

Remaining problem in the national and local governmental action against the volcanic hazards

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Introduction Ontake volcano, Japan erupted on 27 September, 2014, hitting many climbers who were taking lunch at its summit. Pyroclastic flow and following ballistic ejecta from craters, that were newly created at this eruption, caused 63 victims, including missing. Though the eruption took place at the worst timing, the lack of enough information raised the disaster. Volcano warning level was not raised although an activation of earthquake activity beneath the summit was noticed three weeks before the eruption. Following the tragedy, national and local government reviewed the existing countermeasures for volcanic eruptions and made reports for the renovation of countermeasures. The author is involved in these activities and had a chance to see the on-going discussion in various institutions. In this talk I introduce the activities of the national and local governments triggered by the eruption of Ontake, and point out the problems that appeared among the discussions.

Response after the eruption of Ontake With a triggering by the eruption of Ontake, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), Central Disaster Management Council (CDMC) started to discuss for the renovation of disaster mitigation countermeasures for volcanic activity. A revised budget including emergent countermeasure for volcanic disaster reduction was approved for FY2014. In parallel to the governmental discussion, local government such as Gifu and Nagano prefecture started to review the existing countermeasures. A volcano countermeasure board of Ontake was established by the two prefectures by combining the existing separate boards in each prefecture.

Problem remaining Although intensive discussion is made in each organization, each has its limitation that is bounded by the definition of its charge. MEXT discuss on the academic research for disaster mitigation, JMA discuss on the monitoring and warning issuing at the volcanic crisis. CDMC is in charge of creating national plan, but limited by the feasibility of the measures in relatively short time range. Lack of national strategy for volcano disaster mitigation appeared through the discussions and actions of national and local governments. There is no institution to make strategic plan including basic survey and research, infrastructure construction, monitoring and warning for each of many active volcanoes in Japan. Volcano countermeasure board at each volcano may in charge of plan a strategy, but has insufficient potential and budget.

Actions required for JpGU JpGU, as an assembly of academic researchers, is probably one of few organizations that can make a strategy both in local to global level and in short to long time range, being free from the limitation of governmental administration. We are in charge of making academic research, which is also the limitation in the disaster countermeasure activity. Break the limitation and plan a strategy of disaster countermeasure that is globally optimized.

Keywords: volcanic eruption, Ontake Volcano, Disaster mitigation measure, administration, government, local government