

Phone Conversation between PM Kan and PM Key (24 February 2011)

On 24 February 2011, the Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan held a telephone conversation with Rt. Hon. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, who was at the scene in Christchurch. A summary of the conversation is as follows (Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Tetsuro Fukuyama, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Makiko Kikuta, and others were also present).

1. At the outset, Prime Minister Kan made the following remarks.

I would like to express my deepest sympathy with regard to the recent earthquake. In response to the request from New Zealand, Japan has dispatched an international disaster relief team. I would like to show my heartfelt respect for the fact that every effort is being made to rescue the victims, including the Japanese nationals among them. I have received reports to the effect that Japan's disaster relief team is making every effort as they devote themselves to the rescue work. It is my heartfelt wish that they will continue to put their full effort into the rescue work, particularly on the spot of the collapsed building where a large number of people, including Japanese students, remain trapped.

2. In response to this, Prime Minister Key made the following remarks.

(1) I am profoundly grateful for the Prime Minister's kind words and the support from Japan. Unfortunately, the city's downtown area suffered direct damage, which has caused a large number of deaths. The Japanese disaster relief team is cooperating closely with the New Zealand authorities as they go about rescuing those in the building containing Japanese students. Even though this was an exceptionally massive earthquake, we refuse to abandon hope.

(2) We will remain in close contact as we provide information with the Japanese side. Should the need for additional assistance arise, we may make another request to Japan. Thank you very much.

(To conclude, Prime Minister Kan made a statement to the effect that he would like to see efforts being made for relief and rescue operations right up to the very end, and instructed the Japanese disaster relief team to this effect. After that the conversation ended.)