

# A-RI-GA-TO A-RI-GA-TO Thank you Thank you



The earthquake and its resulting tsunami that occurred on March 11, 2011 in the northern part of Japan, shook the Japan Patent Office (JPO) building so heavily and so long, in spite of the fact that the epicenter was located off the northeast Pacific coast of the main island, more than 500 kilometers away from Tokyo. Right after the shaking ceased, I immediately ordered a safety inspection of all personnel. Fortunately, we did not experience any damage in terms of both personnel and our building.

The scene of the central Tokyo that I saw from the Commissioner's Office at that time was the same as usual, which made it hard for me to believe the news reports showing us the devastating disaster that hit so many cities, towns and villages in the wide area of the Tohoku district.

However, the truth of the matter is that the earthquake and its resulting tsunami did severely devastate the Tohoku district of Japan and its surrounding areas. I would like to pray for the lost souls, as well as to express my deepest condolence for the victims and their families.

Right after the quake, I instantly directed the relevant divisions to set up special measures for applicants who are prevented from fulfilling the prescribed patent-related procedures or who are unable to contact the JPO.

Simultaneously, I requested all the foreign IP offices to which the Japan-residing applicants have filed during the last 3 years to take relief measures, such as extending the statutory time period for the applicants who are prevented from taking the prescribed procedures or who are unable to contact them due to the effects of the earthquake and its resulting tsunami. We are very appreciative to have received so many kind replies and warm condolences from so many offices worldwide. I would like to express my greatest and deepest appreciation to them.

The relief measures taken by the JPO and announced by the foreign offices are made publicly available on the JPO website.

In addition to the special relief measures for the Japan-residing applicants, some offices offered kind donations. The United States Patent and Trademark Office staff are kindly raising relief funds for Japan. The Korean Intellectual Property Office has sent charity money donated by the staff members through a Korean broadcasting station. Likewise, the Thailand Department of Intellectual Property sent a monetary donation through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand. In the European Patent Office, as President Battistelli called for a moment

of silence, all the personnel offered a short prayer for the victims at noon on March 21. In the Turkish Patent Institute, at the beginning of the international conference on March 24, responding to President Asan's invitation, all of the 150 participants observed a moment of silence for the victims.

Although we are living in different places and countries, I felt a warm bond with those who engage in the same IP work, pursuing the same goal to serve IP applicants. And my heart is full of gratitude to "TO-MO-DA-CHI" (friends) all over the world. As the representative of the JPO, and on behalf of the whole nation, I would like to say THANK YOU to all.

As mentioned above, the scene of central Tokyo remains unchanged. TOKYO SKYTREE, the world tallest free-standing TV tower, which has reached the world record height of 634 meters on March 18, suffered no damage at all by even such a big earthquake. It is all under construction toward completion.

Above all, the development of technology and the power of innovation in Japan are still alive along with discipline and courage that the Japanese people value most highly. Companies and universities are continuing research and development as usual, and even after the earthquake and its resulting tsunami, the JPO keeps receiving applications from them as usual; in fact, the number of applications filed to the JPO has increased even more after the earthquake. Especially, the number of PCT international applications received by the JPO showed a year-on-year increase of over 10%. The JPO continually engages in protection of intellectual property filed by the vigorously active applicants, further contributing to innovation in Japan as well as in the world.

Lastly, I would like to mention one thing; coming to know that the number of foreign IP offices with which the Japan-residing applicants have filed during the last 3 years exceeds 90, I have felt the "KI-ZU-NA (relationship)" with our "TO-MO-DA-CHI (friends)" grow all over the world. Meanwhile, seeing the intellectual property system, despite having expanded globally even more, the "KI-ZU-NA" has not yet fully ripened, as various differences in the system among the countries still exist.

Contributing to innovation in Japan as well as in the world, and responding to the friendship extended from all over the world, the JPO would like to further contribute to harmonizing the patent systems in the world and bring "KI-ZU-NA" which connects them.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for your support and warm-hearted thoughts and gestures to us, and I want to conclude my message by saying "A-RI-GA-TO" (Thank you).