

Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from the Perspective of Gender Equality

We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for the outstanding support and solidarity we received from all over the world after the Great East Japan Earthquake .

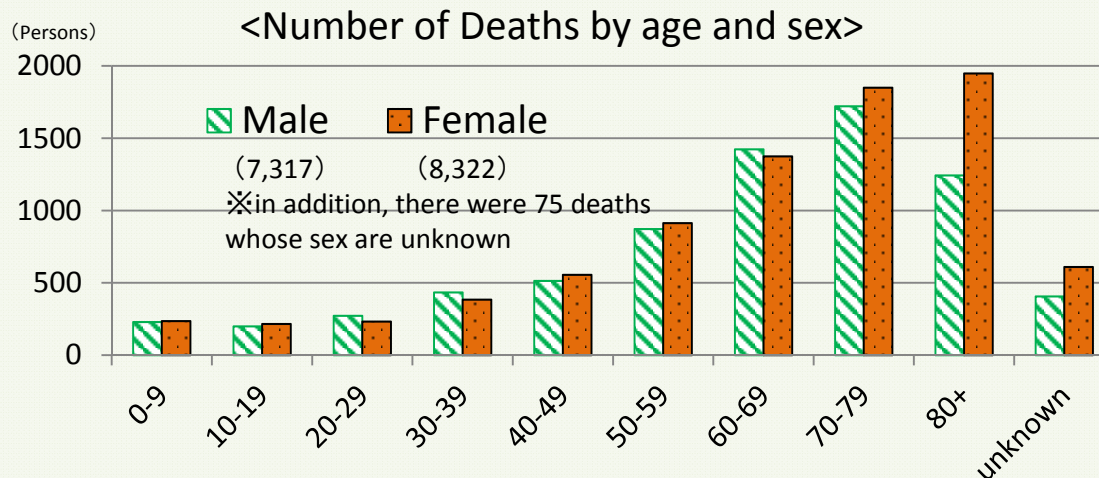
Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office
Government of Japan
February 2012

< Overview of the Great East Japan Earthquake >

Date: March 11, 2011 at 14:46

Scale: Magnitude of 9.0, 24km depth at hypocenter

Maximum Height of Tsunami Tide: 9.3m (on record)



※ Number of deaths, established at postmortem examination from March 11, 2011 to September 11, 2011 in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures. Source: National Police Agency



◆ Action Items Taken by Gender Equality Bureau

Issues and support for disaster victim from the viewpoint of gender equality

<issues that emerged after the disaster>

- Little participation by women in decision-making in consideration of disaster prevention measures during ordinary times and managing communities during the scene of disasters
- Lack of consideration and viewpoints of women for disaster prevention and response
- Strengthen gender stereotypes

Assessing the needs of women by sending Gender Equality Bureau staff in the disaster areas, the following measures are being taken to address the needs of mothers and other women in the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster

○ Requesting disaster response efforts in ways that meet the needs of mothers and other women

Getting out info on good examples of shelters and temporary housing, requesting measures

- Providing women's sanitary products, baby formula, baby food, etc.
- Designing shelters so they are women-friendly and conducive to childcare by, for example, providing women-only changing rooms and separate restrooms for men and women
- Running shelters in a manner that reflects the needs of women
- Taking measures to prevent violence against women
- Building frameworks for using temporary housing and managing communities
- Ensure mental wellbeing

○ Providing information on support that will help women find employment

○ Implementing projects for the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster

Commensurate with the needs of local communities, projects such as establishing counseling services for women with problems and victims of violence, and dispatching advisors should be implemented

○ Setting up a website that supports gender-equal viewpoints

- Things being done by the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office
- Info on support for the needs of women victims of the Tohoku disaster
- Links to disaster management, victim support, etc.



<partition at shelter>



<women's changing room>



<providing sanitary products>

◆ Toward Reconstruction

Reconstruction reflecting the viewpoints of women and ordinary citizens

Basic Act on Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake (excerpts) (In force on June 24, 2011)

(Basic Principle)

The will of the residents of the disaster stricken areas should be respected, and the viewpoints of diverse segments of the population of this country, including women, children, and the disabled, shall be incorporated.

Toward Reconstruction "Hope Beyond the Disaster" (excerpt) (June 25, 2011 Meeting of the Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake)

It is important that young persons who thus far have not been able to find their place in their communities, the elderly and persons with disabilities who tend to be isolated, and women who have difficulty voicing their opinions, use this great disaster as an opportunity to proactively participate in local regional development. Above all, we must always maintain the viewpoint of gender equality.

Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake (excerpts) (Reconstruction Headquarters in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, July 29, 2011)

Basic Concept

- From the standpoint of gender equality, women's participation will be promoted in all facets of the reconstruction process.

(1) Building disaster-resistant and resilient regions

- Promote a new concept of building towns that gives due consideration to the elderly, children, women, disabled persons, etc.

(2) Restoration of community life

- Implement counseling services for women.
- Secure employment opportunities for the youth, women, the elderly, and the disabled in the disaster-affected regions.
- Take measures to support women's entrepreneurial activities, such as assistance in launching community businesses in the disaster-affected regions, consulting services for women in rural areas seeking to start businesses (e.g. food processing businesses and businesses that trade goods/services between urban and rural areas), and training to help women acquire know-how in the field of business management.

(3) Revival of Local Economic Activities (agriculture)

- Create income and employment opportunities not only by promoting agricultural production but also by combining various other efforts, including promotion of "reconstruction tourism," coordinating with welfare services, etc., with elderly people and women participating in these areas.

Policies and Measures

◆ Revisions to the Basic Plan for Disaster Prevention (December 2011)

Reflecting recent disasters including the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Central Disaster Management Council decided on some revisions to the Basic Plan for Disaster Prevention. These include drastic improvement of earthquake and tsunami countermeasures and revision of disaster-prevention countermeasures. The revised plan includes more concrete measures such as reflection of the needs of women and families with babies and mental healthcare at temporary housing.

Excerpt of revised plan

○ Change of social structure and correspondence on disaster prevention

To strengthen the response capabilities of communities to disaster by promoting anti-disaster measures that reflect a wide range of viewpoints among ordinary citizens, it is necessary to expand the role of women in the process of deciding policies and principles as well as in actual disaster management situations, and to establish a gender-equal framework for disaster management.

○ Dissemination of knowledge and training on disaster prevention with consideration of persons who need assistance during disasters

Sufficient consideration must be given from the perspectives of both men and women, including differing needs, etc.

○ Operational management of shelters

Promote the participation of women in operational management of shelter and take into consideration the perspectives of both men and women, including differing needs. Especially, shelters should be operated in a manner that reflects the needs of women and families with babies, which include setting up spaces for drying women's articles, changing facilities, nursing rooms, distributing women's sanitary products and underwear by women, and ensuring the safety of shelters.

○ Operational management of temporary housing

Temporary housing must be safe, and it should provide mental healthcare for preventing solitary death and withdrawal, and organizing and managing communities by residents. Also, consideration must be given to promote the participation of women and to reflect the opinions of ordinary citizens, including women.