

Toward the Future of Fukushima 2014

“I strongly felt that happiness lied in everyday normal life which we tend to take for granted.”

---A junior high school student’s honest feeling.

“Shortly after the disaster, I could not stand to see the buds of cherry blossoms growing day by day. Spring was the season that I was longing for before the disaster, but I just could not accept it at that time.”

---A remark by a teacher who lost his students, who had just graduated from school, in the tsunami.

The earthquake, the tsunami and the accident at the nuclear power station. Citizens of Fukushima Prefecture have earnestly devoted themselves for the past three years to overcome the impacts of the disaster that suddenly devastated the prefecture, including the ensuing reputational damage. I would like to offer my heartfelt respect to all citizens for your efforts. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to people who are supporting Fukushima throughout Japan and the world.

Even after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the world is still under the threat of natural disasters. We can do nothing but feel how powerless human beings are when it comes to the forces of nature. Yet, we must make the upmost efforts in order to protect invaluable lives, and maintain safety.

In terms of energy policy, many discussions arose after the disaster. Now is the time when global discussion must take place to reconsider energy policies again and view while looking ahead to the next decade, the next three decades, and even further.

We thought about the safety and the role of regions based on the lessons we learned from the unprecedented disaster, and demanded decommissioning of all reactors of nuclear power stations in the prefecture. We are fully determined to proceed with renewable energy projects which are symbolized by a floating wind power farm, called “Fukushima’s Future”, and further promote a regional economy and society free from nuclear power from Fukushima.

Moreover, we will promote advanced research including medical services which is specific to Fukushima, with which we have to contribute to the world.

Even now, there are many local residents evacuating from their homes in the prefecture.

A remark given by an evacuee from Futaba County.

“After being forced to evacuate, my husband was never ever able to return home before he passed away. He lived an ordinary life up until the day of the disaster. When I think of the deep meaning of his first tears shed before us during his last moment, I cannot look away from the many difficult circumstances we are facing. When the evacuation order is lifted, I will bring him back to our home with us. ”

I take very seriously the feelings and desires of each and every citizen from regions where people will soon be able to return home, from regions where people will not be able to return for a long time, and those who are determined to start again in a new community, and will make my best efforts for them.

Rich nature preserved since ancient times, warm-natured people, connections, culture and new meetings born in the wake of the disaster. These all make up our “Hometown”. We must conserve and grow these invaluable treasures and pass them down to the next generation. I believe that true revitalization is to build a Fukushima in which all who call Fukushima their home can take pride in.

“I like my nature-rich hometown where my friends and family members are living. I hope Fukushima will become a place where everyone can live with smiles on their faces when I grow up. ”

“We want to encourage people like people who encouraged us.”

Such sincere expressions by children are like a light which illuminates the road along which Fukushima moves forward.

Let’s all step forward together toward the future that Fukushima aims to build.

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Yuhei Sato

Governor of Fukushima Prefecture