

Message from the President on the Publication of *The Great East Japan Earthquake/Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and Hiroshima University*



We are pleased to announce the publication of *The Great East Japan Earthquake/Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Disaster and Hiroshima University*. The Great East Japan Earthquake that struck on March 11, 2011, and the ensuing nuclear disaster at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) brought unprecedented devastation to Japan. The recovery and reconstruction from which will take several decades. This major catastrophe can also be viewed as a wake-up call to Japanese society regarding overconfidence in science and technology and a neglect of the importance of coexisting with nature.

Immediately following the earthquake/tsunami, dual natural disasters, and ensuing nuclear accident, Hiroshima University dispatched its Radiation Emergency Medical Assistance Team. With this first dispatch we began providing medical assistance and other kinds of support for reconstruction efforts in the disaster-hit areas, particularly Fukushima Prefecture where the nuclear power plant accident occurred. We recognize that assistance with reconstruction efforts in the disaster-hit areas as one of our most important missions and have engaged in relevant support activities primarily for two reasons: 1) Hiroshima University has been selected as a tertiary radiation emergency medical institution for the Western Japan Block and, therefore, is expected to play a pivotal role in providing radiation emergency medical care in the event of nuclear disasters; and 2) the university was founded in the world's first city to have ever suffered an atomic bombing. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the faculty and staff of Hiroshima University for their thorough understanding of and earnest devotion to that mission. I am also proud to note that

many of our faculty, staff members, and students have, of their own volition taken the initiative to plan and implement various support activities for the disaster-stricken regions.

Despite the eager support activities conducted by Hiroshima University as well as many other organizations and individuals from both inside and outside the country, recovery and reconstruction from the devastation of the earthquake, the tsunami, and the radiation disaster fall far below the expectations of the residents of the disaster-hit areas, thus posing numerous challenges. In the years to come, in order to enhance our activities we believe it will be necessary to further strengthen our cooperation with the municipalities and organizations involved.

Almost two years have passed since we started our post-disaster support activities. At this juncture, we have decided to publish *The Great East Japan Earthquake/Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and Hiroshima University* in order to review our support activities, determine if we have met the expectations of the residents in the disaster areas, and apply the findings to our future efforts. With these shared objectives, many faculty members and students who have engaged in various support activities have contributed to this publication.

In conclusion, let me express my sincere hope that the disaster-stricken areas will be rebuilt and recover as soon as possible from the devastation caused by the earthquake/tsunami and nuclear accident.

March 1, 2013

Toshimasa Asahara

President

Hiroshima University

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