

Committee for Policy Planning on Disaster Management Final Report – Toward the reconstruction for sound and unwavering Japan - Summary

■ Chapter 1 Basic attitude toward disaster countermeasures - To construct a disaster-resilient society -

- Protecting the people and the country from disasters is the ultimate responsibility of the government.
- Awareness of large-scale disasters at the “national crises” level
- Make every possible effort for preparation through “mainstreaming of disaster reduction”
- Mass/concentrated provision of resources upon disaster occurrence with the coordination of public and private sectors
- Turning the disaster experience into hopes for suitable restructuring for the local community
- Disaster management is the frontier of the revitalization of Japan
- Presenting the "disaster management leader Japan" to the world

■ Chapter 2 Basic principles of disaster management policy - Thorough pursuit of "disaster reduction" in all areas of disaster countermeasures -

(Premises)

- Be aware that one disaster can trigger other disasters
- Utilize every latest scientific knowledge
- Conduct full inspection of all policy fields from the perspective of disaster management

(Measures after a disaster strikes)

- Never base any part of disaster management on “normal conditions”
- Understand and predict the situations to make timely decisions with limited information
- Be aware that all aspects of disaster management, including saving lives, is a competition with time

(Pre-disaster measures)

- Realize a disaster-resilient nation and communities with a combination of structural and non-structural measures
- Rely on the power of “people” to protect their own lives and daily lives, and government “collaboration” with the private sectors and citizens
- Build a “market” that can withstand disaster risks
- Avoid “optimism” in disaster management, and presume the worst

(Support for disaster victims and recovery/reconstruction)

- React with flexibility and agility toward changes in needs ; recognizing diversity in disaster affected people
- Aim not only for recovering former state of the disaster areas, but also for the realization of “building back better”
- Consider local characteristics and “local capacities” of recovery/reconstruction in the affected area

■ Chapter 3 Future priority issues - Based on the basic principles of disaster management policy-

Major items

Section 1 Efforts to save lives from disasters and to support and recover the daily living of affected people

Initial response to save lives from disasters

- The foremost goal of the initial response measures in disaster management is to save lives, and life-saving activities and tasks pertaining thereto should be prioritized above all else in allocating human and material resources during the first 72 hours after disaster occurrence.
- Emergency evacuation locations for temporary escape from disasters, and evacuation centers where disaster victims will live in for medium- to long-term, should be clearly differentiated and designated by municipalities, and residents should be thoroughly familiarized with access to and specific locations of the centers.
- Collaborative measures among disaster base hospitals and other healthcare facilities within and outside the disaster area should be established beforehand so as to enable effective medical practices during disasters.

Detailed support for life in evacuation centres and reconstructing livelihoods of affected people

- The Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act should clearly state the philosophy and basics of disaster victims support, and it is the act upon which execution of the Disaster Relief Act, the Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims and other laws should be based.
- Matters of concern that arise during evacuation life such as food, temperature control, and mental and physical healthcare measures at evacuation centers should be legally stipulated.
- Matters regarding those with special needs during disasters, such as creation of lists, should be stipulated by laws and regulations pertaining to disaster countermeasures, and such matters and their relationship with personal information protection laws and regulations should be reviewed and organized.

Early recovery of damage on critical infrastructure

- The managers of each critical infrastructure should review design standards for improved damage prevention capacity, prepare manuals for rapid recovery, etc., as soon as possible.
- Mechanisms of cooperation and coordination among local governments as well as between local governments and private businesses, plus mechanisms for central government involvement, should be prepared regarding broad-area disposal structures for disaster waste, securing final disposal sites, etc.

Section 2 Strengthening of disaster response preparedness

Enhancement and strengthening of disaster response systems

- The functions of the general disaster management division of the government should be fortified through system enhancements made possible by coordinating with local governments in dispatching and training employees as well as other aspects, and through clarification of roles of the general disaster management division of the government, etc. At the same time, disaster management measures of Japan and its regions should be enhanced through stronger coordination of various disaster prevention divisions within the government, and through enhanced and fortified disaster management drills that contribute to human resource cultivation in, and stronger coalition between, the central and local governments, etc.
- Fundamental improvements should be made as soon as possible so that truly necessary information can be collected for and provided to the Comprehensive Disaster Management Information System.
- There is a need to become aware of the possibility of compound disasters, to review disaster management plans, etc., and to enhance preparations.

Response to nationwide "emergency situation" caused by natural hazards

- The scope of emergency measures during emergency disaster situations is currently limited to economic measures, etc., but the need for possible expansion of the scope from the perspectives of supporting stranded victims, maintenance of order, etc., should be deliberated.
- Based on the experience and handling of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the ideal state of allocation of administrative responsibilities, authority, and financial burdens of the central government, prefectures, and municipalities during emergency situations should be deliberated.

Section 3 Multifaceted efforts to prevent disasters

Clarification of the basic ideas on disaster management, and collaboration by various actors

- Basic objectives in disaster management (disaster reduction, self-help, mutual help, public help, etc.) should be legally justified.

Inheritance and development of the disaster culture

- Disaster education should be further promoted by reorganizing the content of systematic disaster education in schools, clarifying its positioning in the teaching guidelines, etc.
- Efforts should be made to reflect training results onto disaster management systems and countermeasures by incorporating external evaluations in order to clarify achievement status of training objectives and supporting/engendering awareness/knowledge of present issues.

Construction of a disaster-resilient nation, regions and communities

- From the perspective of inducing appropriate selection of place of residence, urban plans and land use plans that take into consideration local disaster risks should be formulated.

Disaster countermeasures reflecting the latest scientific knowledge

- Investigation and research for elucidation of generation mechanism of Nankai Trough Mega-Earthquake as well as for prediction of earthquake occurrence should be conducted.

Section 4 Efforts toward prompt and smooth reconstruction

- A legal framework for reconstruction that enables formulation of fundamental policies regarding reconstruction, establishment of a reconstruction headquarters that handles general coordination of measures by relevant administrative bodies, etc. should be prepared.
- Regarding the special measures taken during the Great East Japan Earthquake, legal measures should be taken so as to enable prompt invocation upon occurrence of a large-scale disaster.

Section 5 Establishment of the systems to address countermeasures with concerted efforts from across the country

- Each actor should collaborate to their maximum capabilities to create a national movement regarding disaster prevention.

■ Chapter 4 Toward the enhancement of future disaster countermeasures

Further improvement of disaster management systems and countermeasures through rapid improvement and enhancement of necessary systems, promotion of specific measures, and regular and continuous monitoring and evaluation of implementation status