Let me start off by saying we – the whole world -- are deeply saddened to learn of the death of Nelson Mandela. I convey my deepest sympathies to the South African people.

The world has lost a man who brought a rainbow of possibilities to a country that was segregated into black and white. But his gifts to humankind remain with us.

We are humbled by his leadership. We are inspired by his commitment to reconciliation. He showed us that fundamental change is possible and must be pursued when the freedom and well-being of people are at stake.

On this sad day, our thoughts are with the South African people.

Your Excellency, Mr. Aso and members of the press, distinguished guests, <translated from Japanese> I’m happy to be able to come to Japan again.

I would like to thank the Japanese government and the people of Japan for your contributions to the World Bank Group. Japan’s leadership in global development and its long-standing support for the World Bank Group are deeply appreciated.
Let me briefly mention a few important aspects of our ongoing collaboration, in particular universal health coverage and disaster risk management.

These are areas where Japan has accumulated a great deal of knowledge and expertise, and the World Bank Group is drawing on that know-how.

I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Abe for his leadership in supporting universal health coverage as a pillar of Japan’s “Strategy on Global Health Diplomacy.”

As we just heard at the conference, there is a large and growing movement in developing countries to undertake the necessary measures to achieve universal health coverage for the poor. The quest for universal coverage is not only a demand for better health – it’s a demand for equity.

On disaster risk management, the recent devastations in the Philippines are a tragic reminder of the severe social and economic toll that natural disasters take on a country and its people.

The World Bank Group is providing nearly US $1 billion dollars to support the Philippines’ efforts to recover and rebuild from the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan.

Recent data shows that total worldwide reported losses from disasters are estimated at $3.8 trillion in the period from 1980 to 2012 -- with 74 percent due to extreme-weather.

And while not all natural disasters can be avoided, the impact that these disasters bear on a population can certainly be mitigated through effective planning and preparedness.

Japan and the World Bank have been working hard to make disaster risk management a development priority. Together, we will launch early next year the World Bank-Japan Disaster Risk Management Hub in Tokyo.

The Hub will help disseminate Japan's sophisticated knowledge on disaster risk management. It also will play an important role as a knowledge broker by spreading Japan's know-how and technology to help developing countries manage and mitigate risk from natural disasters.

Finally, allow me to stress the leading role that Japan has played within the International Development Association, or IDA, which is the World Bank Group’s fund for the poorest countries. With IDA’s help, hundreds of millions of people have escaped poverty—through
new jobs, access to clean water, schools, roads, food, electricity, and much more. During the past decade, IDA funded immunizations for nearly half a billion children, provided access to better water sources for 123 million people, and helped 65 million people receive health services.

The World Bank Group looks forward to continuing our close partnership with Japan. We will draw upon Japan’s vast knowledge and expertise in universal health coverage and disaster risk management. Together, we can achieve the grand goal of the global community: Ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity.

<Translated from Japanese> Thank you.