

WHAT'S NEW from the Embassy of Japan in Luxembourg

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As all of you know, we, the Japanese, are now undergoing the most difficult moments caused by a huge and devastating earthquake of Magnitude 9 followed by a colossal tsunami which occurred on the 11th of March 2011.

For the Japanese people living abroad, following these sad events by watching television or reading newspapers is quite heartbreaking. In spite of all these difficulties, we have to cope with this situation with strength. To my relief, I heard through the Embassy of Luxembourg in Tokyo that all Luxembourgish people living in Japan were confirmed to be safe.

As of today, unfortunately the Japanese Government has identified that more than 26 thousand people have passed away or are missing and about 270 thousand are taking refuge in provisional evacuation centers. The people of Japan are certainly confronted with an unprecedented difficulty and hardship. However, we are doing our best to deal with these serious situations. Authorities are making everything possible to rescue the victims and ensure the safety of the public.

From the very outset of this tragedy, we have received a lot of sympathy and compassion from all over the world. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Government and the people of Luxembourg for the heart-warming messages of support and sympathy as well as for their willingness to assist the victims and people who suffered damage by this unprecedented catastrophe.

Despite all possible efforts, many shelters still lack sufficient food, water or fuel. Taking account of this situation and appreciating the sense of unity and solidarity shown by our friends in Luxembourg, the Embassy of Japan has opened a special bank account to receive donations from people willing to help the people suffering from this disaster. The total sum of the raised funds will be transferred to the Japanese Red Cross Society, and then directly distributed among the affected population through the Distribution Committee of the local governments in the disaster-affected prefectures. Donators might, if they prefer, directly donate to the Japanese Red Cross Society.

I can fully understand the fact that people from Luxembourg are concerned about radioactive pollution. However, as the relevant Luxembourgish and European authorities state, there is no danger here in the Grand-Duchy.

Japanese relevant bodies are closely monitoring, measuring and publishing levels of radioactive contaminants in foods, drinking water, air as well as in soil and seawater. The environmental radioactivity level around Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Stations and in all prefectures of Japan are measured and published. In accordance with this data, the Government is already taking and announcing appropriate measures. You can find detailed information on the websites of bodies such as the Prime Minister's Cabinet as well as the Japanese Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, all available in English.

International organizations are issuing reassuring messages, consistent with the objective data. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) notices that there is no general restrictions on travel to Japan, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) as well as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) state that international flights and maritime operations can continue normally into and out of Japan's major airports and sea ports, excluding those damaged by the tsunami. Furthermore, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) confirmed the continued safety of air transport operations in Japan. We also welcomed a delegation from the IAEA to allow specialists to measure the radioactivity level in Japan.

I would like to invite the Luxembourgish people to continue to be objective and reasonable when reacting to the situation in Japan and would like to thank them all for the precious support they have shown us.

Finally, I would like to stress once more that I am confident that Japan and its people will recover before long.