

Toward a More Disaster Resistant Nation

Public awareness about natural disasters is higher than ever. During 2004, Japan suffered major damage in many parts of the country due to a succession of typhoons and torrential rains and the Mid Niigata Prefecture Earthquake in October. In December, the Major Earthquake off the Coast of Sumatra brought about tsunamis, ravaging countries along the Indian Ocean. In addition, the year 2005 marks the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

With these circumstances in mind, this special part describes major natural disasters during 2004 and the progress in restoration of the devastated areas. It also discusses what should be done to prevent such disasters.

Responses to natural disasters that occurred in 2004

[Responses to damage from torrential rains and typhoons]

○Extent of damage

A total of ten typhoons made landfall on Japan during 2004—the largest number on record—with Typhoon No. 4 in June of 2004 being the first one. These typhoons and other torrential rains left more than 230 people dead or missing and flooding some 170,000 homes across the country.

Two separate torrential rains in July 2004 caused major deluges, including urban areas. A torrential rain in Niigata and Fukushima led to the collapse of riverbanks along the Ikarashi, Kariyata and other rivers in the Shinano River system. Another torrential rain in Fukui resulted in bursts in the riverbanks of the Asuwa and other rivers in the Kuzuryu River system.

Typhoon No. 16 in August brought storm surges and heavy rains to many areas mainly in Chugoku and Shikoku. Typhoon No. 21 in September caused many large-scale sediment related disasters to Mie, Ehime and other prefectures. In October, Typhoon No. 23 brought about large-scale flood damage to the northern part of Hyogo Prefecture and other areas with the collapse of the riverbanks of the Maruyama and other rivers in the Maruyama River system. This typhoon also caused coastal disasters associated with storm surges in Kochi Prefecture.

<Damage from torrential rains and typhoons>

(i) Torrential rain in Fukui in July (Fukui city, Fukui Prefecture)



(ii) Typhoon No. 16 in August [storm surge disaster] (Takamatsu city, Kagawa Prefecture)

