In honor of our Japanese hosts, I would like to start my remarks by making some comments in Japanese.

Mina-sama Kon-Nichiwa.
Okagesama-de, Sekai Ginkou-no
Sousai Toshite Hajimete-no Soukai-de
Sendai-nimo Iki, Mina-sama-no
Yasashisa-to Tsuyosa-ni Fure,
Subarashii Kizuna-wo Tsukuru Koto-ga
Deki-mashita.
Arigato Gozai-mashita.

[Hello everybody. Thanks to your help, I could complete my first Annual Meetings and visit Sendai as the President of the World Bank. I was touched by your kindness and resilience. I am glad that we could build a wonderful Kizuna. Thank you very much.]

I don’t know if there was translation, but if not, too bad.

I want to first of all just thank you.
I want to thank the Japanese people and the government of Japan for just a truly outstanding meeting. The Japanese government I think demonstrated to all of us the character of the Japanese people by responding to the great tragedy of March 11, 2011 by insisting that these meetings focus on ensuring that all countries – especially developing countries – have access to all the tools they need for disaster risk management. We’re so grateful to them.

I want to thank Christine for her eloquent plenary remarks and leadership, and also DC Chair Marek Belka for his leadership and contribution.

I also want to congratulate my European colleagues. Many questions have been raised in recent years about the European Union. The Nobel Committee’s awarding of the Peace Prize to the EU is a powerful reminder of just what the Union has done to shape history in a positive way.

These Meetings were my first as World Bank president. From my discussions with Governors, Ministers, civil society representatives, and many other stakeholders, I’ve been impressed by the depth and breadth of views.

In fact, many took to heart our campaign "What Will It Take" - and told me directly exactly what they think it will take! Many also wore our black T-shirts that had a simple phrase: End Poverty.

For me, that message – End Poverty – is what I think about every day on my job as president of the World Bank Group. I think of that message and the message of boosting shared prosperity so that families or young people can have hope for a brighter future that includes a good job, access to health-care, and good education.

The economic environment today is tough and very disconcerting. I believe that the World Bank Group has a role to play in all countries around the world, and all countries of the world can work with the World Bank to find solutions to some of the most difficult issues in development today. I want the Bank to be transformed from a knowledge bank to a solutions bank that will be a clearinghouse of ideas from the north and the south on how to most effectively deliver services to those who need them the most.

Let me emphasize how important it is during these times to keep developing countries in the forefront. We still live in a world that has more than one billion people living in absolute
poverty. We must all work to make sure that the impressive gains in Latin America, Africa, and Asia over the past generation are not lost now. In just the last few years, growth from developing countries accounted for more than half of global growth. It is in everyone’s interest that these countries continue to grow and continue to be such strong contributors to the global economy.

I would like again to thank our Japanese hosts and close by highlighting the winner of the World Bank High School/Junior High School development Slogan Contest. From more than 1600 entries, the winner is Ms. Mayu Muto, from Hiroshima Prefectural Yoshida Senior High School.

Her slogan was **Hinkon-de Kimi-no Mirai-wa Jama Sasenai.**

**We will not let poverty hamper your future.**

Thank you very much.