



Man with the plan: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks at a news conference on the second anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake at his office in Tokyo Monday. | AP

NATIONAL

Road map for Fukushima evacuees due in summer: Abe

KYODO

MAR 12, 2013

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday he has plans to unveil a road map this summer on promoting infrastructure-building to allow nuclear evacuees in Fukushima Prefecture to return as early as possible.

“There is a need to create an environment in which each disaster-affected person can visualize when and how the reconstruction will progress,” Abe told a press conference on the second anniversary of the disaster that devastated the northeast coastline and triggered the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl.

The road map is intended to provide a time frame for when infrastructure, such as power lines and roads, will be restored and when medical and nursing facilities will be ready for resume operation in disaster-hit areas in Fukushima, Abe said.

Abe also said the government is hoping to start transporting soil and waste contaminated by the Fukushima crisis to a temporary storage facility starting in January 2015.

The government has proposed setting up such a facility somewhere near the Fukushima plant, but none of the municipalities approached has agreed to host it.

Abe said the government will conduct more research on candidate sites from March to May before designating a host.

In another step to speed up reconstruction, Abe said the government will “boldly simplify” procedures for relocating buildings and houses to higher ground to shield residents from future tsunami, citing the easing of a procedure to purchase farmland as an example.

He said the government will promote new, competitive industries in the quake-hit Tohoku region to stimulate Japan’s economic growth. He specifically eyes setting up research and development facilities for wind power and medical equipment.

“I want to establish industries in the fields where we can address difficulties facing Japan and expand their business abroad,” Abe said.

While domestic utilities have boosted thermal power generation and consequently increased natural gas imports, Abe said Japan wants to diversify its energy sources in a way that will help reduce costs, possibly by importing shale gas.

[MAIL THE EDITOR \(HTTP://WWW.JAPANTIMES.CO.JP/CONTACT-US/READER-MAIL/\)](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/contact-us/reader-mail/)

[REUBLISHING \(HTTP://WWW.JAPANTIMES.CO.JP/ABOUT-US/REUBLISHING/\)](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/about-us/republishing/)

[COMMENTING POLICY \(HTTP://WWW.JAPANTIMES.CO.JP/ABOUT-US/COMMENTING-POLICY/\)](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/about-us/commenting-policy/)