

A Message from Fukushima on March 11th, 2024

Those who lost their loved ones in the earthquake and tsunami.
Those who were forced to leave their hometowns for evacuation.
And those who continue to pray from afar for the revitalization of their hometowns.

As we reflect on the sorrows, struggles, dreams, and hopes for the future of many, today marks the 13th year since the Great East Japan Earthquake and the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station Accident.

Efforts are underway to reclaim regions that were once deemed difficult to return to.

Research into new technologies has begun at F-REI, a facility envisioned as “the Centre of Excellence for Creative Restoration”. The prefecture has seen a record influx of newcomers and aspiring farmers, while the export value of local products has reached an all-time high.

With “Fukushima Pride” in our hearts, the challenges we have taken on without ever giving up are steadily bearing fruit.

On the other hand, the harsh reality persists, with many people still living in evacuation.

In addition to rebuilding their lives, we face numerous challenges towards revitalization. These include restoring the declining population, rebuilding livelihoods and industries, and the long-term commitment to decommissioning.

Furthermore, with the passage of 13 years, the memory of the disaster is gradually fading.

“Those of us who live in Fukushima know that every day we take for granted may not come tomorrow.”

*(Mahiru Suzuki, Haramachi Daiichi Junior High School,
“Letter to the Future”)*

On January 1st, 2024, a massive earthquake, with its epicenter in the Noto Region of Ishikawa Prefecture, claimed numerous precious lives and disrupted peaceful daily lives of many people.

Despite the tremendous loss, it is precisely because of the overwhelming support we have received that we must empathize with and stand by those affected by the disaster as if it were our own concern.

Passing on the experiences and lessons of the disaster to the next generation is our responsibility as the generation that experienced and survived it.

We believe that this will not only contribute to the revitalization of Fukushima, but also help protect many lives from potential disasters in the future.

“I hope that Fukushima will become better known, and that the once solitary landscape will be filled with plenty of buildings and become more vibrant.”

*(Rin Suzuki, Shirakawa Daini Junior High School,
“Letter to the Future”)*

Starting this year, the Inter-High School Men's Football Games will be held at J-Village. The location, now a symbol of revitalization, will become a dream destination for young players nationwide.

In order to understand “Fukushima Today,” the youths are visiting disaster-stricken areas, directly “witnessing” and “experiencing” the impact of the disaster, learning about it as their own.

Through interactions with local communities, a growing circle of friendship and mutual inspiration is observed, creating a new light of brilliance.

“There are many challenges that Fukushima must overcome in the future. Even so, I will face forward and do my best to do what I can for the future.”

*(Meru Kobari, Shirakawa Daini Junior High School,
“Letter to the Future”)*

We will persist in moving forward, embracing the true nature of Fukushima, where light and shadow intertwine.

In order to create a place where the children who will carry the next generation can envision a future filled with dreams and hope, we will continue to take up the challenge of making Fukushima shine brighter than yesterday and even brighter tomorrow.

The determination engraved deeply in our hearts on that decisive day remains steadfast: “We will definitely bring back the smiles of the people.”

With this original resolve in our hearts, we pledge our unwavering dedication to shaping the future of Fukushima.

March 11th, 2024

UCHIBORI Masao
Governor of Fukushima Prefecture