



## Message on the Japanese Constitution Day (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) 2011 YWCA of Japan

The season filled with energy of new lives has come around. Yet we see it in a time of deep sorrow and great pain.

The March 11<sup>th</sup> Northern Japan Earthquake and the Pacific Tsunami has taken countless lives away and left many people bereaved of their loved ones. Furthermore, the nuclear power plant accident that followed the disaster continues to threaten people with a great fear of radioactive pollution at local and global levels.

Through this experience of the natural and the human generated disasters, we are made aware that our life is a gift, and that we should take this tough time as a chance to thoroughly re-consider the direction and the works we should pursue from now on.

In 1970, the YWCA of Japan held up the philosophy of “Denial of Nukes”, despite the world trend which was for nuclear power at that time. This philosophy did not only deny nuclear weapons, but it also called people to look back on the way of life which had over-prospered by the exceeding reliance on science and technology including nuclear power. This philosophy was our prayer and declaration to deny any form of nukes including the “peaceful use of nuclear power” that threatens humanity and nature, and to regain the environment where people could live in harmony with nature.

Now, the warnings by conscientious people about the danger of the nuclear power has become reality. We need to raise our voices even more, and strongly demand the Japanese Government to change its energy policy and stop relying on nuclear power. We are determined to stand firmly on our decision in 1970, and make further efforts to spread our views widely, in order to achieve the way of life where all lives are respected and cared for. To pursue this goal, we will work together with political sectors and hold hands with people who share our common goal.

Japan’s nuclear power policy, with an exceeding priority on the economy, sacrifices the dignity of lives. It also creates a tension and danger of diverting radioactive materials to military use. This tendency of sacrificing lives and militarism are seen in other issues throughout Japan; the military policies including the concentration of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa, history text books for compulsory education lacking facts about what Japan has done on people during the Asia and the Pacific War, and forcing the teachers and pupils/students to sing the national anthem and salute the national flag in elementary and secondary education. We are aware that all these national policies including education, economy, energy, military, are tightly linked to one another, and as a whole it is neglecting the dignity of all our lives. We cannot ignore this problem, as we reassure that the life continues from the past, to the present, and to the future, and we can only live in this continuation of life and by understanding and appreciating the life we are given. Based on the idea of the “‘safeness’ on perspective of women and children”, we have a mission to ensure that the links of life will safely continue over generations.

The Preamble of the Japanese Constitution states, “We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in the peace, free from fear and want. We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations. “

We are now in a state of great devastation. However, we see a ray of hope in this Preamble, which calls for a world where all lives are respected and cared for. In these words of the Constitution, we see our own vision to pursue to create such a world for our children and future generations.

On this Japanese Constitution Day, we, YWCA of Japan, state that we will keep hope alive and work in solidarity with people at local and global levels until we achieve our vision.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 on the Japanese Constitution Day

Naoko Matano, President

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