

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



WORLD VISION URGES JAPAN QUAKE RELIEF; RELIEF DISTRIBUTION STARTS TOMORROW

SINGAPORE – 16 March 2011 – International aid group World Vision has declared the 9.0 magnitude Japan earthquake-tsunami a Category 3, Level 3 emergency – which is the highest rating in terms of the scale and scope of response, and is appealing globally for USD\$10 million to meet the critical needs of desperate survivors.

Reports indicate that over 50 million people are affected directly and indirectly. The confirmed death toll has climbed to 3,400 people, but more than 15,000 are still missing, while at least 500,000 people have been made homeless. A total of 63,000 homes were damaged, many completely destroyed as entire coastal villages were swept away. The threat of the spread of radiation is causing great concern, while the government has set up a 20 kilometre exclusion zone around the power plants.

“This situation is, understandably, very chaotic,” said Kenjiro Ban, World Vision Japan’s manager for humanitarian and emergency affairs. “I’ve served on disaster response programmes in Kenya, Sudan, India, Pakistan, Myanmar and Haiti and the needs I’m seeing in my own country are as bad as anything I’ve seen globally.”

According to the Director of International Programme for World Vision Japan, Kazushito Takase, World Vision will begin its distribution operations on Thursday, 17 March 2011, in Tome City (north eastern part of Sendai). The distribution operation is targeted at 6,000 people, with 4,500 blankets, 130,000 sanitary napkins for children, 100,000 sanitary napkins for women and 4,800 bottled water (0.5 litre per bottle) ready for distribution. World Vision has been granted permission to work with the displaced in Tome (north eastern part of Sendai).

“Last night, I visited one of the shelters housing some of the 340,000 people who have been evacuated around the city,” said Mitsuko Sobata, communications and advocacy officer for World Vision Japan. “Children are sleeping on cardboard with only one blanket in this freezing weather. It was very difficult for me to see that. They’re tired and afraid, and the tragedy they’ve endured is overwhelming.”

In addition to providing relief supplies, World Vision is also working to establish Child-Friendly Spaces in the affected areas. These sites offer psycho-social support for children who are affected by the disaster, and allow them to resume normal childhood activities and experience structure and security that are often lost during emergency situations.

On Wednesday, the assessment team will travel to Fukushima, where nuclear contamination has forced the evacuations of tens of thousands of people. The assessment will help World Vision understand how best to respond to the needs there. It is anticipated that food, warm clothing and Child-Friendly Spaces are amongst the highest priorities for these displaced families now.

Find out more about World Vision's relief response in Japan today by visiting www.worldvision.org.sg/japandisaster.

Please do not hesitate to contact **Ms Lynette Lim** or **Ms Sharon Lim** at **(65) 6511- 7115/ 33** should you require additional information, images, or would like to conduct tele-interviews with our spokespeople on the ground.

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