

**Remarks by Ambassador Yoshikawa  
for the Memorial Conference for the Great East Japan Earthquake**

(Wednesday 14 March 2012 at 16h00 in CC10)

Mr. Secretary-General

Fellow Ambassadors

Ladies and Gentlemen

First, I wish to thank you for gathering here today to participate in the Memorial Conference for the Great East Japan Earthquake that happened on March 11<sup>th</sup> last year.

Before starting the Conference, may I ask you to stand and join me in a minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the Earthquake. (Silence)

Thank you very much.

One year ago, on March 11<sup>th</sup>, an earthquake of magnitude 9.0 struck Eastern Japan, followed by a tsunami and a nuclear accident.

We are going to show a 2-minute footage of the earthquake. It starts with animated computer graphics which show the impact of the earthquake and tsunami waves. It then shows the tsunami, fires, people evacuating and the land devastated by the earthquake.

(Video)

The disaster that you have just seen caused tremendous damage. More than 19,000 people are dead or missing. 18,000 people are still living in temporary residences such as friends' or relatives' houses, hotels, city halls or schools.

Material damage was also very large. The reconstruction cost is estimated at 23 trillion yen or 200 billion Euros in 10 years.

On behalf of the government of Japan, I would like to express my renewed appreciation for the generous assistance which we received from all over the world including the OECD member countries. The assistance was not only rescue teams and materials but also messages of sympathy and solidarity.

Very strong support also came from the OECD Secretariat.

- Mr. Secretary-General, you visited Japan one month after the earthquake and expressed to the Prime Minister Naoto KAN the OECD's readiness to support Japan in its efforts to rebuild the country.
- Many departments of the Secretariat made specific contributions in risk management and education in affected areas, to mention only a few.
- The Nuclear Energy Agency has helped us to share information on the nuclear accident with the

international community. For example, NEA organized a briefing meeting, just one week after the accident. Director General Mr. Luis Echávarri visited Fukushima.

- The International Energy Agency has been providing valuable inputs to the ongoing review of energy policy in Japan. IEA Executive Director Mme Maria van der Hoeven and Deputy Executive Director Richard Jones both visited Japan after the earthquake.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will be very candid and say that we still have a lot of challenges but I can say with confidence that we are on the way to recovery.

First, most parts of Japan, except for a few restricted areas, have returned to normal. Affected areas, including their infrastructure and economies, are making steady progress. Business is on a track to recovery. Foreign tourists and students are coming back to Japan.

Second, on the nuclear accident, last December, the government of Japan announced that reactors at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station were brought to a condition equivalent to a so called “cold shutdown.” The accident in the station has thus been settled. There remain, however, many challenges such as decontamination, health management, compensation and decommission of the reactors. They are being treated with the utmost importance and urgency.

Third, on the energy policy, following the nuclear accident, Japan is reviewing its energy policies, including nuclear, in a comprehensive manner. My government intends to formulate a new energy strategy by this summer. Japan faces energy constraints, but this challenge can be an opportunity to be innovative.

In today's Conference, in Session 1, Secretary-General will talk about “reconstruction,” focusing on the economic impact, risk management, the global value-chain and education.

Then, in Session 2, Director General Echávarri of the Nuclear Energy Agency and Deputy Executive Director Jones of the International Energy Agency will talk about the “nuclear accident” and the “energy policy” respectively.

In both sessions, we will take some questions.

Now, I wish to invite our Secretary General, Mr. Angel Gurría, for his presentation. You have the floor.

(END)