○Responses toward the rehabilitation of the disaster areas

MLIT supports post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. As part of such support, the ministry has launched a number of support programs designed to promote tourism in Niigata Prefecture, where the tourism industry was significantly damaged by the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake.

[Responses to the Major Earthquake off the Coast of Sumatra and resultant tsunamis in the Indian Ocean]

On December 26, 2004, an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 on the Richter scale occurred off the coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, to the west. The subsequent tsunamis devastated countries along the Indian Ocean, reportedly leaving some 300,000 people dead or missing.

MLIT assigned staff members of Japan Coast Guard to join the Japan Disaster Relief Teams sent to the disaster areas. The ministry also dispatched experts in tsunamis and those in restoration and reconstruction to Thailand, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

MLIT will continue to work together with other ministries, agencies and institutions concerned to assist affected countries in two major aspects: restoration and reconstruction of the devastated areas; and capacity development in disaster preparedness. As part of this initiative, MLIT will proactively support the establishment of a tsunami early warning system in the Indian Ocean.

＜Activities of the Japan Disaster Relief Teams＞

Thorough examination of the existing disaster management and development of new measures

A spate of natural disasters in 2004 have prompted MLIT to thoroughly examine its disaster management measures and commit itself further to disaster prevention and mitigation, as part of efforts toward a more disaster resistant nation.

[Management of torrential rains and typhoons]

○Developing an emergency action plan for torrential rain disaster management

Based on the lessons learned from a spate of torrential rain disasters during 2004, MLIT has come up with an "emergency action plan for torrential rain disaster management." This plan is made up of five key policies: (i) improving disaster information services; (ii) ensuring the sharing of disaster information; (iii) maintaining and improving the functions of disaster prevention facilities; (iv) rebuilding the local disaster management capacity; and (v) thorough reviewing disaster preparedness for improvement. Deadlines and numerical targets have been established for these policies.

○Sediment related disaster management

The year 2004 has seen some 2,500 cases of sediment-related disasters across the country—a record annual number since statistics were first compiled. MLIT is now studying measures that address structural and non-structural counter measures against sediment related disasters.

［**Earthquake disaster prevention**］

○Follow-up on the Shinkansen train derailment

MLIT's Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission, which reported in January 2005 the progress in its investigation into the derailment accident on the Joetsu Shinkansen train due to the Mid Niigata prefecture Earthquake, is still working to identify the cause of the accident. With reference made to this progress report, MLIT's Shinkansen derailment prevention council is studying steps to prevent derailment, mitigate disasters, and reinforce the earthquake-resistance of railway infrastructure.

＜Joetsu Shinkansen train derailment accident (between Nagaoka and Urasa stations)＞

○Promotion of more earthquake-resistant housing and other buildings

Many old buildings that failed to meet the current quakeproofing standards were damaged or destroyed altogether in the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake. MLIT is thus studying ways to make such substandard buildings more quake-resistant, including target settings, measures to achieve them, and the use of earthquake insurance.

○Anti-earthquake measures for sewerage

In light of sewerage damage from the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake, MLIT is studying technical recommendations, including back-filling associated with damaged sewerage facilities.

○Promoting seismic retrofitting of bridges, etc. for roads and Shinkansen lines

Over a three-year period between FY2005 and FY2007, MLIT plans to intensively conduct seismic retrofitting work for bridges for emergency transportation roads, piers of elevated bridges for Shinkansen lines, and bridges (overpasses) over Shinkansen lines and expressways.

［**Tsunami protection**］

○Developing a tsunami protection roadmap

In light of the extensive damage from the Major Earthquake off the Coast of Sumatra and resulting tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, MLIT has decided to review Japan's preparedness for tsunamis and identify issues to be addressed. Then MLIT plans to determine steps to be taken and establish mid- to long-term goals.

○Large and comprehensive tsunami response drill

MLIT plans to organize a large and comprehensive tsunami response drill in July 2005 that will involves the central government and local governments, corporations and other organizations, and residents. This drill will contribute to the development of a mechanism to communicate accurate information in the case of tsunamis. It will also serves as an information campaign for tsunami preparedness.