



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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**Speech by Mr. Kiyoshi Murakami, Special Representative of Mayor,
City of Rikuzentakata, Japan**

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, Good afternoon!

My name is Kiyoshi Murakami, Special Representative of Mayor and Senior Executive Advisor to the City of Rikuzentakata, Japan. This is my great honor and privilege to share our experiences and lessons learnt from Tsunami Disaster 2011, and the progress update of the recovery and reconstruction efforts and our future dream of Rikuzentakata.

As you remember, the City of Rikuzentakata was completely wiped out with 15.1 meter high tsunami,. We lost about 1800 lives among the population of 24,000 , which is over 8% of the total population. Half of all residents lost their homes, and the city lost almost all public facilities and buildings. So, over 13,000 people became displaced under the cold weather.

Now, talking about our renewing city projects, we have been rebuilding Rikuzentakata with the fundamental concepts of “Build-Back Better”, “Resilient City,” and “Inclusive Society with Accessibility”. We have designed and made the recovery and the reconstruction plan based on these concepts. We never want to have the same experience in Rikuzentakata and to create resilient city for the next generations. We made massive and gigantic projects of the rebuilding whole city by, 12.5 meter high seawalls surrounding bay, elevating city center with 10 meter high with the soils and rocks delivered by the world largest conveyer belt from the mountain 2 miles away. So, new shopping mall has started the business on the elevated landscape. Connecting with the shopping mall, we now have the user-friendly and universal designed public library, kids park, event house, and so on.

It is very crucial for us as Tsunami Disaster survivors to share our experiences and lessons learnt. So, most of all tsunami covered area will be renewed with National Memorial Park. The City of Rikuzentakata, cooperated with national and prefectural

governments, has decided to remain several destroyed buildings as the monuments of Tsunami experiences. Within the park, not only the Tsunami Victim Memorial will be built, but the Tsunami Disaster Museum will also be scheduled to open summer 2019.

Using this museum and the Rikuzentakata Global Campus, which is jointly operated by universities, City of Rikuzentakata has a strong commitment to become a Center of the Excellence on Disaster Management and Prevention. So, we will provide the different levels of disaster prevention training programs, crisis simulation games, and urban development programs for any students, officials, and professionals globally.

The inclusive and accessible society to my knowledge is where no one is left behind in the community. Anyone is welcomed at our community in Rikuzentakata. Anyone here includes families with children, the elderly, women, single parents, foreigners, people with special needs, and LGBT. The City of Rikuzentakata has been working on to create the inclusive policies and programs such as conducting para-sports in Rikuzentakata.

It is very crucial to use the universal design to all of newly rebuilding the entire city, but it will be more essential for all of the citizens of Rikuzentakata to treat anyone without any discrimination in mind. We want to promote our city as one that is accepting and welcoming. We want people to know here they will be appreciated. We want to be a model city of inclusive society globally. Tsunami disaster also created new friendship in the international community. Crescent City and County of Del Norte, California and the City of Rikuzentakata have recently established the sister-city relationship because both have the same experiences of completely washed away by the tsunami.

In bedding this concept, Rikuzentakata will also focus on new industry and businesses. Since whole area of the city center was completely washed away and became empty as a white canvas, we are inviting any start-up company, ventures, anyone who want to challenge developing new businesses. Above all, this is considered to be a part of "Build-back Better" locally following the Sendai Framework. Finally, please allow me to convey to you again the deep gratitude and appreciation on behalf of the citizens of Rikuzentakata. I hope to see you in Rikuzentakata.

Thank you