

# **RENGO's Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake**



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# 1. Damage Caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Impact on Employment

On behalf of all working people and the Japanese citizens, we would like to express our deepest gratitude for the encouragement, support and donations received from each country, as well as our regard for the strength of international solidarity.

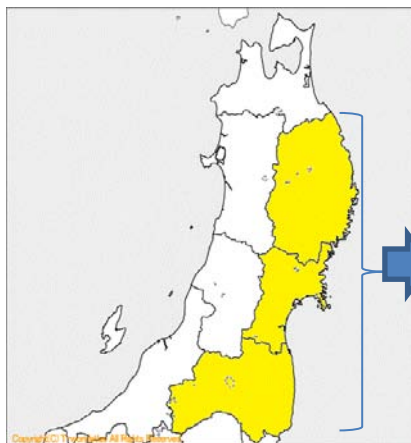
## ■ Damage caused (as of 17.00, 15 November, 2011)

### 1. Damage to humans

Confirmed deaths: 15,838  
Missing: 3,647  
Injured: 5,950

### 2. Damage to buildings

Totally destroyed: 120,233  
Half destroyed: 189,583  
Partially damaged: 598,131



## ■ Impact on employment

### 1. Numbers of workplaces and employees in the 3 worst affected prefectures

	<Workplaces>	<Employees>
Iwate Pref.:	68,000	689,000
Miyagi Pref.:	110,000	1,108,000
Fukushima Pref.:	102,000	1,100,000
Total for 3 Prefs.:	280,000	2,807,000

### 2. Numbers of workplaces and employees in coastal towns and cities in 1.

	<Workplaces>	<Employees>
Iwate Pref. :	16,000 (24%)	131,000 (19%)
Miyagi Pref.:	47,000 (43%)	458,000 (41%)
Fukushima Pref.:	24,000 (24%)	253,000 (25%)
Total for 3 Prefs.:	88,000 (31%)	841,000 (30%)

\*% shown is that of total (businesses and employees) in each prefecture.



RENGO dispatched 6,000 relief support volunteers in the 6 month period up till September 2011, an accumulated total of 35,000 volunteers.



## 2. RENGO's Demands concerning the Great East Japan Earthquake and Government Responses

### ■ RENGO's demands to the Government

#### 15 March: Demands to Government, governing and opposition parties

- Implementation of Employment Adjustment Subsidy special program.
- Setting up a support system for employees who cannot go to work due to damage to the workplace.
- Strengthening safety and health measures for recovery projects.
- Assured implementation of special unemployment benefits due to suspension of workplace operations or temporary displacement.

#### 25 March: Demands to Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare

- Total mobilization to protect workers and ensure employment.
- Help for workers who have been unable to go to work or who have lost their jobs.
- Rapid implementation of support measures for businesses etc.
- Job creation and a variety of employment assistance measures.

#### 29 March: Demands to the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency

- Support for workers in small and medium size businesses.

#### 6 April: Demands to the Prime Minister

- Secure funding for employment and labor measures.
- Full mobilization of labor administration to support job-seekers.
- Thorough enforcement of labor standards, safety and health, and disaster prevention in all recovery projects.
- Setting up of special programs for employment insurance, etc.
- Support for businesses to maintain employment, etc.
- Job creation through large-scale public works.
- Upgrading of child-care and elderly-care facilities to support changed family circumstances which force different family members to work.
- Strategic support for building industries, human resource development and starting businesses, etc. for local job creation.

### ■ Government's emergency employment and labor measures

1. Help for workers who were forced out of jobs or are unable to go to work due to the disasters.
2. Rapid implementation of various support measures for businesses which were affected by the disasters.
3. Strengthening safety and health measures.
4. Easing of conditions necessary to implement employment creation fund projects and expansion of the funds pool.
5. Flexible upgrading and implementation of job training.
6. Preparations for full mobilization towards protection of workers and securing of employment.



6 April, 2011: Kan, Prime Minister at the time (right) and RENGO President Koga (left) at the PM's office

### 3. RENGO's Policy Demands and Government Responses to Secondary Damage Caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake (accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and rolling blackouts due to power shortages)

After the accidents occurred at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant as a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March 2011, approximately 50 workers stayed on at the plant and at present over 3,000 workers are making intense efforts to restore functions.

The mass media dubbed the workers who remained at the plant in the immediate aftermath of the disaster as “the Fukushima 50.” They were highly praised and even won prizes in some countries but this is not just an issue regarding the sense of mission and mental toughness of workers doing a job. It is the responsibility of the Government to protect the life and health of these workers, same as any others.

#### ■ RENGO's demands regarding strengthening occupational safety and health measures in response to the nuclear accident (20, 26 May)

1. Strengthening of the occupational safety and health measures for all workers engaged in the response to the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.
2. Strengthening of the safety and health measures for workers who are forced to work in the evacuation zone, the planned evacuation zone or in the surrounding area.
3. Releasing of accurate information regarding radiation exposure and the impact on health, as a long period of time will be required to bring the nuclear accident under control and a large number of workers are expected to take part in the operation at the site.
4. Including an expert on industrial accidents in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's "Radiation Council" as a committee member and setting up a forum where reports can be made and policies debated.
5. Implementing thorough measures to prevent accidents and maintain workplace safety and health as well as to protect against overwork and exposure to dangerous and harmful substances such as asbestos while engaged in restoration and reconstruction work.



#### ■ RENGO's demands regarding electricity supply measures to avoid rolling blackouts (6 April)

- Strengthening advice and instructions from the Labor Bureau regarding changes in working hours and arrangements and implementation of labor-management consultations due to changed hours of operation, etc.



#### ■ Government policy

#### ■ Government measures

1. For all workers who begin emergency work after 1 November, the effective dose limit on radiation has been lowered from 250 mSv to 100 mSv.
2. Setting up of health clinics for workers, implementing extra health checks, formulation of a database for managing radiation dosages.
3. Recommendations to relevant project officers to correct any cases of breaking the Industrial Safety and Health Act.

1. Setting up consultation services in the Labor Bureau and the Labor Standards Inspection Office to respond to labor/management enquiries regarding review of working conditions in order to save electricity.
2. Compiling a pamphlet summarizing main points from labor/management discussions.
3. Circulating Q&A on review of working conditions in order to save electricity in Labor Bureau and posting it on MHLW website.