

Statement

Ten Years since the Great East Japan Earthquake: Response of the Japan Geoscience Union to Natural Disasters

March 11, 2021

On the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, we would like to repeat our prayers said for the souls of those who lost their lives following the double blow of a natural disaster and the resulting accidents that added to the suffering, and to express our deepest sympathy to those who are still enduring lives as evacuees and those who are still striving to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami.

The devastating effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami were compounded by the resulting secondary disaster including the spread of radioactive materials. In the 10 years since the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan has been afflicted by numerous destructive natural disasters such as the series of 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes, flooding related to torrential rainstorms, and deadly landslides. If similar natural disasters were to occur during the current Covid-19 pandemic, it is clear the resulting disaster and needs for mitigation would be complex and multifaceted. Looking to the future, none of us can afford to be complacent about the potential for major disasters—in Japan major seismic events are expected both in SW Japan due to movement on the Nankai Trough megathrust and directly under the Tokyo metropolitan area.

The core mission of the Japan Geoscience Union (JpGU) includes “promoting basic research for the scientific elucidation of natural phenomena such as earthquakes and tsunamis”; building on the results of this research “to develop education in earth and planetary science”; and “to disseminate information related to natural disasters.” Education plays an irreplaceable role in disaster management, helping both to ensure individual safety and to mitigate damage to property. The JpGU will continue to promote basic research that deepens our understanding of natural phenomena related to earth and planetary science, and based on the results of this research, we will strive

to develop disaster assessment that eliminates the unexpected and to disseminate the knowledge and wisdom needed to further improve disaster mitigation.

JpGU has 51 member societies covering the broad spectrum of earth and planetary science and as such is well placed to contribute to understanding and tackling the effects of complex natural disasters in the future. In particular we will continue to promote interdisciplinary cooperation with the Science Council of Japan and the Japan Academic Network for Disaster Reduction, and strengthen our links with both national and local government. Through these efforts we aim to make lasting contributions to the creation of safe and secure societies, in Japan and throughout the world.

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