

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Suetsuna at the memorial ceremony of the first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11th March 2011 (13 March 2012, at the Residence of Ambassador)

Excellencen, Dir Dammen an Dir Hären, Gudden Mëtteg an Haerzlech Wëllkomm.

<Introduction>

One year has already passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11th March last year. Today I invited all of you to be with us in order to pay tribute to the victims and to express our heartfelt thanks toward the support from the international community. At the same time I would like to share the information on how Japan is now on a steady path to recovery after one-year relentless efforts.

Gratitude to Luxembourg and the International community

- First of all, on behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sincere gratitude for the tremendous assistance extended by the international community, in particular, by the people and the Government of Luxembourg. Following the earthquake, our Embassy has received messages of condolences and donation from many individuals, companies and associations in Luxembourg. I strongly believe that the donation transmitted to disaster-struck prefectures through the Japanese Red Cross Society continues to contribute largely to the recovery of the daily lives of victims.
- Furthermore, I am very grateful for two high-level visits soon after the disaster, which were the evidence of solidarity and friendship of Luxembourg toward us. Only one month later, Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn visited Japan. Then in May, H.R.H, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Prince Guillaume, together with the economic mission headed by former Minister of the Economy and Foreign Trade Mr Krecke, visited our country. You cannot imagine how those events encouraged the people of Japan during this unprecedented challenging period.

Efforts toward “open reconstruction”

- Now let me highlight some major progress during the past one year. Following the finalization of the basic guidelines for reconstruction from the

Earthquake in last July, the Government has been fully engaged in the efforts for assuring as rapidly as possible recovery and reconstruction. Currently, the infrastructure and economy of the disaster-affected areas of Tohoku, are recovering steadily. The daily lives of those outside the affected areas, including the metropolitan area of Tokyo, have completely returned to normal.

The relevant legislation passed at previous Diet sessions lays out the tools for reconstruction to stimulate investment from both within Japan and overseas. Thus, our Government welcomes inward investment by foreign enterprises and visits to Japan as partners for "open reconstruction."

(Nuclear safety and energy)

- I have to inform you that also progress has been made in the path to the settlement of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station since the establishment of a "Roadmap towards Restoration" in last April. At the end of last year, the reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station had been brought to "a cold shutdown condition" and stabilized and now Japan is following a concrete plan towards decommissioning the reactors.

- I am convinced that Japan has a responsibility to share knowledge and lessons learned from the accident with the international community, thereby contributing to an enhancement of the international nuclear safety. In this context, Japan will organize "the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety" from 15-17 December this year in Fukushima prefecture itself, in co-sponsorship with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Active participation from Luxembourg would be very much appreciated in this regard.

- Currently a comprehensive review of energy mix is being held in Japan, in order to pursue the optimum balance that ensures a safe, cost-effective, sustainable and stable supply including renewable energy. By summer, a revision of the government's long-term energy plan will be in place.

(Restoration of confidence on the safety of Japan)

- Another important challenge for us is to prevent harmful rumors about radiation which may hinder reconstruction. Since the disaster of March 11, we have taken every opportunity to ensure timely provision of accurate information to the international community. At the same time, we have asked the international community to act based on scientific evidence. As a

result, a growing number of countries that had imposed across-the-board restrictions on imports from the concerned areas in Japan are now easing these restrictions.

- As well, the number of foreign travelers to Japan, which decreased significantly in the wake of the disaster, has been on a recovery track. I am very pleased that the 2012 Vakanz Tourism Fair, which took place in Luxexpo from 20-22 January, was an excellent occasion to appeal that Japan is now safe and the doors are open for tourists from all over the world. Keeping in mind strong interest and passion expressed by many visitors toward Japan, we will pursue every effort so that Japan could continue to be an attractive destination for foreign tourists, business people and students.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I have to say that there remain a number of crucial challenges to be addressed, however, Japan will continue to be fully engaged in the efforts for recovery and revitalization of economy, actively working with its partners worldwide. We will also increase cooperation to address the challenges of the global community, in particular, by sharing best practices in crisis management and directly supporting overseas counterparts when they are faced with similar challenges.

- Now, I would like to invite here three students to hand them folkcraft goods from three affected prefectures; Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate, as a token of our profound gratitude. Students from St George's International School, European School and Ecole Sainte Sophie kindly came to the embassy to provide generous donation after the disaster.

- Finally, let me draw your attention to the paintings by children in disaster-struck areas, which were inspired by their thanks to warm friendship demonstrated from all over the world. In another room, you can see a video on reconstruction activities of the Japanese Red Cross Society. We provide today Japanese saké in the tent, as a proof of our strong support to disaster-affected areas. Some refreshments are also available.

Thank you for your kind attention. Villmols Merci.