

April 14, 2011

To: Chair of the Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake  
From: Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan

### **Request for Consultation**

I hereby request your Council's advice on the following subject.

#### Subject

Framework for formulating guidelines on reconstruction in regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

#### Reason for request

The Great East Japan Earthquake was an unprecedented natural catastrophe that not only devastated an extremely large area of eastern Japan together with the following massive tsunamis, but was also compounded by a nuclear power plant accidents. Moreover, the disaster continues to have far-reaching impacts on this nation's society, economy, and industries.

The disaster's aftermath is not a problem for the people of the affected regions to solve on their own; instead, it is a challenge that must be addressed by all of us living in this nation.

Together, we must move forward to surmount this national crisis so that we can promptly rebuild the ravaged areas and the livelihoods of their residents, and so that we can overcome the disaster's effects on our society, economy, and industries and thereby restore Japan into a prosperous and dynamic nation.

To those ends, we need to take creative, future-oriented actions that go beyond restoration—action that is driven by a national spirit of mutual assistance and solidarity; action that is founded upon appropriate role-sharing and collaboration among national and local governments, private businesses, NPOs, and other organizations, and upon cooperation among local governments; and action that respects wishes of local residents, pools together our wisdom, and wields the full power of our economy.

As we pursue this mission, we must constantly give consideration to the communities that directly suffered from the disaster and still struggle to operate their administrative functions effectively.

The most important focus for reconstructing the affected regions is to implement firm community planning aimed at minimizing the risk for similar tragedies in the future and at creating an environment where people from all walks of life can live in safety and with peace of mind.

At the same time, we must look closely at each community's uniqueness and use it as a guide as we revitalize the local economy and employment opportunities through the creation and placement of new industries and home-grown industries that make use of

local resources, and as we strive to preserve each community's longstanding traditional culture and strong bonds of its people.

Furthermore, as a new endeavor, it is vital that we seek to create trailblazing communities that will lead our country with their bold initiatives for tackling challenges like population aging and shrinkage, and with their systems for environmentally friendly living.

Since the day of the earthquake, we have worked at full steam to conduct search and rescue operations, implement emergency repairs, assist those living in evacuation shelters, and make other immediate responses to the disaster. Now, while firmly maintaining those forms of support, we must also strive to put the affected communities on a smooth path toward future-oriented reconstruction.

In the case of areas affected by the nuclear accidents, this first means alleviating public anxiety by taking thorough measures to ensure the safety of the nuclear power plants and prevent the dispersion of radioactive material. Our full attention to this matter is an indispensable precondition for recovery.

It is also necessary for us to bear in mind that the disaster has exerted immeasurable impacts on not only the devastated regions, but also the foundation of Japan's industries and economy.

Our nation's economy cannot be restored unless we rebuild the disaster areas. And, the disaster areas cannot be truly rebuilt unless we restore our nation's economy. Accordingly, we must overcome the catastrophe's far-reaching impacts on our society, economy, and industries so that we can revive both the afflicted regions and Japan as a whole. In order to accomplish this mission, it is necessary that a framework for formulating reconstruction guidelines be hammered out based on a broad range of perspectives.

I ask that all the distinguished members of the Council engage in unfettered discussion to draw up a robust blueprint for our path to the future.

This is the reason why I am soliciting your advice.