

Summary of Press Conference (January 17th, 2024)

On the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake

(YAMANA Hiroo, Executive Director of General Media Administration)

We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to those who lost their lives in the major earthquake that hit the Noto Peninsula on New Year's Day and extend our sympathy to those who were affected by the disaster.

More than two weeks have passed since the quake struck. At NHK, the General Media Administration, together with various other departments and bureaus in the headquarters as well as regional stations, are concentrating our efforts to report on the earthquake through all media, including TV, radio, digital media, and international broadcasting. I would like to explain our responses to date and our plans for the future.

Immediately after the earthquake occurred shortly after 4:06 p.m. on January 1st, we broadcast an early warning of the quake on all TV and radio channels, including BS103ch. About 20 seconds later, we started broadcasting news on General TV. Starting after 4:11 p.m., we suspended regular programs on all channels, including BS103ch, and began special news reports. The total length of broadcasting time of the special news reports on all channels from the time tsunami warnings were issued until they were downgraded to tsunami advisories extended to about 9.5 hours.

Because of the issuance of tsunami and major tsunami warnings, what we made sure in the initial stage was "reporting that calls on people to evacuate." Following this, we continue to deliver information on the situation of damage, traffic, local weather, and the support needed by those in the affected areas using live broadcasts from the sites, through special news programs and expanded regular news programs.

On January 6th, we also launched a nationwide program on lifeline information on General TV. The program provides information essential for daily life in the affected areas, such as the situation of medical institutions and water stations, as well as information on volunteer centers.

In addition, in some areas in the Noto Peninsula's northern part, which were particularly hard hit by the disaster, people became unable to watch terrestrial broadcasting because infrastructure had been cut off. Disaster victims in such areas asked us to give them information via satellite broadcasting. In response, we began broadcasting regional news from the Kanazawa Station and national news by making use of BS103ch from 6 p.m. on January 9th.

Also, in response to quake victims' wishes to watch programs other than news, we made available almost all programs of General TV on BS103ch from January 12th.

As a new initiative, we launched a special program titled “Kodomo Hotto Song” on Radio 1 on January 15th. We believe that there are children all over Japan who are feeling uneasy as they have been watching and listening to news reports about the earthquake for a long time since New Year’s Day. In the program, popular characters on Educational TV deliver songs that are selected to help children become emotionally calm. We would like to continue this program for a while.

In addition, many people in the affected areas are falling ill due to their prolonged stay at evacuation centers. “Today’s Close-Up” on January 17th and the “NHK Special” on January 21st will focus on the issue of disaster-related deaths.

We will likely determine broadcast schedules while keeping an eye on the situation in the disaster-stricken areas for the time being. As many people may be forced to stay in evacuation shelters for a long time, we will continue to provide necessary information to the victims through our broadcasting and digital media, and fulfill our roles as a public broadcaster and public media.

(Comments by NAKAJIMA Taichi, Senior Director)

I’d like to explain how we report in the quake-hit areas and deliver information in consideration to the characteristics of the disaster.

In the affected areas, the search-and-rescue operations still continue for those who went missing in the disaster. Many people are still living in evacuation shelters as lifelines and telecommunications have been cut off. I would like to express my deepest sympathies to those who are spending uneasy days in a harsh environment with continued aftershocks and severe cold.

Two weeks after the major quake struck, we assume what victims need are changing from moment to moment. To respond to such changing needs, we will continue to provide detailed information to help people rebuild their lives, including information on the restoration of lifelines, such as electricity, gas and telecommunications, as well as information on temporary housing.

Lately, an increasing number of people have died from suspected disaster-related causes. In order to reduce the number of such cases as much as possible, we will focus on providing information on how to prevent disaster-related deaths as many people are forced to stay at evacuation shelters for an extended length of time.

As members of the media may be already aware, those who are reporting in affected areas are struggling in the environment that is harsher and more dangerous than ever. Many houses are in danger of collapsing, and cautions need to be paid to possible landslides and snow accumulations. Despite such harsh environment, reporters and others are working around the clock while ensuring safety management, with the support of staff from various departments of the headquarters and regional stations across the country.

The disaster has made people in some areas unable to watch TV due to severe damage to infrastructure. This prompted us to make use of all media to deliver information. Today, I would like to focus on our digital efforts.

First of all, we have made it possible for people to watch and listen to the

local news on General TV and radio delivered by Kanazawa Station via the Internet. Many people are making use of the service.

We have also made available on the Internet the “isolation information map,” which shows isolated areas in an easy-to-understand manner, and the Noto quake emergency map, which shows the locations of evacuation centers and water supply centers. The “isolation information map” includes not only information from the prefectural government but also NHK’s own information gathered by its reporters. Some viewers who have their family members in the affected areas informed us that their family members were saved thanks to NHK’s information.

We have seen a huge number of misinformation and disinformation, or so-called “fake news,” circulating on social media. As some of them may be life-threatening, we are also focusing our efforts on reporting to deny such information through our broadcasts and the Internet.

Reporting on the Noto Peninsula Earthquake is expected to continue for a long time. While making the most of the characteristics of broadcast and digital media, we will be committed to delivering information necessary for the affected people and making reports to “protect people’s lives and livelihoods.”

On Collaboration between NHK Radio and Nippon Broadcasting System

(Comments by NAKAJIMA Taichi)

I would like to explain about the collaboration between NHK Radio and Nippon Broadcasting System.

To mark the 100th anniversary of radio broadcasting in 2025, NHK Radio has launched the “100 Years of Radio Project” and is planning to enliven radio through a variety of initiatives, such as the use of NHK’s archives and collaborations with commercial broadcasters.

In a collaboration with Nippon Broadcasting System, which will celebrate its 70th anniversary of radio broadcasting this year, we will broadcast Nippon Broadcasting System’s “ALL NIGHT NIPPON MUSIC10” and NHK’s “Radio Shinya-bin” on both stations on January 29th and 30th, with the programs’ personalities and anchors appearing on each other’s programs. They will be broadcast simultaneously on both stations.

In the wake of the earthquake on the Noto Peninsula, we are considering delivering content that will cheer up those affected by the disaster, even if a little.

(Comments by the project manager)

On January 29, from 10 p.m., NHK’s “Radio Shinya-bin” anchors TOKUDA Akira and SUMA Katsue will join “ALL NIGHT NIPPON MUSIC10” on Nippon Broadcasting System, to be hosted by singer MORIYAMA Ryoko.

When “Radio Shinya-bin” starts at 11:05 p.m., the program will be broadcast simultaneously by connecting studios on both stations. While MUKAI Yasuko will be the anchor for “Radio Shinya-bin,” MORIYAMA will be in the “ALL

NIGHT NIPPON MUSIC10” studio. The guest in the NHK program will be Robert Campbell, a Japanese literature scholar, who is also a semi-regular guest of “Radio Shinya-bin.”

After the broadcasting of “ALL NIGHT NIPPON MUSIC10” ends at midnight, the broadcasting of “Radio Shinya-bin” will continue, with MORIYAMA planned to be present in the program.

On the following day, the two programs are planned to collaborate in the same way and broadcast simultaneously.

The programs will discuss the role and power of radio, which is useful in times of disaster, and introduce email messages sent to our Radio 1 campaign titled “#Radio de Koe o Todokeyo” (Let’s deliver messages on radio), in which listeners convey their message to those affected by the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. We heard that radio is an important source of information as the earthquake has caused power outages in many places. We hope this collaboration between our flagship programs will help cheer up those affected by the earthquake.

We also hope that listeners of both programs will become familiar with the programs on other stations and feel anew the appeal of late-night radio programs they have in common.

On Program Productions in Consideration to Diversity

(Comments by YAMANA Hiroo)

NHK is committed to realizing diversity by incorporating a variety of viewpoints and themes in an effort to provide content that meets diverse needs of our viewers and listeners.

As part of this effort, NHK began taking part in the “50:50 The Equality Project,” launched by the British public broadcaster BBC, in April 2021, together with more than 50 organizations from 30 countries around the world. This project is an initiative to produce programs that incorporate diverse perspectives, in consideration to the gender balance of actors appearing in dramas, hosts and studio guests in information programs as well as experts featured in news programs.

By measuring and visualizing the proportions of women and men featured in each program, it is expected to help those in charge of production to recognize any unbalance and increase the diversity of the content. (*The gender proportion is calculated based on the gender identity of individual program participants.)

NHK is the only Japanese TV station to participate in this project, and has been working to reflect the diversity of the society in what we produce, while making efforts to expand the understanding of reporting and production teams.

Nearly three years after our participation in the project, we began to see changes in our content as well as in the awareness of production team members with regard to the issue of diversity.

At NHK, six programs initially participated in the project: Historical Drama,

Drama Serial, Night Drama Serial, "asaichi," "Heart Net TV," and "No Nare." We began by counting the number of those who appeared in individual programs by gender to grasp the gender balance.

With the project gradually becoming recognized and understood within NHK, some of our flagship news programs "News: Good Morning, Japan," "News Watch 9," and "Saturday Watch 9," as well as "Today's Close-Up," "Sunday Debate," and "Documentary: 20 Minutes" also joined the initiative. In this fiscal year, a total of 12 programs are producing their content in consideration to diversity.

The number of programs participating in the project has doubled over the past three years. Starting from the new fiscal year, we plan to expand the project to the entire organization, including regional stations.

Changes in the proportions of men and women in the participating programs have been gradual, but we believe this is a long-lasting initiative to change the awareness on diversity on the production site and reflect that in the content.

We will play our role as a public broadcaster for the sake of a diverse society through the rich content produced in that way.