 2011, therefore, a decision was made to make women in positions of expertise regarding gender equality, such as management staff in Gender Equality Offices in local government bodies and Gender Equality Center chiefs, members of these councils, in order to ensure that employment creation opportunities were appropriate to women’s needs.

Section 4: Lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake

1. Development of the Central Disaster Management Council

The Central Disaster Management Council comprises all cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister, together with selected representatives from public bodies and persons with relevant academic or specialist experience. In December 2011, the Central Disaster Management Council amended the Basic Disaster Management Plan to radically reinforce measures against earthquake and tsunami based on what had been learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake, as well as to better reflect revisions in disaster prevention methods based on recent experience. The amended plan also specifically includes provisions to: promote the participation of women in the operation of evacuation sites and improve efforts to consider the needs of women and families with children in the operation of evacuation sites; promote the participation of women in the operation and management of temporary housing and provide greater opportunities for all persons living in such accommodation, particularly women, to have their opinions heard and acted upon (See Reference 3).

The Working Group subordinate to the Central Disaster Management Council examines the measures taken by the government in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, and attempts to pull together the lessons that can be and have been learned from the disaster as well as to enhance and strengthen disaster prevention methods. The Working Group uses these lessons and issues from the disaster as a basis for the overall review and revision of disaster prevention methods and to summarize the salient points for a debate on reform of the legislation related to disaster response. In March 2012, the Working Group released an interim report, which spoke of the importance of the gender equality perspective at multiple stages: support for affected people, reconstruction and recovery, disaster prevention.

The Central Disaster Management Council comprises 27 members, of which 2 are women. The Working Group subordinate to the Council has 20 members, of which 5 are women.

Reference 3: Basic Disaster Management Plan (extract)
Section 2: Earthquake Disaster Response (*other sections contain similar statements)
Chapter 2: Emergency Response Measures
Part 5: Evacuation Capacity and Information Provision
2. Evacuation Sites
(2) Operation and Management of Evacuation Sites

○Local government bodies must promote the participation of women in the operation of evacuation sites, as well as give due consideration to the differing needs and perspectives of men and women. In particular, efforts should be made to provide women-only clothes drying areas, changing rooms, and breast-feeding rooms; to have women distribute sanitary menstrual items and women's underwear; to ensure that evacuation sites are safe and secure. Operation of evacuation sites should consider the needs of women and of families raising children.

3. Emergency Temporary Housing

(3) Operation and Management of Emergency Temporary Housing

○Local government bodies must operate and manage emergency temporary housing sites appropriately. Safety and security in emergency temporary housing sites should be secured, emotional care services should be provided to prevent deaths from isolation and retreat from social, and efforts should be made to create and run a community among housing residents. Furthermore, the participation of women should be encouraged, and consideration given to the views of all groups of residents, including women. Where required, consideration should be given to accepting family pets in temporary housing.

In response to the lessons learned from the actual occurrence of the disaster and subsequent disaster response activities, many local governments are in the process of amended local disaster management plans. In FY 2011, 27 prefectures amended their regional disaster management plans.

Since the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake, people have become acutely aware of the need to expand female participation in the decision-making processes for government measures and policies on the prevention of disasters, such as regional disaster prevention plans. Local government bodies have responded to this, with some actively recruiting women to serve on Regional Disaster Management Councils.

Local governments are required, in accordance with the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures (Act No. 223 of 1961), to establish Regional Disaster Management Councils. The proportion of women on these councils as members was, as of April 2012, on average 4.5% for prefectures (3.5% in 2011), and 8.5% (7.2% in 2011) for government ordinance cities. The number of prefectural councils with no female members decreased from 12 in 2011 to 6 in 2012; Kanagawa prefecture, which previously had no female members, now has 5, and Hyogo, Kochi and Okinawa prefectures, which also previously had no female members, now have 3 each (Sec.1-Feat.-Table 37).

In order to further encourage such measures, in May 2012 the Cabinet Office and Fire and Disaster Management Agency notified all prefectures that measures to promotion gender equality would be included in a review of disaster management measures.

Furthermore, a bill entitled 'Bill to Partially Amend the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures' was submitted to the 180th Session of the Diet. The bill proposes that, in order to better reflect the views of diverse actors in regional disaster management planning, prefectural governors should be able to appoint as members of the Regional Disaster Management Councils persons who have set up independent disaster management organizations and persons with relevant academic expertise.

The Cabinet Office has also provided support for disaster prevention measures undertaken by local government that take a gender equality perspective into account, as part of the FY 2011 Regional Gender Equality Collaborative Project Support Scheme (See Article 11).

Section 1-Feature-Table 37 Proportion of Women on Regional Disaster Management Councils

Prefecture	Council members (people)	Of which women (people)	Percentage of women (%)	Reference: Percentage of women in the previous year (%)	Government ordinance cities	Council members (people)	Of which women (people)	Percentage of women (%)	Reference: Percentage of women in the previous year (%)
Hokkaido	58	4	6.9%	5.2%	Sapporo	62	4	6.5%	6.6%
Aomori	49	4	8.2%	4.1%	Sendai	63	2	3.2%	4.9%
Iwate	57	1	1.8%	1.8%	Saitama	82	5	6.1%	4.9%
Miyagi	49	1	2.0%	2.1%	Chiba	69	2	2.9%	4.4%
Akita	54	2	3.7%	5.8%	Yokohama	60	2	3.3%	1.8%
Yamagata	50	2	4.0%	4.0%	Kawasaki	68	3	4.4%	4.7%
Fukushima	49	3	6.1%	8.2%	Sagamihara	47	2	4.3%	2.2%
Ibaraki	45	1	2.2%	2.2%	Niigata	61	4	6.6%	5.1%
Tochigi	49	2	4.1%	2.0%	Shizuoka	45	4	8.9%	8.9%
Gunma	42	1	2.4%	2.4%	Hamamatsu	32	2	6.3%	6.3%
Saitama	63	3	4.8%	3.3%	Nagoya	63	8	12.7%	13.3%
Chiba	54	1	1.9%	1.9%	Kyoto	47	3	6.4%	6.5%
Tokyo	62	0	0.0%	0.0%	Osaka	50	4	8.0%	8.0%
Kanagawa	49	5	10.2%	0.0%	Sakai	50	2	4.0%	4.3%
Niigata	58	4	6.9%	6.9%	Kobe	61	1	1.6%	1.6%
Toyama	56	4	7.1%	7.4%	Okayama	49	20	40.8%	40.8%
Ishikawa	60	2	3.3%	3.3%	Hiroshima	70	3	4.3%	4.3%
Fukui	55	1	1.8%	0.0%	Fukuoka	68	6	8.8%	3.1%
Yamanashi	55	1	1.8%	1.9%	Kitakyushu	60	17	28.3%	6.3%
Nagano	57	1	1.8%	0.0%	Kumamoto	62	5	8.1%	6.6%
Gifu	51	3	5.9%	4.0%	Total	1,169	99	8.5%	7.2%
Shizuoka	48	2	4.2%	2.0%					
Aichi	66	0	0.0%	0.0%					
Mie	48	1	2.1%	6.5%					
Shiga	51	1	2.0%	2.0%					
Kyoto	59	3	5.1%	5.2%					
Osaka	53	1	1.9%	0.0%					
Hyogo	49	3	6.1%	0.0%					
Nara	53	4	7.5%	1.9%					
Wakayama	48	0	0.0%	0.0%					
Tottori	54	9	16.7%	16.7%					
Shimane	59	8	13.6%	8.5%					
Okayama	48	3	6.3%	2.2%					
Hiroshima	55	0	0.0%	0.0%					
Yamaguchi	57	1	1.8%	3.5%					
Tokushima	53	10	18.9%	20.0%					
Kagawa	50	4	8.0%	8.2%					
Ehime	44	0	0.0%	2.3%					
Kochi	52	3	5.8%	0.0%					
Fukuoka	48	0	0.0%	0.0%					
Saga	52	3	5.8%	3.9%					
Nagasaki	66	3	4.5%	4.7%					
Kumamoto	56	1	1.8%	1.9%					
Oita	44	2	4.5%	6.8%					
Miyazaki	45	1	2.2%	2.3%					
Kagoshima	56	1	1.8%	1.8%					
Okinawa	50	3	6.0%	0.0%					
Total	2,486	113	4.5%	3.5%					

(Notes) 1. The data source is documentation available from the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office.
2. Figures as of April 2012

Article 10: Innovations in Regions with Strong Female Participation in Regional Disaster Management Councils

The lack of female members on Regional Disaster Management Councils can be explained by the fact that membership of Regional Disaster Management Councils tends to be affiliated to certain specific positions in certain specific organizations, and the people who are in high level roles in such organizations tend to be men. However, councils in some prefectures and government ordinance cities have achieved councils where women represent 15% or more of the total members, including Tottori prefecture (16.7%), Tokushima prefecture (18.9%), Okayama city (40.8%), and Kita-kyushu city (28.3%). Common to all these local government bodies in these prefectures and cities seems to be strong leadership in gender equality promotion, championed by figures of authority. Each area, however, also has its own innovations in place.

For example, in Tottori prefecture and Okayama city, the regulations on gender equality specific to the relevant local government body stipulate that active measures should be taken to improve the proportion of women sitting on committees and councils. Tottori prefecture also nominates women as a matter of course to take up places on councils reserved for prefectural civil servants. In Tokushima prefecture and Okayama city, council memberships are awarded to representatives from public organizations in which women hold many of the leading roles, such as nursing associations, midwife associations, social welfare councils, and other healthcare and welfare-related bodies. Okayama city and Kita-kyushu city also offer places on councils to women working in NPOs and grassroots organizations, while Miki city in Hyogo prefecture and Tottori city seek council members through a process of public application.

Article 11: Disaster Management from the Perspective of Gender Equality in Local Governments

The Station Toyonaka Empowerment Partnership (located in Toyonaka city, Osaka prefecture) made use of a scheme offered by the Cabinet Office, the Regional Gender Equality Collaborative Project Support Scheme, to set up the 'Toyonaka Women's Disaster Prevention Project' in collaboration with local administration, private organizations and local citizens. The project was designed to enable the consideration of disaster prevention measures from a female perspective. The project developed the 'Toyonaka Women's Disaster Prevention Guidebook', a notebook complete with hints and tips on creating pleasanter environments at evacuation sites, based on the idea that evacuation sites developed with the involvement of a female perspective would be more pleasant and open to all persons. The 'Toyonaka Women's Disaster Prevention Kit' was also developed, a pack containing relief supplies and items necessary for evacuation.

In Nishihara town in Okinawa prefecture, a large shopping center in town made use of the same Cabinet Office scheme to organize the first ever drill for tsunami-related evacuation in the town, with around 850 residents taking part. The event was organized in collaboration with neighborhood associations and women's groups. Activities included learning how to evacuate with people in wheelchairs (when going up slopes, chairs need to be pushed from below but also pulled from above). A number of issues were identified as a result of the exercise, including the fact that evacuations taking place in the daytime, when women and the elderly would have to take on much of the responsibility of evacuation, it would be difficult to evacuate those persons in need of care quickly and safely.



The Toyonaka Women's Disaster Prevention Guidebook (Toyonaka city)



A wide range of people participating in an evacuation drill (Nishihara town)

2. Collaborative Support from Diverse Organizations

As this report has shown, the response to the Great East Japan Earthquake was characterized by the provision of support through a wide framework of collaboration, including national and local governments, Gender Equality Centers, universities, NPOs, NGOs, neighborhood communities, and private business.

The 2011 Cabinet Office survey mentioned previously ('Survey on the Status of Disaster Response from a Gender Equality Perspective') reported that support was provided through a number of different combinations of actors, for example private business and NPOs, Gender Equality Centers and NPOs, or Gender Equality Centers and industry groups. Groups which had previously given little thought to the issue of gender equal participation within responses to disaster were prompted to work together with local women's group as a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and reports suggest that this has been an opportunity for such groups to realize the importance of tackling issues with a gender equal approach (See Article 12).

Article 12: Organizations Starting Activities Supporting Women as Part of Disaster Response

The RQ Citizens Disaster Rescue Center in Tome city, Miyagi prefecture, is a voluntary association established on March 13 2011. Ecotourism Japan, an NPO engaged in nature-based educational opportunities and ecotourism, was the leading party in establishing the Center, before calling upon friends and like-minded organizations to join. Initially, the Center's activities focused on persons related to the operation of 'nature schools', but local volunteers soon became involved, and Center operations expanded to include the delivery of goods, the removal of rubble, the creation of areas for children to play and interact in evacuation sites, and social meetings where participants could drink tea and listen to talks.

Around the middle of May 2011, Miyagi Tome Egao-netto was set up by 5 volunteers involved in the formulation of the regulations on gender equality for Tome city in Miyagi prefecture. The group was intended to provide personalized support to women who had been affected by the disaster, and in order to do so the group was helped by municipal civil servants and university professors, who all assisting in conducting a survey of women in evacuation sites around Tome city, asking 430 women in total about their individual needs. The RQ Center also assisted in carrying out the survey, and in doing so became aware of the need for specialized support for women. As a result, the RQ Support Center for Women in Disaster Affected Areas was set up, as a separate organization to the RQ Citizens Disaster Rescue Center, in June 2011.

At first, some group members were not convinced of the need to concentrate on the provision of support specific to women, and there was some internal conflict. However, the newly established center provided

such support, including hand massages for women and events at evacuation sites, and their efforts were quickly and clearly appreciated. The success of these activities in turn convinced the doubters that there was value in providing dedicated support to women. The Center continues to provide projects as part of its community building activities, including handicraft workshops at temporary housing, and the production and sales of handmade items.

Article 13: Volunteer Tours for Women

The Cabinet Secretariat's Volunteers Coordination Office (abolished on September 16 2011) called upon the travel industry in Japan, via the Japan Tourism Agency, to set up and advertise 'volunteering tours' that combined volunteering opportunities with travel to the north east of Japan. This call resulted in the set up of a range of volunteer tours.

One publisher specializing in magazines for women collaborated with a travel agency to develop a 'Working Women's Volunteer Tour'. The tour was designed for women who wanted to volunteer in the affected areas but were not practically able to because of the cost of travel, accommodation and food, or who were keen to help but did not feel confident or comfortable doing manual work. The tour was structured around a weekend of volunteering, and was offered to women only. The work was also chosen to be suitable for women, for example sorting out small stones and pieces of glass from fields that had been damaged by the disaster. In the evenings, activities were arranged to encourage communication with local people and other volunteers.

The tour ran eight times from August 2011 onwards, with around 350 women participating. Women who took part gave positive feedback, commenting that: "I wanted to help the affected areas but I didn't feel confident going there on my own as a woman, so I was pleased to have this opportunity through a women-only program", and "I want to make sure that I put the things I have seen here to good use in my own work".

Gender Equality Centers play a vital role in the promotion of gender equality in local communities. On a day-to-day basis these centers provide information, undertake communication and awareness activities, and offer advice and counseling services, and have in place collaborative frameworks that include diverse organizations also engaged in local and community-focused work. This existing framework allowed the Gender Equality Centers to take on central and coordinating roles in terms of the various support activities provided by these organizations at the time of disaster occurrence. These centers used the network among Gender Equality Centers nationwide to provide support information for and assistance items to women in affected areas. In addition, these centers used their experience to provide support to evacuation sites and temporary housing in consideration of the needs of women and families with young children. The role of the centers was significant (See Article 14).

However, the fact that support was provided to people affected by disaster by multiple organizations also highlighted a number of issues. The above-cited survey in 2011 conducted by the Cabinet Office notes a number of difficulties in evacuation sites, many of which were experienced by the following groups of people: parents with ill children; persons with developmental disorders difficult to identify from outward appearances and persons with internal disorders; persons with allergies requiring special support; persons with gender identity disorders; persons experiencing violence from partners; non-Japanese persons with insufficient understanding of the Japanese language (See Article 15).

Article 14: Examples of Measures in Place at Gender Equality Centers

The Cabinet Office, the National Council of Women's Centers, and the Yokohama Women's Association for Communication and Networking collaborated on a survey, conducted between July and August 2011, focusing on the disaster response activities of Gender Equality Centers in Japan, entitled 'Survey on the

Role of Gender Equality Centers during Times of Disaster'. The survey took the form of interviews designed to clarify the details of how Gender Equality Centers in the affected areas initiated or took part in disaster response activities. A written questionnaire was also used to discover how Gender Equality Centers throughout Japan, including those in the affected areas, conducted a variety of disaster support activities and services.

The Sendai Gender Equality Center collaborated with Ikoorunetto (Equal Net), an NPO with which the Center works regularly, to run a laundry service, collecting laundry items from women in evacuation sites which was then washed and dried in the homes of female volunteers, then returned to the centers.

The Saitama Gender Equality Center was located next to a large-scale evacuation sites, housed in the Saitama Super Arena, which was temporary home to many evacuees from outside of the prefecture. This prompted the Center to provide those center residents with young children and disabilities individual showering facilities, as well as counseling and childcare support services run by volunteer staff. The Center also opened up a women's advice service within the arena itself.

Ibaraki prefecture suffered some isolated areas of earthquake related damage, which meant that people entirely unaffected by the disaster were living in close proximity to people whose lives had been entirely changed by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The Ibaraki Prefecture Women's Plaza became a platform for women who wanted to take part in support activities and meet others in similar post-disaster situations.

Article 15: Issues Resurfacing with Disaster Occurrence

In order to establish the needs of persons resident in evacuation sites, it was vital that registers of all persons were drawn up, but for some evacuees—those who had suffered violence at the hands of partners—the registration and publication of their name on a register would mean that partner finding out their current location. Some evacuees requested that their name not be added to the register, and some local government bodies responded by agreeing to such requests.

In other cases, women who were not divorced but were separated because of violence or similar reasons were unable to collect support funds paid out.

For others, the fact that their divorce had not been finalized meant that they were not able to collect support funds paid to affected people as the recipient had to be the ostensible head of the family. In other cases, the amount of condolence money paid to affected people or special payments made in view of disaster differs according to whether the recipient is the household provider or not. Some local government bodies chose to distribute charitable donations made for affected people at a flat rate for each individual.

Other issues also surfaced; for example, men who had lost wives suddenly as a result of the disaster and were now required to look after their children alone faced problems such as not being able to cook, or not being able to find anywhere to look after the children when overtime or business trips are required, despite having placed the children in an unauthorized childcare facility (that the father thought would have been willing to deal with out-of-hours requests). Another issue raised was the fact that 'survivor's pension', the pension paid to the surviving family of a person who is eligible to receive an old-age pension or a highly disabled person receiving a disability pension dies, is not provided to families when the father is still living.

Elsewhere, while the provision of separate toilets and changing rooms for men and women is of course very important, persons with gender identity issues faced difficulties in using toilets and showers at evacuation sites, which were divided for male and female use, with no further options. Organizations providing support to persons with gender identity issues suggested that, in addition to male and female facilities, facilities that could be used by either gender could be provided as a solution.

3. Creation of a Gender Equal Society and Disaster Management and Recovery

The gender equality perspective during disaster response was first incorporated into the Basic Disaster Management Plan in 2004. Then, in the Basic Plan for Gender Equality Promotion (second version) (adopted by the Cabinet on December 27 2005), disaster prevention (including disaster reconstruction) was incorporated as one of the areas in need of new measures. In the Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality Promotion (adopted by the Cabinet on December 17 2010), the promotion of gender equality in regional areas, disaster prevention, the environment and other areas was highlighted as a priority area. At the same time, the importance of a gender-aware approach to disaster response has been increasingly reinforced in international arenas, too.

Unlike the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and the 2004 Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Earthquake, the Great East Japan Earthquake saw in its aftermath the raising of a number of issues related to gender equality, suggesting that the notion of maintaining a gender equal perspective at times of disaster is becoming increasingly familiar to people.

However, women still faced problems as a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake, such as the lack of female items in evacuation sites, or the lack of space to change or breast feed, or the expectation that they would prepare food “because they were women”, or the tendency of men to take over the operation of temporary housing. Reports were received of many situations in which there was a lack of adequate consideration of gender equality.

Of the statistics relating to the disaster, those on persons losing their jobs or new graduates seeing their offers of employment withdrawn or their start date extended were not available as a male-female breakdown, so it was not possible to gain a clear idea of the current situation. A number of surveys have been or are being conducted to establish the situation in which people affected by the disaster find themselves, but many fail to adequately grasp or analyze the difference between the male and female experience. During disaster occurrence itself, and then through each subsequent stage of evacuation, recovery and reconstruction, women are in a different situation to men; it is of benefit for the future to ensure that data on men and women is obtained and kept. This will prove more useful, more efficient, and more detailed when planning measuring and policy in the future.

As the report has shown since the very first section, it is clear that overall women have been more vulnerable to the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake than men: more women died, particularly elderly women, and in Fukushima prefecture more women than men have been affected by inter-prefectural movement. After the disaster, women faced more serious and severe situations in terms of both employment and health when compared to men. Consultations at advice services highlighted problems regarding housework and child raising, implying that family and household responsibilities fall upon women, and that those responsibilities are growing. Elsewhere, cases were reported in which stress of various sources was resulting in increased violence against women. It is clear that overall women are more vulnerable to the effects of disaster than men.

Now, as recovery and reconstruction progress, women in the affected areas are facing a challenging employment environment, and the issue of securing adequate employment opportunities for women is a serious concern. In terms of providing support to would-be female entrepreneurs, there is a general need for entrepreneurial support in the affected areas, including to women. Such support should focus on the provision of funding and know-how and skills-based assistance. Equally, the issue of isolation within temporary housing is of particular concern among men, who tend to have less interaction with their local communities on a day to day basis. It should be noted that more men than women report an increase in alcohol consumption subsequent to the disaster.

There was a need for greater consideration of the differing needs of men and women with regard both to post-evacuation living circumstances and later processes of recovery and reconstruction.

At the same time, however, large numbers of women were involved on the front-line of disaster response after the Great East Japan Earthquake, working in rescue, relief, support to affected people, reconstruction,

recovery, and disaster management. It should still be noted that the proportion of women involved in decision making processes for disaster management and recovery measures was low, at the national and all other levels.

Some issues were reported that resulted from a failure to give due consideration to the needs of women and families raising children in evacuation sites and temporary housing, but equally there were examples in which such issues were resolved by having women participation in the operation and management of such facilities. In disaster affected areas, too, women were able to make use of their existing experiences and networks to form collaborations with diverse bodies, enabling the provision of fine-tuned support for affected people.

Women are an important resource in terms of disaster management and recovery forces, and they are expected to take on an increasingly important role. The question of how to promote further participation by women is important as a future agenda as highlighted by the inclusion of measures for such in the Basic Disaster Management Plan and the Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake.

As the report above has shown, the lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake made clear the importance of gender equality in disaster response; the importance of the day-to-day collaborative frameworks by multiple entities among national and local governments, Gender Equality Centers, universities, NPOs, NGOs, neighborhood associations, and private business; and the vital importance of the participation of women in the formulation of policy and principles for disaster management and recovery.

In order to build and develop communities that are able with withstand disaster, it is vital to consider the very ways in which we use land and build facilities. We need to develop a more deliberate approach to the development of evacuation sites and evacuation routes, and we need to ensure that the processes of consideration that are required are done with the full participation of men and women alike. Only by adopted a gender equal approach will we be able to ensure that measures reflect the needs of different and diverse groups of residents that make up a community, and that the measures are practical and sustainable. Women are more vulnerable than men to the negative impact of disaster, but that does not mean that women must merely be protected. Rather, women should be recognized as actors capable of working alongside men to tackle preparations for disaster on an everyday basis.

An inclusive society is one which does not exclude any person or group of people, and which shows due consideration for those persons unable or less able to speak up, and those persons who, when they do speak up, are seldom heard. The creation of such a society is inextricably linked to reducing the risk of social exclusion (e.g. isolation resulting from a lack of human relationships with people in local communities, inability to benefit from necessary services) faced by the vulnerable people who are most at risk from the impact of disasters. This viewpoint is not a perspective limited to the areas affected by disaster or the moments in which disaster occurs. It is a standpoint that relates to the very nature of society as a whole, and should be routinely considered as vital. The creation of a gender equal society, then, is very much linked to the realization of a society that can withstand the challenges of disaster.

Article 16: Reaffirming Disaster and Gender at an International Conference

At the 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held at the United Nations Headquarters, a resolution entitled 'Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters' was passed with consensus on March 9 2012. This resolution is designed to share the experiences and lessons of Japan with all countries of the world on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, to enhance the understanding of international society about natural disaster, and to promote measures that encourage disaster and disaster management measures to take the needs of women into account. This was the first resolution submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women by Japan.

The international community has repeatedly highlighted the need for the promotion of gender perspectives in disaster response, reconstruction, and disaster prevention, as well as for the promotion of female

participation in policy decision making processes. The CSW has previously come to Agreed Conclusions (46th Session, 2002) and Resolutions (49th Session, 2005) on such matters; other noted statements on the need for a gendered perspective in disaster response include the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, and the Hyogo Framework for Action from the World Conference for Disaster Reduction, held in 2005.

The CSW resolution was based on these existing documents, and incorporated insight from the experience of disaster response to the Great East Japan Earthquake. Specifically, the resolution highlighted the need for consideration of those most vulnerable to the effects of disaster—women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities—and the need to create an inclusive society that enabled the full participation of such persons. It also seeks to highlight the following to governments and international bodies: (a) the consideration of the perspectives and needs of women and families raising children, and the formulation and implementation of reconstruction projects sensitive to gender; (b) specific attention to the threat of violence against women, the prevention of exploitation including human trafficking, the protection of victims of violence, the provision of legal and other services; (c) obtaining and keeping gender- and age-specific data, keeping records of disaster relief from a gender perspective, the sharing and exchange of positive case studies, the use of such data in disaster prevention planning; (d) awareness and the promotion of the importance of the role in female volunteers in anticipating the needs of women

Reference 4: from the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office: Major Measures in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake

	Event	Response Measures by Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office
March 11 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Occurrence of Great East Japan Earthquake · Establishment of Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters (HQ Chief: Prime Minister) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dispatched bureau staff to the Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters as emergency response staff (until March 31)
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hydrogen explosion at building housing reactor 1 at the Tepco Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant 	
March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Hydrogen explosion at building housing reactor 3 at the Tepco Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant 	
March 16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issued a document, 'Disaster Response based on the Needs of Women and Persons Raising Children', which made certain requests on the nature of disaster response measures related to everyday life in evacuation sites, to the Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters; requested that the document be shared with related organizations and local governments
March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Special Headquarters for Measures to Assist the Lives of Affected People (HQ Chief: Minister of State for Disaster Management) set up under Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters (name changed on May 9 to Team in Charge of Assisting the Lives of Affected People) 	
March 18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dispatched staff members to the Local Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters (Miyagi prefecture) to gather information from the disaster affected area, and work with Gender Equality Centers and NPOs (until July 29; 15 staff in total (8 women, 7 men))
March 24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Amended part of 'Disaster Response based on the Needs of Women and Persons Raising Children', and issued the amended document together with a further document, 'Establishment of Dedicated Counseling Services for Women Affected by Disaster and the Promotion of those Services, and the Response to Women under Threat of Violence', to local governments, the Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters, and The Special Headquarters for Measures to Assist the Lives of Affected People.
March 30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Released a report, 'On Violence-related Counseling', pulling together information on counseling services in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures
April 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Official name of disaster determined as: Great East Japan Earthquake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Published a disaster response page on the Gender Equality Bureau website (subsequently updated regularly)
April 04		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issued a document, 'Great East Japan Earthquake Victim Support based on the Needs of Women and Persons Raising Children', requesting that the safety of volunteers be guaranteed and the views of women reflected in the operation of evacuation sites to local governments
April 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cabinet decision on establishment of Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake (held 13 times between April 14 and November 10 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Published information including telephone numbers on counseling services for women in the third issue of the wall newspaper distributed in the affected areas, as well as under articles in local newspapers
April 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Held local information exchange groups with relevant persons from government and business (Miyagi prefecture) (held four times in total; also held on May 5, May 25, June 23)
April 26		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Published information on positive examples of consideration given to women and families raising children in the seventh issue of the wall newspaper distributed in the affected areas · Published information on women's counseling services in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 'Life Support News' published by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare · Released a report containing examples of disaster response case studies from the Great Hanshin Earthquake: 'Case Studies on the Great Hanshin Earthquake: Reconstruction and Lifestyle Rehabilitation from Women's Perspectives' · Expert members of the Council for Gender Equality release a recommendation report: 'Recommendations on Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake: Incorporating a Gender Equality Perspective'
May 02		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Released a report on government support measures for women affected by the disaster, 'Support in Response to the Diverse Needs of People Affected by Disaster'; issued report to local governments (subsequently updated regularly)
May 09		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Release a document, 'On the Implementation of New Projects in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake', designed to promote the utilization of Bureau services and projects (counseling services on women's issues and violence, advisor dispatch project)
May 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reconstruction Design Council formulated the Seven Principles for Reconstruction Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Launched counseling service on women's issues and violence in Iwate prefecture
May 12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issued a document, 'Outline of Support and Information on Women's Employment', summarizing support and information on employment available for use by women to local governments (content amended December 8 2011, February 1 2012)
May 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters approve "Immediate Policy Measures for the Normalization of Lives in Areas Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake" 	
May 23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issued a report, 'Positive Examples of Reflecting the Needs and Perspectives of Women in Evacuation Sites in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake', compiled from case studies gathered by staff in disaster affected areas
June 06		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Members of the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality issued a document containing their recommendations, 'Toward Recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake: The Perspective and Power of Women'
June 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Basic Act on Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake passed (adopted June 24 2011) 	
June 23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issued a document summarizing issues of note regarding temporary housing, 'Disaster Response in Temporary Housing based on a Gender Equality Perspective', to local governments in disaster affected areas
June 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reconstruction Headquarters in Response to Great East Japan Earthquake, and Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Local Response Headquarters established 	
June 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "Towards Reconstruction: Hope beyond the Disaster" report issued by the Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Broadcast information on public service announcement (radio program) about incorporating gender equality perspectives in disaster response
June 28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Held the 'Symposium in Miyagi on Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake' in Sendai city (organizers: Cabinet Office, Miyagi Prefecture, Sendai City, Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation)
July 20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Specialist Committee on Basic Issues Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation, Council for Gender Equality, issue a summary document, 'Recommendations on Response to Great East Japan Earthquake from a Gender Equality Perspective'

July 29	· Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake approved by the Reconstruction Headquarters in Response to Great East Japan Earthquake	
August 01		· Use the Bureau website to promote Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake
August 03		· Bureau staff send to affected areas in order to conduct 'Survey on the Role of Gender Equality Centers during Times of Disaster' (conducted a further 8 times; survey findings released April 9)
August 24		· 'Reconstruction in Miyagi: Women's Symposium' held in Sendai city (organizers: Cabinet Office; co-organizers: Fukushima Local Response Headquarters)
September 01		· Launched counseling service on women's issues and violence in Miyagi prefecture
September 20	· Gender Equality Teams established in the Secretariat of the Reconstruction Headquarters in Response to Great East Japan Earthquake	
September 30		· Launched the 'Survey on the Status of Disaster Response from a Gender Equality Perspective'
October 22		· Held the 'Symposium in Iwate on Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake' in Morioka city (organizers: Cabinet Office, Iwate Prefecture, Iwate Gender Equality Center)
December 09	· Law to Establish the Reconstruction Agency passed (adopted February 10 2012)	
December 15		· Issued a document requesting that measures be put in place to ensure that diverse perspectives (women, children, young people, the elderly, persons with disabilities, etc.) are reflected in disaster response measures, 'On the Reflection of Diverse Perspectives in the Reconstruction Process', to local governments (issued jointly with the Secretariat of the Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters; Office for Policies on Cohesive Society, Cabinet Office; Office for the General Promotion of Policy on Youth Affairs and Childrearing, Cabinet Office)
December 27	· Basic Disaster Management Plan of the Central Disaster Management Council amended	
January 12 2012		· Pulled together information on disaster related measures adopting a gender equality approach in three documents ('Usage Examples of Great East Japan Earthquake-related Reconstruction Funds from the Perspective of Gender Equality', 'Case Studies on Rebuilding Community Life from a Gender Equality Approach', 'Case Studies on Community Businesses related to the Great Hanshin Earthquake'), and issued to local governments in disaster affected areas
January 23		· Issued a document, 'Employment Creation Program for Lifelong Activity, Full Participation, Generational Inheritance', written by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, designed to promote awareness to local governments in disaster affected areas
February 10	· Reconstruction Agency established	
February 11		· Launched counseling service on women's issues and violence in Fukushima prefecture
February 15		· Issued a document on points of note relating to community building geared to reconstruction, 'Reconstruction-focused Community Building Incorporating a Gender Equal Perspective', to local governments in disaster affected areas
March 09	· Commission on the Status of Women pass resolution on 'Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters'	
March 13		· Issued a document containing samples of project plans for submission to the Employment Creation Program for Lifelong Activity, Full Participation, Generational

		Inheritance (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) to local governments in disaster affected areas
March 14		·Included statements on the greater promotion of gender equality approaches in disaster prevention and recovery and reconstruction in the 'On Future Measures' document approved by the Council for Gender Equality

Reference: Website of the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office: <http://www.gender.go.jp/saigai/index.html>