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To: Friends in New Zealand

* We appreciate you if you will kindly forward this letter to the persons who helped the researchers who visited New Zealand on behalf of the Japanese Federation of the Deaf in January 2011.

February 24, 2011

We express our deepest sympathy to the persons and their families who were involved in the earthquake in Christchurch and its neighboring area, and we pay our greatest respect to the people taking a prompt action for the disaster relief- the personnel of the government of New Zealand, relief parties sent from the government of other countries and non-government organizations.

We are also being seriously concerned about the situation of the deaf people and sign language interpreters who were affected by the earthquake and/or currently taking shelter away from their residence.

Japan experienced the 1995 South Hyogo Prefectural Earthquake, which struck the entire nation by its devastating damage and the loss of 6,434 lives. Another big earthquake hit the offshore of Noto Peninsula in March, 2007, and left tremendous damages in the area. We recognize the suffering of your country as our own affair, through our experience of the frequent earthquake and natural disasters.

We keep gathering the information on the ongoing situation and affects of the earthquake, and we wish to be your help to relieve the concern and anxiety of the deaf people in New Zealand. We will be ready to set up the supports they need.

Fujisaburo Ishino

President, Japanese Federation of the Deaf