

Online Symposium:
Ten Years after the Earthquake
—To Realize Future that Every One of
Us Wishes to Have.

February 27, 2021 14:00-16:00

Organized by AAR Japan [Association for Aid and Relief, Japan]

First half: Summary of AAR's support for the Great East Japan Earthquake and report on the actual situation in the three prefectures in Tohoku

Introduction

Yoshiteru Horie (Secretary General of AAR Japan)

Horie: Thank you every one for sparing your precious time today to attend our “AAR Online Symposium: Ten Years after the Earthquake—To Realize Future that Every One of Us Wishes to Have.” I am Yoshiteru Horie, Secretary General. First of all, let me express my sympathies to those who were hit by the earthquake off the coast of Fukushima Prefecture on the 13th of this month. Originally it was reported that no one was killed in the earthquake, but later I learned that there actually was one death toll, and I am really sorry for that.

We will soon have the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. They say ten years can bring a lot of changes. Ten years appear to be a very long period. But I believe that many people, particularly those who lived in the East Japan area north of the Kanto District, do remember clearly where they were and what they were doing at 2:46 pm that day, as if the earthquake had hit them yesterday. After the big earthquake came the huge tsunami, which was further followed by the nuclear accident at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant, making it an unprecedented disaster that no one has ever experienced. Ten days or so after the earthquake, I drove north from Minami Soma City in Fukushima Prefecture to Miyako City in Iwate Prefecture. Along the roads lied piles of debris for hundreds of kilometers on both sides. I will never forget what I saw that day.

Immediately after the earthquake, AAR started providing emergency support, sending officers and staff members to the area, and offered various types of aids, including soup kitchens , distribution of emergency relief supplies, mobile medical care services, and fixing facilities for PWDs and aged. We have been providing aids to date, although the scope of people we are doing so to is now somewhat narrower, including PWDs aged, and those affected by the nuclear accident. Over the past years, a lot of individuals and groups have helped us. Monetary aids and subsidies, both from within Japan and from overseas, amounted to some 3.7 billion yen. I would like to take this opportunities to thank the supporters again.

I believe many of you are aware that in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, were adopted by the United Nations. The aim is to build by 2030 a world where no one is left behind. Once there is a major disaster such as the Great East Japan Earthquake, many people lose families, homes, and jobs. They lose their livelihood and communities, or, in other words, where they belong to. Some of them are left alone this way. AAR has been providing support for such people, who tend to be left behind so that they can find where they belong to. Ten years have passed since the disaster, and people generally believe that the reconstruction is much in progress. The impact of the nuclear accident,

however, is still felt, and is aggravated by the damages caused by Typhoon Hagibis (No. 19) in 2019 and recent major earthquake aftershocks. From the viewpoint of AAR, the 10th anniversary is not a milestone: we will continue our support activities in the Tohoku Area.

Today, we will carry out discussions, with online participation of people who are helping our activities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures. Together, we will discuss what we can do so that those living in the affected areas of Tohoku, which is still on its way to reconstruction, can realize the future that every one of them wishes to have without being left behind. I hope we have a lively session today.

1. Keynote Speech: The Great East Japan Earthquake and "Human Security"

Yukie Osa (President of AAR Japan)

Osa: Thank you very much. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our online symposium today. Now, like Mr. Horie, Secretary General, I would like to give messages to those hit by the Earthquake and to those supporting our activities. Today, however, I have to concentrate on the keynote speech, so I will leave my messages to them to other opportunities.

The title of my keynote speech today is "Great East Japan Earthquake and 'Human Security.'" Let me first define the human security. The following definition was made by Ms. Sadako Ogata, who was deceased two years ago. The idea of human security is, with focuses on each human being, to give top priority to the security of each human being and to give emphasis on people promoting their own safety and development. Now that ten years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred, I would like to revisit the day of the disaster again with this concept in mind.

My emphasis today is on "What the Great East Japan Earthquake Revealed," including the following four points: "Japan's Demography and High Mortality Rate of the Elderly," "Damages Mainly on Vulnerable People, Particularly PWDs," "Burden on Women," and "Nuclear Disaster." I will take up these points, and also the concept of prevention. It is said that, at the time of major disasters or incidents, various social issues, which are normally hidden, are revealed.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and "Human Security"— (1) High mortality rate among the elderly

One of the revelation of the Great East Japan Earthquake was Japan's highest mortality rate of the elderly people. Do you know that Japan is inherently a country where the ratio of the elderly people is the highest globally? Everybody knows that the average life expectancy of the Japanese is very long, but at the time of the earthquake the ratio was the highest globally. In other words, this was, since the beginning of the history, or since the beginning of the earth, or since the dawn of humanity, a disaster among whose victims the ratio of the elderly people was the highest. At that time, the ratio of people

aged 60 or higher was about 30% of the population. Let me repeat that this was a disaster in which the ratio of the elderly among the victims was the record high, not only in Japan but around the world, and in history.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and "Human Security"— (2) Damage concentrated on PWDs and the burden on women.

The size of a disaster may be the same for all the people, but the damages that it causes are very different from person to person and from region to region. A typical example, I believe, is the damages that people with disabilities suffered. Please see the reference materials at your hand. This is a result of research carried out by the crew of “Welfare Network” of NHK. This is a chart on “Normalization” published by the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD). It is in very fine print but if you look at the bottom line, it covers 27 municipalities and shows the overall death rate and that for persons with disabilities.

The overall rate was 1.03% while the rate for persons with disabilities was 2.06%, almost twice as high. In particular, in Onagawa Town in Miyagi Prefecture where the damages were very severe and the death rate was high. About 7% of the population were killed, but the mortality rate for persons with disabilities was 13.88%, almost twice as high. This figure, about 14%, was for persons with any disabilities, but the rate for those with hearing difficulties was 22.5% and that for physically disabled 18.45%. It is hard to believe that a disaster that occurred in a developed country like Japan caused such damages.

Further, whether it is all right to call women in general as vulnerable, it is probably true that women, even though they themselves were victims of the disaster, were given various tasks as usual, or even more than usual, at the evacuation center or at their local communities. Their burden was more than usual.

It may not be just Japan, but I think the Japanese society is where certain members are given excessive burden of social issues. In the Japanese society, minority people in the peripheral and those facing certain social issues such as nuclear power stations and military bases are also suffering badly. It is embarrassing to admit, but I live in Tokyo and used to consume electricity from Tokyo Electric Power as much as I please. I had never given thought to how the power is generated before the disaster. It was also my first time to know what radiation the nuclear power generation is forcing the workers at the facilities to be exposed to at normal times, not at the time of the earthquake. The nuclear disaster and radiation-exposed workers were, I believe, two of the major social issues that the Great East Japan Earthquake brought to light.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and "Human Security"— (3) From the perspective of human security.

I would now like to take the disaster up from the viewpoint of human security. Let me repeat that the human security is, with focuses on each human being, to give top priority to the security of each human being. A different definition is to protect essential cores that are indispensable to the human life in order to secure freedom and achievement of full potential of all the people. These definitions are both rather vague, but the concept was actually intentionally defined vague. The artificially vague definitions were made with the intention that they are applicable to all the people.

The next question is who on earth are the persons that the human security is designed for. According to the concept of international cooperation, the human security is usually applicable to people in the developing countries or refugees and not much to do with people in the developed countries. The disaster revealed that, even in the developed countries, there are many people whose human security is not ensured, and that is particularly true at the time of disasters. If we look at the aid or disaster relief support from the viewpoint of human security, this concept, I think, requires the supporters to always give top priority to the people to whom it is difficult to deliver the support, namely, the aged people, persons with disabilities, and socially vulnerable people who need special care. I believe Ms. Nogiwa of the Association will give a detailed report on this point.

From the viewpoint of policy concept, I think the notion also requires policies that take into consideration the minority people in the peripheral of the society and those facing certain social issues such as nuclear power stations and military bases. The question, then, is who are the people whose human security needs to be ensured. I would like to say that the scope should include not only us living here now but also those that will live in the future and those that lived in the past. The latter, I mean, is the dignity and mourning of the deceased.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and "Human Security"— (4) Human Security as a Prevention Concept.

I think Mr. Horie, our Secretary General, earlier talked about his journey from Soma City northwards along the coast in late March 2011. It is my personal affair, but I was in the front passenger seat of the car. We two were looking at scenes along the coast that resembled like those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the nuclear bombing we saw on photos. At that time, Mr. Horie was sitting next to me, and shouting something like “Osa-san, I cannot believe it!” While he was shouting something, I suddenly got awfully drowsy. The worst drowsiness or languor in my life. I blamed myself—how can I get drowsy, looking at such disastrous scenes?

Sometime thereafter, I had an opportunity to talk with Buddhist priests and nuns, who, by the way, were not victims of the disaster. I do not think I am very sensitive to spiritual matters, but they said that, regardless of whether one is sensitive or not, when a large number of people or someone dies, something gets resonant and one may feel really drowsy even to a point where he or she will be unable to keep standing. At the time of disaster, many lives were lost, not just human but also animals,

and everything in the natural world was washed away and destroyed. I now feel that something that is very spiritually horrendous hit me at that time, not that I was sleepy.

At the areas hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake, people talk about wishing to see someone close that was died in the disaster, even if he or she is now a ghost. I heard that there are also many rumors about seeing ghosts.. Human beings need dignity, not only living people but also the deceased. The concept of human security is thus to pay respect to the dignity of deceased people as well, not just that of living people. We will need to continue mourning the deceased. Another aspect is, if we consider the human security as applicable to people not living right now, it should also be applicable to those yet to live. It means that we are responsible for prevention. Another earthquake hit Fukushima Prefecture just recently, and we do not know when Japan will be hit by another disasters in the future or what kind of disasters will hit Japan. There definitely is a concept of human security as a preventative measure that will help the people living in the future at the time of such disasters.

At the time of the Kumamoto Earthquake, AAR went into action. Many of the staff working hard today behind the scene went to Kumamoto. At that time, Mr. Hidekiyo Tachiya, Mayor of Soma City in Fukushima Prefecture, commented as follows: “I thought we, including myself and my people, and many of the people around here that suffered from the disaster, delivered lots and lots of messages, but people over there have learned absolutely nothing, which, I have to say, is more of a surprise than a shock. Many stories were brought up on TV shows, lots of articles were published on newspapers, and many people talked about their experiences everywhere. Still, those with disabilities had to go through many difficulties that were exactly identical to those experienced in the previous disaster. The exact same issues were repeated running evacuation centers. We learned our lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake and delivered the lessons we learnt. Yet, nobody there appeared to have learned anything from our lessons.” His words, “more of a surprise than a shock,” describe the situation very well. For us living outside the Tohoku area, I think, must be that that disaster took place in the Tohoku which had nothing to do with us, which discouraged us from learning because we could not recognize this as our problem. I say this as a warning to myself, but we will need to think through the concept of prevention as we are responsible for people in the future.

“Waka” poem of Gakudo and Disaster Risk Reduction

Let me quote a “waka” poem of Gakudo Ozaki, to make the most of lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake for the future. I think many of you know that Gakudo, or Yukio, Ozaki, is the father of Ms. Yukika Soma, founder and former Chairperson of AAR. Ms. Soma does not like it but her father is called “God of Constitutionalism” or “Father of Parliamentary Government.” He was elected 25 times as member of the House of Representatives—a record not broken to date. He was also Mayor of City of Tokyo, and it was he who sent cherry trees as present to the United States that were planted along the River Potomac in Washington. By the way, the dogwood, which blossoms

beautifully and is now being planted as street tree everywhere in Japan to replace some of the cherry trees, was presented from the United States to Japan in return.

Yukio Ozaki was a politician, but he was also a “waka” poet with close friendship with Akiko Yosano and other famous poets. I often quote his words that the main stage of human life is always in the future, but I sometimes remember his poem with more feeling: “If you know that everything in the past is in preparation of means for the future, then regrets and troubles are all valuable to you.” I personally think that the word “Means” here refers to a certain method or a measure to do something. I do not know when Yukio Ozaki wrote the poem but I want to study it seriously. I think this phrase in the poem, “regrets and troubles are all valuable,” really reflects what he was thinking of at the time.

I think everyone hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake, as well as everyone involved in the relief aid, has some regrets, wishing to have done something in a different manner. Some people may have personal regrets, like they should have fled with a certain item with them, or they should have taken a certain photo with them. Many people, I believe, still live in a world with the time standing still, regretting, beyond words, something that was related to life and death. It is not possible to lump together such regrets and troubles as they are so diverse, but if we can turn them into “preparation of means for the future,” preparation for major disasters yet to come or for those that have already come, then we should bear in mind that such regrets and troubles are now very valuable to us.

It is about time to finish. One last thing I would like to mention in relation to the concept of human security is that, as ten years have passed since the disaster, I would like to see that the people hit by the disaster, areas damaged, or areas in the Tohoku area are not lumped together as human beings are different from one another. It is true that, immediately after the disaster, it was necessary, to some extent, to group them together as the ‘victims’. Ten years after the disaster, I hope, from now on, we can look at individuals one by one, because victims from different cities, towns or villages, victims from a single city, town or village but from different areas therewithin, or family members of a single family, may all have different memories of the disaster, different expectation for reconstruction, and different degree or status of rehabilitation for themselves.

I am a lecturer at a university and I usually talk in a more orderly manner. I must have been very nervous today—my apologies for my rather disorderly speech. Thank you very much for your attention today.

2. The Great East Japan Earthquake and 10 Years of Activities in Tohoku

Sayako Nogiwa (Manager of Relief Operations of AAR)

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. I am Sayako Nogiwa, and am Manager of Overseas/Domestic Operations of AAR. I joined AAR in 2005, and since then, I have been working on various program activities. At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, I went to the affected areas two days after the disaster, and was Manager of the Tohoku Office for two years thereafter. I worked with people

from the Japan Council on Disability and others supporting persons with disabilities. I am very thankful to these people as I learned a lot from them. Now, let me talk about outline of the AAR activities during the past ten years.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and 10 Years of Activities in Tohoku

—(1) Initial response.

First, let me talk about our activities immediately after the earthquake. Before the earthquake, we had been mainly engaged in emergency relief aids overseas. As the damages caused by the earthquake were unprecedented, we in no time decided to provide an emergency support, and we went on site two days after the disaster, starting soup kitchens and distribution of relief supplies. What we bore in mind was to deliver “what is required promptly.” Although the disaster hit a very wide area, we focused on three prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, delivering foods and sanitary supplies to a total of 160,000 people. Our principle was “to deliver to people to whom it was not easy to do so” right from the beginning. We paid special attention to such people, including those with disabilities, elderly, women and children.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and 10 Years of Activities in Tohoku

—(2) Restoration and resurgence phases.

Next, after the emergency phase came restoration and resurgence phases. In these phases, we also gave emphasis on people with disabilities, elderly, women and children. As Ms. Osa talked about human security earlier, it is all the people whose human security needs to be ensured, regardless of their age, whether they are disabled or not, where they live, or what circumstances they are in. They are all human beings. We worked hard so that our support could reach every one of such people. We had three pillars. The first was providing support to the PWDs so that no one was left behind. With the help of many staff members of welfare facilities for persons with disabilities, we did repair work, provided necessary fixtures and fittings, and provided support for merchandise and sales channel development for workshops for persons with disabilities. We also got a lot of support through the members of Aeon 1% Club, etc. Even today, retail stores of Aeon and its affiliated companies are collecting donations from the public as Tohoku Monozukuri (manufacturing) Fund Raising. I would like to offer my thanks to them, taking this occasion.

The second was “to restore connections.” This was the activity that we gave the top priority to in Fukushima Prefecture. We have been promoting our project: “Building Healthy Communities Project;” which includes massaging, listening attentively to what people have to say, and making vegetable gardens, among others, in order to keep the victims of the disaster from being left behind or to prevent their health deterioration, with the help of many volunteers including physical therapists, occupational therapists, and counselors from the Japan Industrial Counselors Association. These activities have also

been supported by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC), a group of second- and third-generation Japanese-Americans living in California, and more recently from January this year, by the Japan Platform. I would like to offer my thanks to them, too.

The third point is “supporting growth of children,” who will be building the future. We installed playground equipment and prepared library rooms for facilities and nursery schools that children with disabilities attended. We also started an activity called “Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku” which is a recreational activity that children can participate in with their parents. This activity is supported by the Sumitomo Foundation. As Mr. Takeji Asano, our officer responsible for this activity put it, people from the Foundation actually participated in the activity together with us, which was very delightful. My thanks to the people from the Foundation.

Let us now look at the organizational structure for these activities. During the period of emergency relief aid, a total of about 150 staff members were stationed in the region, including 38 in our Sendai Office and 8 in our Morioka Office. These were all expatriates and other personnel of offices both in Japan and overseas, who were temporarily stationed in these areas on a rotational basis. In addition, we were also supported by many volunteers, which really made our activities feasible. At present, these activities are run and managed remotely from Tokyo and Sendai, with our staff members making business trips. Concerning the size of our activities, as the size of the disaster was huge, we spent about 2 billion yen in the first three years. Our overall budget for fiscal year 2020 was about the same amount, for activities in Japan and overseas combined. During the past ten years, donations and support funds given to us totaled almost 3.8 billion yen. Such strong will from groups and individuals around the world made our activities feasible. I would like to offer my thanks to these supporters .

An officer of Caritas Germany, an NGO in Germany, once told me that, when the Rhine flooded in Germany some time ago, they spent budget equally for ten years. I suppose this was probably thanks to good budgeting or in consideration of the exit strategy. Looking back at our ten years of activities, we are not very good at activities from a medium- to long-term perspective. I hope we can take advantage of the experience in the future. Concerning donations, our activities were made feasible by a huge amount of donations and supports, and it is not possible for me to mention them all today. Details will be on the leaflet covering our ten-year activities in the Tohoku area, which you will receive shortly. The electronic version is also available for download from our website.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and 10 Years of Activities in Tohoku

—(3) Future Challenges and Prospects

Lastly, I would like to talk about issues and prospects for the future. I strongly feel that it is now necessary to realize the future that every one of us wishes to have, where freedom from fear or destitution is ensured so that everyone whether disabled or not, elderly and children living in Fukushima can feel hopeful for their future. I would like that we, together with those of you

participating in our symposium today, reflect on what we can do, also in consideration of messages from the speakers to appear on the platform later today. My speech today may be simplified, but this concludes my report on the ten-year activities of AAR Japan.

Nogiwa: I now would like to invite speakers to appear on the platform. The first speaker is Mr. Takashi Koyama, Facility General Manager of Himawari-kai Step, a social welfare NPO from Iwate Prefecture. Immediately after the earthquake, he was also Secretary General at JDF Iwate Support Center, a network of groups working for people with disabilities. AAR was given much support from the NPO. When participants of the Liaison Committee for Welfare of People with Disabilities or our staff members of Morioka Office provided emergency relief aids, he was offering much backup and support for them. I cannot thank enough for his kindness. Mr. Koyama, please.

3. The Great East Japan Earthquake in the three prefectures of Tohoku — Actual situation from the disaster to the present.

Takashi Koyama (social welfare service corporation Himawari-kai, Head of a facility) ,Shiho Oikawa (Tohoku Office of the Japan Industrial Counselors Association, General Manager of Cultivation and Lecture Department) ,Tateoka Megumi (Participants of “Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku”)

3-1 The Situation in Iwate Prefecture: From the Perspective of Disability Welfare.

Takashi Koyama (social welfare service corporation Himawari-kai, Head of a facility)

Koyama: Thank you very much. I am Takashi Koyama from Himawari-kai in Oshu City, Iwate Prefecture. First of all, I would like to thank all the people nationwide for their support in the past ten years after the Great East Japan Earthquake. I am also thankful to AAR for letting me speak today at the symposium. Let me first introduce myself. I am from Kesenuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, but I now work at workshop facilities in Iwate Prefecture, where people with disabilities are working near their home. After the earthquake, I was, as Ms. Nogiwa mentioned earlier, also working as Secretary General of JDF Iwate Support Center that was set up by the Japan Disability Forum. I came across with people of AAR for the first time when I participated as supporter in the aid activities for persons with disabilities in areas affected by the disaster in Iwate Prefecture.

Thereafter, when one of the largest afterquakes hit the Tohoku area including Iwate, the walls of the facilities I was working at were damaged, might collapse anytime and were very dangerous. Because the facilities we were renting were a private property, we were at a loss as subsidies from the government was not available for repairing private properties. As I had been to the coastal regions as supporter and knew the situations there were much worse, I told myself that I had to put up with it,

but I was also aware that, as I was responsible for the safety of the users of the facilities, I had to do something. I was much troubled and at a loss when AAR gave me consultation and helped repair the building of the facilities.

When I had difficulty continuing the food business because the region was the hot spot of the nuclear power plant accident, AAR supported me for obtaining a radiation counter. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, I again had difficulty running the business, and this time also AAR supported us so that users of the facilities can continue their work with peace of mind. During the past ten years, it was always AAR that kindly supported us. Thanks to AAR, the workshop I run was always safe and secure, which made it possible for the people to work fulfillingly and for me to carry out my support work at the coastline region. Today, I would like to talk about the past ten years, including what I felt during my activities at JDF Iwate Support Center.

The Situation in Iwate Prefecture: From the Perspective of Disability Welfare.

— (1) PWDs in Rikuzentakata were affected by the disaster.

Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, is where I spent the longest time after the earthquake. As you are aware, this is where the tsunami after the earthquake washed everything away. On September 11, six months after the earthquake, one of NHK's welfare programs reported a shocking story—as Ms. Osa talked about earlier, the mortality rate of persons with disabilities was twice as high as that of all the residents. I was given the raw data from the director in charge of the program. The raw data gave me another shock—the table had no data on the damages of Rikuzentakata City, with a note that, with so many deaths, there was not sufficient manpower to carry out the investigation.

After the earthquake, we offered our support to the prefecture, however, they answered that the prefecture had already identified the situations of persons with disabilities in the prefecture, that the prefecture was providing support to these people, and that our support was not necessary. Then the fact came out that there was not sufficient manpower to carry out the investigation. In the same month of September, one of my relatives who were affected by the earthquake in Rikuzentakata City told me that his family would come back to Rikuzentakata City as the temporary housing was ready. The family had a member qualified as person with disabilities type 1 degree 1 (person with the most severe disabilities), confined to bed. When I told him that everything will be fine as the prefecture had completed the investigation on persons with disabilities, he said no one had ever visited them in relation to the disabilities. Stories I heard were all different—the prefecture said it was all right as the prefecture well knew the situations of persons with disabilities; the city said they did not know as there was not sufficient manpower; and my relative said there had been no investigation on persons with disabilities.

So I asked the prefecture again. They answered that, after the broadcasting that it was not possible to identify the conditions of persons with disabilities in Rikuzentakata City, the city had made no

reports to them, that, as such, they had no idea nor plan to carry out another investigation. I calmly pieced fragmentary information together to find out the following facts.

The investigation of the prefecture covered persons with mental/physical disabilities aged up to 64 only. Persons with specified diseases aged up to 64, who were receiving nursing insurance benefits, were surveyed as aged person, not as person with disabilities. Persons with disabilities aged 65 and older were also surveyed as aged person, not as person with disabilities. Persons with disabilities require different types of support, depending on the characteristics of their disabilities. In reality, little was known about the situations of almost all the 1,500 persons with disabilities that lived in Rikuzentakata City. I thought that, unless we do something to clarify what actually happened there, identify issues and take measures, something similar could happen in the future. Therefore, I visited Rikuzentakata City and offered the city that we would like to find out what actually happened and to work to solve any issues.

Fortunately, after the earthquake, Minamisoma City in Fukushima Prefecture released the personal information of persons with disabilities to a private party (JDF) for the first time in Japan, and JDF carried out the fact-finding surveys and provided relief aids. We asked officers of Rikuzentakata City to read the JDF reports, and the city agreed to do likewise. At that time, I asked about the manpower shortage that hindered them to compile the statistics. The fact was that, as is expected of any municipality, the city confirmed the safety of all the residents first thing after the disaster. It was only in autumn of the year that the backup data of the physical disability certificates was delivered from the prefecture, but prior to that, for persons with mental disabilities, health nurses had already carried out door-to-door calls to confirm their safety. For persons with intellectual/physical disabilities, they formed investigation teams to do the same. The data was unavailable simply because there were no adequate time and no adequate human resources to check and compile data, because Rikuzentakata City had lost about one quarter of city workers, including six out of eight health nurses who were the driving force of the welfare activities in the city. Other municipalities with similar situations must also be suffering from insufficient resources.

The Situation in Iwate Prefecture: From the Perspective of Disability Welfare.

— (2) Cooperation with local government.

Rikuzentakata City accepted our offer. They would like to use our investigation results as basic data for designing their welfare policy for persons with disabilities, which had been suspended due to the disaster. In addition, they also wanted us to find, not only persons with disabilities but also those that might one day be recognized as one, such as those confined to bed or those that did not appear very well. Once we found one, we would report the person to the city. Together with this instruction, the city disclosed to us the personal information for 1,357 individuals, including the age, type of disabilities and other information on the physical disability certificates together with information of

the persons that were mentally exhausted after the earthquake. We invited 539 investigators in total from all over the country, who carried out the investigation over the following six months or so based on the information from the city. As our investigation took place more than one year after the earthquake, we were able to learn various stories about what happened: immediately after the earthquake; during the evacuation life; and the life thereafter. The investigation results are being used as basic data for the welfare policy of Rikuzentakata City which is available on the website, so please take a look if you are interested.

After the earthquake, only two municipalities, Minamisoma City, as mentioned above, and Rikuzentakata City, made the decision to disclose the personal information to the private groups for supporting the persons with disabilities, which the municipalities alone were unable to do. I doubt if all the other municipalities hit by the earthquake were able to do so. The decision of the two cities, I believe, can be attributed to the understanding of the city officers what difficulties these people with disabilities would have under the circumstances, as well as to their belief that, despite all the confusions everywhere, they would need to do something for those with disabilities. That was why, I think, the government of Japan delegated to the mayor of the cities the authority to disclose the personal information. The spirit was also known from the fact that the administration of Rikuzentakata City was the driving force for promoting participation of persons with disabilities in the policy making processes of the city.

The Situation in Iwate Prefecture: From the Perspective of Disability Welfare.

— (3) Need to encourage social participation of persons with disabilities

In rural areas, disabilities are often taken negatively. Families, left alone those that live nearby, tend not to accept the disabilities. Under such circumstances, it is natural that persons with disabilities tend to be passive. Officers at the Welfare Section of the city were all frustrated at such situations surrounding persons with disabilities as well as at regional communities. At that time, there was a system called List of Persons Requiring Special Support in Emergency for protecting persons with disabilities and aged people from disasters. In order to be registered under the system, however, they first needed to request for registration on their own. In order to be able to do so, they needed to have known about the system in advance. People had to ask for the help, saying that they need the support for PWDs. For these reasons, only about 100 persons with disabilities were registered under the system at Rikuzentakata City prior to the earthquake. Then Chief of the Welfare Section told me with passion that, if the situations surrounding persons with disabilities remained unchanged, the tragedy would likely repeat. “If those with disabilities were more active in the communities regularly, we would be able to save more lives. We would like to save more of them this way.”

In order to save lives, and also in order that everyone, whether he/she is part of the PWDs community or not, lives as a citizen, the persons with disabilities, who have lived quietly to date, need to come

one step forward and think about it together with the city. I was skeptical about how passionate the PWDs themselves are about this idea, and initially I remained waiting to see. Then they started to speak up and saw their future gradually opening up. They all started to feel happy, talking to each other what they felt and creating something new. That grew into solidarity and trust, and then into a big hope, which formed the basis of the current city management.

It was common in Japan that the guarantee of rights of persons with disabilities were won through fight of these people, together with their supporters, against the administration. In the city after the disaster, however, under the slogan “Urban Development without a Need for the Word ‘Normalization,’” the Mayor, together with city officers, led the movement. The administration leads persons with disabilities, appears on stage together, thinks together, and supports them from behind. This sort of administration-led participation of persons with disabilities was established in the city. The city was able to start building a town where residents in an area talk together heartfully, saying that it is lucky to have been born in the city. The phrase “together,” I think, is a very important keyword when thinking of urban development or disaster mitigation. Right now, in this country, whether in ordinary times or in emergency, self-help is always required first, then mutual assistance. The government has made it clear that the public assistance comes in only when everything else does not work. Under such circumstances, many people must be feeling that the public safety net cannot be relied upon. I myself believe that, unless you have solid relationship with the communities around you, it will be very difficult for you to save your life.

In the future, it is predicted that a huge earthquake, Tokyo Near-field Earthquake or Nankai Trough Earthquake, is expected to take place due to plate movements. Measures to be taken should be different for coastal areas and for overcrowded inland residential areas. When I think of how I can save lives of people around me, I feel the importance to establish horizontal relations in the regional communities through face-to-face communications. This, I believe, is the shortest way. I do not think it is practical to convert all the evacuation centers into barrier-free facilities. Still, if you could establish a close relationship or conditions with the people vulnerable to disasters such as elderly people, persons with disabilities, or injured persons in ordinary times so that you can notice them, then some of the barriers will be removed.

Actually, there were many such evacuation centers in the disaster-hit areas. It may be different in the country, where people have face-to-face relationship in the rural areas, whereas people do not even know who lives next door in larger cities. Just exchanging a word of greetings with your neighbors could make a difference in the future, remembering in emergency that someone who needs to be taken care of lives over there.

As I am working in the field of welfare for persons with disabilities, I cannot avoid placing emphasis on such people. The mortality rate of persons with disabilities is twice as high. Looking at the fact from a different perspective, the rate of people aged 60 and older is also twice as high as that of people

aged 59 and younger. Unless we see persons living in a region as a whole, and not persons with disabilities living in a region or aged persons living in a region, we cannot live together, and we cannot see the issues in that region. Unfortunately, we cannot in reality save lives unless we have self-help and mutual assistance relationship that is functioning. How you can save lives of people around you depends on to what extent and by what means you can imagine yourself saving them.

I think the disaster that is an extension of daily lives can be mitigated if relationship with regional communities is established in ordinary times. I myself would like to move forward so that I can think together with people in the region and do not work solely vertically in my specialty, cherishing their lives and my horizontal relationship with them. Thank you very much.

Nogiwa: Mr. Koyama, thank you very much for your valuable story. Mr. Koyama raised many issues and gave us explanations on many points, but his story about the statistics was impressive. As Ms. Osa mentioned earlier, the statistics table published on November 2011 issue of “Normalization” had blank fields only for Rikuzentakata City. His story made me understand well that the hard work of Mr. Koyama and people of the city has made the situations of the city clearly known today. Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires countries that have ratified the Convention to gather necessary statistics data. This time, Mr. Koyama and the people in the municipality of the affected Rikuzentakata City worked hard to collect those data. I strongly felt that we should explore all the possibilities together to collect and compile such statistics data with cooperation of the government of Japan, interested parties and ourselves. Again, thank you very much, Mr. Koyama.

Our next speaker is Ms. Shiho Oikawa from Miyagi Prefecture, who is General Manager of Cultivation and Lecture Department, Tohoku Office of the Japan Industrial Counselors Association. AAR has been able to carry out its activities to prevent elderly people from being left behind thanks mainly to heartfelt support of volunteers of the Industrial Counselors Association. We really cannot thank them enough. Now, Ms. Oikawa, please.

3-2 The Situation in Miyagi Prefecture: From the Perspective of Local Connections.

Shiho Oikawa (Tohoku Office of the Japan Industrial Counselors Association, General Manager of Cultivation and Lecture Department)

Oikawa: Good afternoon, everybody. I am Shiho Oikawa, from Tohoku Office of the Japan Industrial Counselors Association. I am glad that I have this opportunity to appear on the podium at this symposium held in the tenth anniversary year of the earthquake. I would like to report on activities of the “Building Healthy Communities Project” Project that we are working with AAR Japan. I would like to talk about the activities to date, review of the activities by the participating counselors. and

issues to be thought through for future activities.

The Situation in Miyagi Prefecture: From the Perspective of Local Connections.

— (1) About Activities.

Let me first talk on our activities. In the summer of 2011, AAR asked us to join their activities, and we went out to look for volunteering counselors. As our policy for the activities, we decided to focus on “listening to people” offered to regional communities as support, and looked for counselors that could listen to people and could, hopefully, work as volunteer daily on an ongoing basis. I used the expression “listening to.” Many of you may be aware, but it means devoting yourself to listening to someone else. It is a proactive action, proactively seeking to relate yourself to that someone. It is not just hearing someone, but proactively involving yourself in listening. It is said that the view of human beings, which forms the basis of the act of listening, is respect for human beings. It is also said that this is the view of human beings, or basic concept, that counselors should have. I have always felt that this is basically identical to the basic idea that AAR holds up, namely, respect for human beings, human security, and valuing each and every individual.

Let me talk about our activities to date in detail. We formed teams to visit the affected people. A team consisted of the coordinator from AAR Japan, a volunteer physical/occupational therapist, and a volunteer industrial counselor, which visited temporary housing and, later, housing constructed after the disaster and meeting facilities of the regions where people started to come back. The volunteer physical/occupational therapists gave the massage therapy and, while people were waiting for their turn or when they finished the therapy, our counselors listened to them over a cup of tea.

We worked in the three prefectures including Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima. Our record shows that the number of sessions held after the disaster totaled 544 as of the end of last year, with the number of counselors involved totaling 915, who listened to some 9,700 persons. The participating counselors were asked to prepare and submit a report, and these figures are derived by adding up the data on these reports.

We have been working since summer 2011. What a long period of time. Next, please. We owe a lot to the coordinator of AAR Japan, specifically Mr. Ohara, for enabling us to work for so long. From the beginning, he, as the coordinator, identified skills of the counselor and therapist in a team and coordinated the team activities every time with scrupulous attention. In particular, Mr. Ohara had built good trusting relationship with people that we visited, who accepted us participants of the activities in no time. All the counselors that participated in the activities, as well as I myself as officer in charge, believe and say that the activities could not have lasted so long smoothly without coordination by AAR.

Here are a couple of photos. This red jacket is a uniform that counselors borrow from AAR and wear on the day. Wearing the jacket, we have been working to listen to people. I would like to mention some

of the thoughts of the counselors who participated in the activities. We have a newsletter sent to the counselors of the Tohoku Office four times a year, which carried experiences and thoughts of the participants on the back cover, on 20 issues. These back issues are available on the homepage of the Tohoku Office of the Japan Industrial Counselors Association for viewing. Please take a look if you are interested.

One of the typical comments goes as follows: “After the earthquake, I was wondering if I might be able to do something to help. Then, I came to know that the Counselors Association is engaged in support activities, and I decided to take part, as it was a good opportunity for me. From the people I visited, I was surprised to hear their experiences that were harsh and fierce beyond my imagination. Looking back, I now feel that it was I that was encouraged by their determination to move forward. I am sure I learned a lot from them.” This is just an example, but something that I heard a lot during the past ten years. Many counselors that participated in the activities told me that, being close to the people, they were able to know the situations in the disaster-stricken areas and true feelings of the sufferers, and it was them that were encouraged and that they had learned a lot. This is all because AAR let us counselors to participate in the activities, and I am truly grateful to AAR.

The Situation in Miyagi Prefecture: From the Perspective of Local Connections.

— (2) Future Issues and Responses.

Let me now look at the issues for the future. Ten years have passed since the disaster. There was a big earthquake the other day and, as it is often said these days, the people I talked to might be having tough time, remembering their experiences in the disaster. Concerning how we should carry out the activities from now on, I hope that we can continue utilizing the human relationship in the region, i.e., counselors living in the region supporting people in that region. The basic policy for the activities is unchanged from what I talked about at the beginning of my speech: supporters that live in the region and who can provide support providing daily support, when they can, to the people in the region in a casual manner. In order that we continue carrying out support activities without any break, even if the volume of support may be low, we will need to have a reasonable scope and a sensible timetable. The COVID-19 pandemic since last year made me feel strongly that it is very important from now on to establish a system where people in the region are engaged in support activities for the region.

How can we make the most of the lessons learned from these issues in the regional support activities from now on? I would like to first list continuing activities at the disaster restoration public houses. I hear many people say that they were able to move into a disaster restoration public house but have failed to form communities well, thus feeling lonely. We would like to continue the activities that would build the momentum to form such communities. Through these activities, we would also like to be considerate of the lonely feelings of these people. Furthermore, although our documents say we would visit villages that people have returned to as well as to the meeting facilities of the regions, the

people that returned to their home villages and towns after the evacuation instruction was lifted have not restored their original life. In a place that looks like a strange place, many have less opportunities to see other people than when they lived in the temporary dwelling.

I have mentioned two types of activities that we would like to be engaged in around the current core activities. And what I am thinking of is that these activities should not be confined to those areas hit by disasters. I think it is necessary to carry out these activities as daily support to the regional communities in the facilities for the elderly or in the meeting facilities in the region. I strongly believe that such daily activities will be the basis for the system that enables quick provision of support in the region in case of emergency. I strongly agree with what Mr. Koyama talked about earlier, and that is importance of horizontal relationship within a region. I really hope we can help build such relationship.

Lastly, it is said that people speak of what they have experienced. By speaking to someone who listens to, people try to detach themselves from that experience. For someone, just doing so once may suffice. Others may need to do so repeatedly. Speaking is letting it go. We counselors often say that speaking to others from the bottom of the heart leads to ‘letting it go’, and, as we are good at listening, if the activities are changed from supporting disaster-hit regions to supporting regional communities, what we can do, or the framework of the activities, will not change. We will continue working, believing that listening to people with respect, in collaboration with or in support of such bodies as AAR that value the act of listening, will be very helpful for the people in the region as well as to the region itself. This concludes my presentation today. Thank you very much for listening.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much, Ms. Oikawa. Your story of the experience, expertise, issues and prospects of your people in the field listening to some 9,700 persons was very concise and illuminating. You also mentioned that the basis for listening is respect for human beings. I also think it is very important for realization of the human security. We at AAR would also like to make full use of, for the future, what we have learnt from Ms. Oikawa and other people from the Industrial Counselors Association. Thank you very much again, Ms. Oikawa.

Our next speaker is Ms. Megumi Tateoka from Fukushima Prefecture. Ms. Tateoka is a sufferer from the disaster in Fukushima, who had infants. Thereafter she was kind enough to join our activities. I am grateful that she is here today to share her story. Ms. Tateoka, please.

3-3 The Situation in Fukushima Prefecture: A Survivor's Perspective.

Tateoka Megumi (Participants of "Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku")

Tateoka: Thank you very much for the introduction. I am Megumi Tateoka. I am originally from Yamamoto Town in Miyagi Prefecture, and now lives in Soma City. I was an at-home care nurse until January this year. I would like to talk about the situations on March 11 that year, how we evacuated,

and the “Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku” that parents can participate with their children. I will also touch on the future of Fukushima from a mother’s viewpoint, issues and shape of the future of Fukushima.

The Situation in Fukushima Prefecture: A Survivor's Perspective. — (1) Situation at the time of the disaster.

I first would like to look back on the evacuation action on March 11. On that day, I finished shopping foods and daily supplies for a week and came back home. At that time my elder child was 2 years and 7 months old, and my younger child was 11 months old. After coming back home, they were playing around outside. When the first quake started, I thought it was a big one, but it should be all right because they were outside the house. Then the quake got stronger, it became difficult for me to keep standing, and I collapsed on the site. There were many people who evacuated to outside. My husband then called me, asking where our children were and if they were all right. He was unloading at the Fukushima No. 2 Nuclear Power Plant, and he might not be able to make it home that day. My husband was unable to come home, we lived on the third floor of a condominium, and, in case there was another big quake, I would have to protect my children at any cost. After much deliberation, I decided to go and stay at my parents’ house.

I got on the car with my children, turned on radio, but never caught the word “tsunami.” I sometimes still wonder why, but I really do not know why. But still, I was trying to come up with the safest route to my parents’ in case a tsunami hit. I was driving on the National Route 6 from Soma City to Yamamoto Town in Miyagi Prefecture, when, in Shinchi Town on the route, I saw a lot of people running away from the coast, shouting “run! the tsunami was coming!” At that moment, I heard the radio alerting for tsunami for the first time. I thought the situation was very bad, and I headed to the mountain. The sea I saw from the mountain was coal-black in color that I had never seen before, and was sweeping towards inland. I do not think I understood what was happening at all. At that time, my children were napping in the car. When we were close to my parents’ house, the road was collapsed. We might be able to pass through but I could not take the risk of falling off the road. I left the car there, and headed towards my parents’ house by walking for two or three kilometers. My husband came back home three days later, receiving rice balls and water at convenience stores and catching rides with two strangers. One of these strangers was on his way to hospital as his wife, who was temporarily back at her parents’ at Iidate Village for birthing, started having contractions and on the way to the hospital, but still was kind enough to offer my husband a ride to make a detour to Hara Town despite his own circumstances.

Later, I saw the cargo truck my husband was on in a news show. I had pain in my heart as I saw where we were and how devastated and how hardly recognizable the place had become that was once familiar to me. Later, as the condominium that we lived in had the lifelines intact, eleven members of the families of mine and my husband’s stayed there for about a week. Then, because of the nuclear

accident, we voluntarily evacuated ourselves to Osaki City in Miyagi Prefecture and lived there for about a month. Even ten years after the disaster, at around this time of the year, a lot is talked about the disaster, with many people getting slightly teary, saying that they lost their children and grandchildren in the tsunami, that they had their home washed away, or that they remember seeing dead bodies while evacuating themselves. Children were forced to stay inside most of the times due to the nuclear accident, with all group activities cancelled. Playing outside was also restricted. Due to such changes in the environment and probably sensing our anxiety, our children often cried at night, and we both were under much stress. This is when we participated in the “Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku” project hoping that our children could play outside as much as they want to

The Situation in Fukushima Prefecture: A Survivor's Perspective. — (2) About Nishiaizu Recreation Programs.

We have so far participated in three events of the “Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku” After the earthquake, I have seen some overnight events that only children can join, but there were no other events that children could joint with their parents. Hands-on classes gave us the opportunity to experience something that we would not be able to do so in Soma City, and my daughters wanted to play a lot in the snow. I decided to participate as it appeared to be a good opportunity for us. Although Soma City and Nishiaizu Town are both in Fukushima Prefecture, we do not normally have the opportunity to visit Nishiaizu Town, and that was another factor for my decision. In a hands-on class for coloring the traditional “Akabeko” red-cow folkcraft piece, we mixed various color paints for coloring the piece, trying to find out what color was most expressing of ourselves, and successfully created one that was very unique and not found anywhere else. My daughter, then a fourth grader, had a class of cultures of various regions at school, brought the “Akabeko” that she colored to the class for presentation. She was coming home happily, as they told her that she really had had a good experience. By the way, the color red is said to drive away diseases, and is believed to take over the disease of the patient. For this reason, the “Akabeko” folkcraft pieces sell very well now as souvenir, because people hope that there might be a divine favor to drive away the COVID-19 pandemic quickly.

It was also characteristic, I think, that all the participants joined together to prepare meals for breakfast and dinner. At the "Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku", all the participants, adults and children alike, cook. Children were shouting: I will cut vegetables; I will wash this; I cut it into too large pieces; and I cut it into funny shapes. Pieces of meats and vegetables in various shapes and sizes were produced one after another. I was cutting a big piece of meat wildly, smiling, while other fathers, mothers and AAR staff members were watching us. My children are now able to cut meat, fish and vegetables, and cook curry and rice and mapo tofu (spicy Sichuan dish of tofu and minced meat) without our help. This, I think, is all thanks to the experience at the "Waku-Waku Kodomo Juku".

We also challenged at preparing “Kozuyu,” a specialty dish of Aizu, and making Japanese noodle

called 'soba' in Nishiaizu. We were learning from housewives in Nishiaizu, wondering how Kozuyu would taste and what ingredients would be in. When we ate the cooked meal, it tasted nothing like what we experienced in Soma and was very good. My daughters also enjoyed eating the dish. In soba making, we used a big rolling pin well in cooperation with friends in Nishiaizu, with occasional help from soba making experts, to roll out the dough. In the process of cutting the dough into noodles with a big kitchen knife for soba making, At first, I was cutting carefully into thin noodles just like how soba should look like, but when I finished, there were noodles of every thickness, including some like thick udon noodles. When we ate the cooked noodles, some of them were very al dente. Nevertheless, the soba noodles we made tasted wonderful.

And finally, the outdoor activities in the snow that my daughters were looking forward to. In Soma, we seldom have snow on the ground. We therefore were looking forward to snow piling on the ground. They said they had lower-than-usual snowfall possibly due to the global warming, but there was sufficient amount of snow on the ground for riding on the snowmobile, sledging, or diving into fresh snow. When we had an experience snowmobile ride, I was enjoying more than my daughters. There were other experience activities, but I will omit other stories due to time constraints.

It was just a two-day overnight journey, but our children soon opened up to children in Nishiaizu to become good friends. Parents had lively talks while working on the specialty dish or at outdoor activities. It was a good opportunity to have a relationship with people in Nishiaizu. My daughters wanted to join again and, although the event last year was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both my daughters and myself are waiting for resumption of the event. My rambunctious daughters are a seventh grader and a fifth grader this year. They have so far lived just for some ten years, and have experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake, Typhoon Hagibis (No. 19) that caused huge damages, and COVID-19 pandemic. Following the nuclear accident accompanying the earthquake, my daughters are given thyroid cancer test and whole body counter screening every year. I do feel uneasy from time to time with unspoken and invisible stresses. But I believe I have had the opportunity to experience the relationship and kindness of regional residents, friendly-greeting campaign and mutual support, all thanks to the experience of the unprecedented disaster.

When Typhoon Hagibis hit, I spent a night at an evacuation center. Because I was engaged in nursing, I chose to guide elderly people coming to the center. Seeing me helping elderly people, my children asked me if they could also help. So I asked them to distribute blankets and water. Looking at them, I realized anew that, although children are small, they still can do a lot of things. I hope they remember the importance of cooperating, no matter how small their act of support may be. The children will be creating the future. As a parent, I would like to tell them that building connection and relationship and kindness towards regional residents, greeting friendly and supporting each other is by no means difficult. Thank you very much for your attention for long time.

Nogiwa: Ms. Tateoka, thank you very much for your valuable story. One of the messages that Ms. Tateoka gave us is that children are creating the future, that children still can do a lot of things, and that they should remember the importance of supporting, no matter how small their act of support may be. Another message that the speakers today—Mr. Koyama, Ms. Oikawa and Ms. Tateoka—all delivered today is relationship between regional residents. I would like to keep these messages in my heart for our activities in the future. Thank you very much again.

Second half: Panel discussion

Nogiwa: As the movie is over now, I would like to resume the second half of our symposium today, panel discussion. Mr. Koyama, Ms. Oikawa, Ms. Tateoka, are you ready? In the panel discussion, I would first like to ask three questions. The first question is: what made you uneasy or fearful at the time of the disaster or during the ten years thereafter? One of the components of the human security is freedom from fear or destitution, and this question is in relation to this component. It may be what happened to yourself or to someone close to you. It may be something you came across while you were working in the field. Please focus on human beings, though. Please give us your thought in the order of Mr. Koyama, Ms. Tateoka and Ms. Oikawa. You have about two minutes each. Now, Mr. Koyama, please.

Koyama: Disasters may hit people equally, but, let me repeat, the rate of the victims by the Great East Japan Earthquake of persons with disabilities and aged people was higher. Disasters may hit equally, but what causes the inequality may be a man-made disaster. After the disaster, I have been appealing to the government from the field, but so far no verification work has been carried out to my knowledge. No verification means no reflection. No reflection means no implementation of effective countermeasures. Regarding protection of persons with disabilities and elderly people, the Disaster Countermeasure Basic Act was revised, obliging municipalities to prepare a list of persons requiring support for evacuation.

As a result, the number of municipalities having completed the list has been increasing. Looking at the municipality where I live, however, I do not think the current system is practically workable. I feel the list is compiled solely for the purpose of meeting the legal obligation. In fact, when I talked with officials in charge, including those of municipalities in other prefectures, they told me it is almost impossible in practice to secure the number of supporters required to support people requiring support in a society where population aging is in progress. Planning must include securing supporters. There are municipalities that have not been able to design the plan, thinking deeply but being unable to come up with methods to secure the supporters. In the meantime, there are municipalities that are proud of

their list, without noticing or thinking of the necessity of a workable plan. I am very uneasy and fearful because without facing the people vulnerable to disasters and thinking of protecting their lives, the history could repeat itself.

I suppose it is difficult for municipalities to come up with the notion of what to face, what to think of and how to proceed as long as they think it is somebody else's problem. I now face the difficulty conveying this message to be understood.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much, Mr. Koyama. The fear of the history repeating itself can certainly be tremendous. As Ms. Osa mentioned in her keynote speech, the Mayor of Soma City was lamenting that lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake were proven not to be learned and taken advantage of at the time of the Kumamoto Earthquake. The fear of lessons not being learnt. Experiences and lessons must be learnt and utilized. And yet, after ten years, still this state... The history may repeat itself. These are all unacceptable. We seem to have a lot to do on an ongoing basis. Thank you very much.

Now, Ms. Tateoka, are you ready? Then, please.

Tateoka: For about six years I was an at-home care nurse, working for elderly people and persons with disabilities. What I noticed most at that time is the lack of information. There were many pieces of information elderly people and persons with disabilities came to know for the first time when we visited them. I was a housewife at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, but when Typhoon Hagibis hit, I was working and saw people who had no access to water, and not knowing that the water service had already been restored. There were so many pieces of information that people came to know at the time we visited them. My circumstance requires me to protect my children as a mother but I still want to help people in the region. I have these two emotions. Sometimes I go out to work, causing some inconvenience to the family. It is too exaggerated to say that my family is falling apart, but I did see my husband and children emotionally unstable in the past. That certainly is my concern.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much for your valuable story based on your experience. That is very true. We talk about individuals, but an individual has different aspects. Ms. Tateoka is an individual but has an aspect of raising small children, and another of working as at-home care nurse. She may have more aspects, depending on the situation. The information required is different for different individuals, and may be further different depending on the circumstances. The method of conveying information also may need to be tailored in accordance to the circumstances. Still, shortage of information must be avoided. People also need to be considerate of how others receive information, such as persons with visual or hearing disabilities. This is something that everyone needs to bear in mind. Thank you very much. Now, Ms. Oikawa, please.

Oikawa: I have come across a lot of stories in my activities, so I would like to introduce stories of uneasiness or fear that I have often heard of. During the first or second year after the earthquake, people that lost their family members lamented, saying that they wished they had died, too. “I should have gone with them that day.” I came across that a lot of times. From two or three years after the earthquake, what I heard really often is that they, particularly elderly people, do not want to live anymore. This, I think, reflected their strong feeling of insecurity about their day-to-day life. Presumably, they are not getting adequate and enough support to have hope or pleasure for the near future. Thus, the uneasiness and fear towards their daily life that I imagine is something rather vague and invisible, which only the people who experienced major disasters have.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. This is really something that cannot be described with words. Sharing such feelings, Ms. Oikawa and staff members of the Industrial Counselors Association, after many analysis and reflections, concluded that, perhaps, these people cannot have hope or pleasure to live. I think this is a very serious situation. There is not a single right answer that is easy to come up with, and there probably are very complicated situations behind the scene. It is probably very time-consuming. But then, from what the speakers said, I believe that the fact that there are people that understand the situations and that see the importance of addressing these issues is very encouraging. Thank you very much.

Now, the second question. What is the occasion that you were the happiest with at the time of the disaster or during the ten years thereafter? Please give us your thought in the order of Ms. Oikawa, Mr. Koyama and Ms. Tateoka. Ms. Oikawa, please.

Oikawa: When we were working in the field together, we did not say to the people we visited that we were counselors. This is because, in the beginning, people, particularly elderly people, tended to be nervous when they knew who we were, and would say that there were nothing to talk about to big shots like us. So, after talking with our coordinator, Mr. Ohara, we decided that we would say we were just helpers. The occasion that I was the happiest with was when, after having listened to a housewife for fairly long time, she complimented me that, despite my appearance, I was a very good listener. There were several similar occasions, but when I was told that she usually does not have much opportunity to talk to someone, that she was able to talk to someone longer than expected, and she was tired from talking too much, so that she would sleep very well that night. It was really flattering to me. The most pleasing occasion for me was when someone talked to me like that during my activities.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. That surely is encouraging for your activities from now on. Now, Mr. Koyama, please.

Koyama: The town where I was born was hit by the earthquake and then by the tsunami, completely destroyed. I wondered how anyone was able to find hope. When I was standing against the ground ravaged by the tsunami, I saw people struggling within the framework set by the central and prefectural governments. In such a situation, there were public servants who were determined to build a new framework so that we could resume with our life: “All the rules were washed away by the tsunami. The rules were gone so we would build one. It is an opportunity to start from ground zero to build one that really works.” There were others who thought that, because of the current conditions, it was all the more important that we should dream and come to our feet, thus passing the baton of hope and pleasure for the future to others. There were, around them, also people with disabilities who were hit by the disaster, who hoped that they might be able to contribute something in return to the reconstruction of their town and started speaking up.

The earthquake cost us many people that were very dear to us and many things that were precious to us, but we also came to know a lot of people, helping and supporting one another. When I could not find a way to find out how to regain hope, I talked and worked with these people. And I came to know that, no matter how battered one may be, by starting to walk from that place, one could regain hope and smile. I myself felt hope for the first time after the disaster that one could somehow be all right if one was able to smile. That was very pleasing. Not everybody, however, was able to restart walking at the same time. Some could not speak up. Some could not stand up. When most of us have stood up, these people could be obscured, and that is something we should give attention to. Overall, however, it was pleasing to know that people could somehow make it.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. There were people in the region who took it as an opportunity to start from ground zero. I really feel it is so encouraging having someone like that. Thank you very much. Now, Ms. Tateoka, please.

Tateoka: I was happy when local residents, my friends, and children regained their smile. When I realized that I was smiling with my family for the first time since the tsunami and evacuation, I was most pleased. When Joban Rail Line resumed operations after the suspension that lasted for five years and nine months, I took my children on the train for the first time in their lives, although it was just a 10 to 15 minutes’ ride from Soma Station to Sakamoto Station, and that train service was reported on NHK’s news show by chance, and we were all smiling. I was happy that, despite all the difficulties, my children were growing as they should be.

It was about two years ago. The bathing beaches of Soma City were opened to the bathers for the first time in, maybe, eight years. Just prior to the earthquake, we were talking that we would go swimming in the ocean the following year, and it actually took eight years for that to happen. I saw

smiles on the faces on my children when they went into the sea of Soma, and I really felt I was happy being their mother, as I realized that my children were growing all right despite all the difficulties we had to go through.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. That must be particularly pleasing after eight years. But, wow, it really took eight years to have the beaches opened to the bathers.

Tateoka: Eight years, yes.

Nogiwa: Sea bathing plan was delayed and delayed and delayed... I know you really wished you could do so much earlier. But that was really fun and pleasing. It is wonderful to see the smiles on the faces of children and on the faces of all the people you cherish. It is wonderful that smiles and hopes are spreading that way. Thank you very much,

Now, the last question in the question-and-answer session. I am afraid it may be tough to answer, but my third question is: What kind of future do you wish to realize? What do you think you can do for the realization of that future? Please answer in the order of Ms. Tateoka, Ms. Oikawa and Mr. Koyama. Ms. Tateoka, please.

Tateoka: I would like the experience to be inherited to the next generation. Right now, I am a dedicated housewife, but I would like to do jobs related to elderly people or persons with disabilities. I will think of the job I will do next while continuing telling the experience to my children. That is about it.

Nogiwa: What an encouraging message! Thank you very much. Now, Ms. Oikawa, please.

Oikawa: The future I want to have is one where the future that each and every individual's wishes are would come true. I believe that the relationship between human beings is necessary under any circumstances and that it will be helpful for themselves. Thinking over what I can do, no matter how little it may be, to realize that future, what I can do right now and what I can do in preparation, is to ongoingly plant a seed for the future, to always be in touch, and to help others do the same.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much. Ongoingly planting a seed for being in touch. What nice words! I hope the seed will sprout and bloom. Thank you very much. Now, Mr. Koyama, please.

Koyama: I think the huge disaster revealed the vulnerabilities in the daily life. I would therefore like to have a society where the life of each and every individual is valued, where people respect one another and can face each other, and where as many people as possible can see sufferings and griefs

that others still have today as their own. To be able to accept and think of others, however, I think that one must have room to breathe. To let people have room to breathe and peace of mind is not such an easy task. The society as a whole must be like that, and that is more difficult.

I was thinking what I should do, but we will probably have to make up for what is missing in the society with small findings of everyone and with a collection of deep feelings, that is, with small mutual assistances. Even if a person finds something, it will not change anything if that person only notices it at that moment and fails to convey it to others, I think. As I said earlier, it is not easy to convey. Still, I have to be hopeful that, if one out of ten messages is conveyed to others, it might lead to saving a life in the end. I have to try to convey, or voice it, whether the message is conveyed to others or not. That is what I came to think in the tenth anniversary year.

Nogiwa: Thank you very much for your very organized response. Right, it will be nice if we can work together to devise a good way to convey something noticed in a way as if that something was their own. Now, it is time to answer the questions raised by the audience today. As the time is pressing, let's take a look at the first question. It is for Mr. Koyama. Mr. Koyama said that, when the aids for disaster relief along the coastline were inadequate, AAR provided required support. The question is, what kind of aids was it that was difficult to deliver to the coastline and why. Can you answer in two minutes and to the extent of your knowledge?

Koyama: As I am working in the field of support for persons with disabilities, my answer is related mainly to these people. At that time, the central government provided relief money and supplies to individuals. Such aids to people with disabilities hit by the disaster were distributed through the prefectures from the central government, but it was the prefectures that determined how to distribute the aids. In the case of Iwate Prefecture, they decided to provide the aids to the facilities for these people. Accordingly, persons with disabilities living at home and not using such facilities, or living in an area where there were no such facilities at all, were outside the scope of the aids. For instance, we knew that no aids were reached in certain areas. We knew there were individuals over there needing support. We knew certain people in the area had no transportation means to hospital and those providing transportation services to these people were having funding problems. We told these cases to the prefectures, but their response was that, as the aids were meant for individuals, it was difficult to address these cases, that is, supporting the region that these people lived in, because what was required then was aids for regions and not aids for specific individuals. Our great AAR, on the other hand, valued life in the region that was fundamental for individuals, and provided consultation as well as support to us.

Another point was that programs and supports were often for members of organizations, and not much for individuals that were in difficulty. That was also where we asked for the help of AAR.

Nogiwa: Providing support. Providing support to those that live at home. That is a very important issue for the future. Thank you very much. And once again our thanks to the speakers for their precious stories. Those of you, audiences, who asked a question but we were unable to give an answer today because of the time constraint, we will send you our reply later. If you have any further questions, please contact the Office of Secretariat any time.

It is about time to end the symposium today. Ms. Fusako Yanase, Chairperson of AAR, would like to make a closing comment. Ms. Yanase, please.

Yanase: I am Fusako Yanase, It was a great opportunity for me, too, listening to very valuable stories from the speakers today. This year marks the 41st year since the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan started operations. I myself had a variety of thoughts on our activities related to the Great East Japan Earthquake for the last ten years, but prior to that, we were also active in various ways at the time of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake on January 17, 1995 together with our sister organization, Support 21 Social Welfare Organization. I was active in the field for three years, but the areas hit by the earthquake were rather narrow, and we needed to be active for three years only. In the first year, we provided emergency relief aid. In the second year and thereafter, we established a volunteer station in Nishinomiya City, just next to Kobe City that was badly hit by the earthquake. We asked people from YMCA Nishinomiya to help build the station that could serve as a core for volunteers to drop by any time to do their support activities. I was hoping to do something similar when we started working after the Great East Japan Earthquake. This time, however, the affected areas were so vast that we have had a really hard time throughout these ten years.

I would like to tell you specifically three episodes that I still remember. The first is when gas and kerosine were in short supply and we provided support. We wanted to bring to the earthquake-hit areas oil drums or portable oil tins with us for carrying gas by ourselves, but nothing was available at that time. We went to everywhere where we were able to buy some. I remember visiting Nagano Prefecture and Mie Prefecture. Looking back, it must have been in violation of relevant laws but we filled such cans and tins with gas or kerosine, and placed and carried them on the platform of an ordinary truck. I still believe that the kerosine we carried were used to generate electricity at hospitals, which might have saved some lives.

The second is about a spa. There is a spa called Manyonoyu in Kanagawa Prefecture. The spa had a large tanker truck that could carry some 20 tons of spa water whose temperature remained almost unchanged while carrying. We borrowed that truck. We could borrow a hot spring source at Naruko Onsen in Osaki City in Miyagi Prefecture. We loaded hot spring water of Naruko Onsen in the tank on the truck we borrowed from Manyonoyu, carried the water to Ishinomaki, and filled the bathtub that was installed by members of the Self-Defense Forces at an evacuation center where people were

staying. We were doing so every other day for about three months.

The last was about speeding and traffic accidents. It was near the top of Oshika Peninsula which was essentially isolated from the rest of world. All the cars in that area had been washed away by the tsunami, and they wanted a vehicle by any means. They had received various support supplies but they could not distribute them without a car. We secured a car in Tochigi Prefecture and had it carried to the area. The driver was eager to deliver the car as soon as possible, drove the car at a breakneck speed, and trespassed into an “emergency vehicles only” zone on an expressway to save time. He was halted by a police motorcycle, and was scolded harshly. Three years later, he told me that he had to pay a fine at that time. Ms. Osa, our President, visited Soma City so many times for serious support activities that she even caused a traffic accident there.

Finally, I am not sure if you have already received the final report, but I noticed that one important piece of information is missing. Names of individuals that supported our activities. The report does include description of places where we carried out our activities. But names of our workers and staff members are completely missing. Names of directors, too. Ms. Taki Kato, Vice Chairperson, and Ben Kato, Director, participated in soup kitchens personally and visited various places for inspection. Names of volunteers of Ms. Oikawa’s group should also be kept for record. I will ask our staff of the Office of Secretariat to prepare the record, which will be the closure of our activities in the past ten years. Now we are starting anew. Everyone, please join us for our new start. Thank you very much.

(End of Recording)