

FOREWORD

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The environment surrounding the construction market in Japan is currently robust, buoyed by large-scale redevelopment projects, centering on the Tokyo Metropolitan area, and improvement of infrastructure in the runup to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. At the same time, the Japanese government is devoting great efforts to policies aimed at building a strong, resilient country as part of the ongoing response to the unprecedented tsunami disaster caused by the Off the Pacific Coast of Tohoku Earthquake in March 2011. However, even in the midst of those efforts, Japan also experienced frequent disasters this year due to torrential rains and super typhoons, reminding us that there is no end to enormous natural disasters.

On the other hand, due to the effects of the country's low birthrate and aging population, securing persons to shoulder these challenges has also become a serious issue in the construction industry, as seen in the aging of skilled workers and the declining number of persons acquiring the skills. Together with heightened social calls for workstyle reform, improvement of productivity at construction sites can be considered an urgent task. Moreover, with the progressive aging of infrastructure that was constructed in concentrated manner during Japan's era of high economic growth, preparations for coming the times of full-scale renovation of infrastructure are also indispensable.

As this brief summary suggests, in addition to meeting today's booming construction demand, technology development that responds to the demands of the times, including ensuring the safety and security of the lives, improving productivity, and preparing for the coming era of infrastructure renovation, is important responsibilities that have been placed on us, and I believe that there are very many areas where "steel" can contribute to this. Based on these social needs, the JFE Group is promoting proposals of new products and solution technologies that integrate material, processing, construction and other technologies possessed by the Group and make full use of the outstanding properties of steel.

This "Special Issue on Construction Materials" of JFE Technical Report introduces some of the results of efforts achieved with the cooperation of the JFE Group, including technolo-

gies that respond to strong construction demand, technologies to prevent natural disasters such as great earthquakes, wind and flood damage and sediment disasters, and technologies for productivity improvement at construction sites and infrastructure renovation.

In the future, the JFE Group, as one, will continue to provide a timely supply of products, technologies and services that contribute to society.