Japan Geoscience Union Meeting 2013
(May 19-24 2013 at Makuhari, Chiba, Japan)

SSS02-P01 Room:Convention Hall Time:May 21 18:15-19:30

A Revision of the National Observation and Research Program for the Prediction of Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions

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On 28 November 2012, the Council for Science and Technology recommended the revision of the National Observation and Research Program for the Prediction of Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions, which has started since 2009 as a basic 5-year research program, to the government including the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science.

The basic 5-year research program aims to respond to a social demand for the mitigation of earthquake and volcanic disasters. The 2011 Off the Pacific Coast of Tohoku Earthquake, which is referred to as the Tohoku-oki earthquake, occurred on 11 March 2011 just when the current 5-year program almost ended its second year. The Council for Science and Technology decided to review the current program to ensure that it would be addressing, adequately, the research on extremely large earthquakes with a magnitude (M) of 9.0 or greater, such as the Tohoku-oki earthquake. Currently significant post-seismic crustal deformations of the Tohoku-oki earthquake are still going on. These may be associated with large aftershocks and volcanic eruptions yet to come. Thus, we need urgent revision of the current research program to include researches of the extremely large earthquakes.

The Council for Science and Technology started the revision of the program to include a new research to understand the extremely large earthquake and related activities in the crust and the mantle. The program also includes researches for forecasting seismic hazards generated by the extremely large earthquakes such as a large tsunami. This revised program will be conducted until the end of FY2013 (March 2014). In this presentation, we will report a basic idea and an outline of the revised program.