

[Restoring confidence in the safety and security of buildings]

The problem of fabricated structural calculation data sheets not only created a major obstacle to the safety of residents and the stability of homes, it is also causing the spread of uneasiness about the earthquake resistance of buildings among the general public.

Under these circumstances the Architectural Subcommittee of the Panel on Infrastructure Development put together a mid-term report in February 2006, laying out the course given below in connection with the enforcement of policy for ensuring the safety of buildings. Based on these propositions, efforts must be made to restore public trust in the safety and security of buildings by reexamining the system in an appropriate manner to prevent recurrences of fabrication problems.

(Steps that must be taken immediately to ensure the safety of buildings)

- (1) Tighten building approval and inspection
- (2) Strengthen oversight of designated verification and inspection institutes
- (3) Stiffen punishments and penalties for architects
- (4) Broaden home sellers' defect liability
- (5) Broaden and strengthen the information disclosure system for architects, architectural offices, and designated verification and inspection institutes
- (6) Increase the retention period for drawings and documents

(Issues warranting continued review toward the actualization of policy)

- (1) Issues relating to the architect system
- (2) Strengthen oversight and review systems at specified national, prefectural, and metropolitan administrative government agencies and enrich their stock of information on buildings

Based on this mid-term report, MLIT submitted the "Bill to Partially Amend the Building Standards Law to Ensure the Safety of Buildings" at the 164th session of the Diet. The bill covered tightening of the verification and inspection system, stiffening of penalties, and so on. MLIT will continue to examine other issues like those surrounding the architect system, as well, including the implementation of an architect system divided up by field of specialization. MLIT is committed to putting together the policy by this summer and proceeding with the required amendments.

[Promoting the development, implementation, and utilization of technology]

Not only administrative methods but also methods utilizing science and technology are crucial for solving the problems that must be dealt with for the realization of a safe and secure society.

From now forward MLIT is committed to resolving serious societal issues through the mutual complementation and coordination of administrative methods with science and technology, which is developed by combining, integrating, and enhancing various elemental technologies that make their way back to citizens' lives (social technology), aiming toward the creation of a "new social infrastructure."

(Research and development warranting intensive efforts)

In order to prevent and mitigate damage from natural disasters, MLIT will make intensive efforts toward improvement of local disaster prevention capabilities, early restoration, and accommodation of unforeseen events, with focus on research and development of technology.

(Enhancing the reliability of communications infrastructure)

In order to mitigate damage from natural disasters, speedy collection and provision of information when a disaster occurs is of the utmost importance.