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Developments, Achievements and Issues for Reconstruction and Revitalization of Difficult-to-Return Zones: Based on Actual Situation of Designation of Specified Living Areas for Returnees

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• **Summary** • The purpose of this study is to summarize the development of policies toward the lifting of evacuation orders in difficult-to-return zones leading up to the establishment of the Specified Living Areas for Returnees system, analyze the achievement of designation of the areas and the contents of plans one year after the promulgation and enforcement of the specified living areas for returnees, clarifies the thoughts of municipalities where difficult-to-return zones have been designated, and issues for the reconstruction and revitalization of the difficult-to-return zones. As of June 2024, one year after the promulgation and enactment of the Specified Living Areas for Returnees system, the areas have been designated for a total of 1,900 ha in the four municipalities of Okuma, Futaba, Namie and Tomioka. Based on the results of a questionnaire survey of the municipalities, this study identifies the following issues for the reconstruction and revitalization of the difficult-to-return zones: (1) resolution of various problems concerning the specified living areas for returnees system, (2) clarification of specific policies toward lifting evacuation orders for all areas in the difficult-to-return zones, (3) the implementation of “decontamination” for the purpose of environmental restoration, as well as decontamination for the purpose of radiation protection in the forest.

Key words: difficult-to-return zones, specified living areas for returnees, lift of evacuation orders, revitalization, decontamination

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