

Application Letter for UNISDR Role Model City

In 2004, Saijo City was hit by record-setting torrential rainfall due to a typhoon that caused extensive damage from city-wide flooding to landslides in mountainous areas. We cannot deny that we were unprepared for this event due to our city's generally warm and affable climate as well as the lack of serious natural disasters in the past.

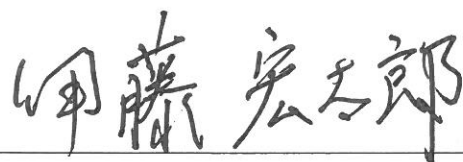
In addition, climate change is increasing the frequency of short yet heavy rainfall known as "Guerilla Monsoons" in many parts of the country. Also, Japan lies over multiple major fault lines and is one of the most earthquake prone countries around the world. The possibility of an occurrence of a magnitude 8 earthquake in areas around Saijo City is growing.

It is now our imperative to be sufficiently prepared for any natural disasters which may occur in the near future. Since the disaster in 2004, the citizens of Saijo have taken it upon themselves to reassess the value of the bonds between communities and are endeavoring to establish a natural disaster prevention framework in Saijo. Through the increasing awareness among children concerning natural disaster prevention, they will be able to protect themselves and their families. Particularly, we are aiming to increase disaster awareness to attend to areas where there is a large number of elderly populations.

The introduction of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction campaign came at a very opportune timing. Through Saijo City's participation in this campaign, we aspire to share our own experiences to the world. We hope that our experiences can be used in other countries to reduce disasters. Furthermore, we hope that the disaster reduction initiatives of all parties involved will mutually benefit and improve through the exchange of information.

Kotaro Ito

Mayor of Saijo



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