

## Latest earthquakes highlight continued risk for children in Japan

Tokyo, March 14 2012. Two earthquakes over a 6.0 magnitude rattled Japan on Wednesday evening local time. The first earthquake, cited at magnitude 6.8 occurred in the same region hit by last year's devastating tsunami. A tsunami advisory was issued but then later cancelled and only small waves were reported in certain areas.

According to Japanese media there has been no apparent damage or injury to date, however evacuation orders were issued to residents nearest the coast. International children's agency Save the Children, operating in the areas affected by last year's earthquake and tsunami that displaced over 300,000 people, says thousands of children are still living in fear of earthquakes and tsunamis. The agency says children's emotional and psychological recovery following last year's disaster will take years, and is implementing a five-year recovery programme.

Earthquakes like the two in Japan today are a sharp reminder for children and their families still living amidst the ruins of their homes or in temporary housing units, of the real risks that children continue to face today. One year after the disaster, children continue to be haunted by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, and are struggling to overcome their fear, rebuild their lives, and dream of a better future.

Save the Children confirmed the safety of its staff in the Iwate area shaken by today's 6.8 earthquake, and stands ready to help meet the needs of children who may be affected. Two Save the Children workers running an activity with children in Kesenuma evacuated with the children to higher ground upon hearing the tsunami advisory. Once the tsunami warning was cancelled, the children returned to the children's centre with the Save the Children workers and resumed their activities.

"Children are particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of any disaster. This is especially the case in Japan where children are still recovering from the extreme stress from last year's disaster. While today's earthquakes in Japan may not result in lasting infrastructural damage, they clearly highlight the need for communities to be prepared for such events," said Save the Children's Annie Bodmer-Roy in Tokyo. "Save the Children is working with local communities, authorities and schools to ensure children have the materials and training they need to reduce the risks they face in the event of another major disaster."

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