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PRESS RELEASE

Devastation in Japan “immense” says World Vision Canada President

Dave Toycen moved by resilience of Japanese people in the face of “triple disaster”

SENDAI, Japan, March 18, 2011 —World Vision Canada President and CEO Dave Toycen says he is saddened by the scale of destruction that is he seeing in northeastern Japan following last week’s earthquake and tsunami.

Toycent arrived in Japan on Thursday and on Friday, he accompanied a team from World Vision Japan to deliver humanitarian supplies in the community of Tome, about 500 kilometers north of Tokyo. The supplies include blankets, sanitary products such as diapers and bottled water and will provide approximately 6,000 people with these necessities. Toycent and the team members also visited Minami Sanriku, a coastal community where almost half of the 20,000 residents are missing and feared dead.

“The scale of destruction in Minami Sanriku is immense,” Toycent says. “Where a thriving community once existed, now there is nothing left. Everything has been flattened and destroyed. I was able to speak with some local survivors and was moved by their resilience and desire to carry on with hope and determination in the face of this triple disaster – earthquake, tsunami and fears of radiation.”

Toycent adds that he’s been impressed with dedication of the World Vision Japan staff who have worked tirelessly for several days with little sleep and occasional meals. He also has praise for the work that is already being done by the Government of Japan, which has provided leadership and structure to the relief efforts being undertaken in the affected areas. Nevertheless, Toycent says World Vision still has much work to do.

“We experienced a modest tremor on Thursday, and no doubt these aftershocks continue to cause anxiety, especially among children,” Toycent says. “World Vision is working to set up some child-friendly spaces so the children have somewhere to play and we can provide some psycho-social support.”

Toycent expects to return to Canada early next week and will remain available for media interviews as circumstances permit.

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- visiting www.worldvision.ca
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- calling 1-800-268-5528

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“The cold weather in northeastern Japan is making it very difficult for survivors. It’s a race against time. There is a rush to get food, water, blankets and medical care to people. This is a “triple disaster” – earthquake, tsunami, and fears of radiation – which is making the needs all the more urgent and desperate.”

—Dave Toycent,
President, World Vision
Canada