I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your enthusiastic cooperation and support for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Japanese people as a whole. We are deeply moved by your encouragement. It has inspired us to consider what we can do, and to make every possible effort to solve our problems.

The Japan Water Forum has also launched a campaign to raise donation for providing drinking water and sanitation assistance to the quake victims. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks again to you all for your assistance, and humbly call for continuing support.

As we all know, in the Asia-Pacific region, 500 million people have no access to safe drinking water and 1.8 billion people have no access to basic sanitation even under normal circumstances. This region is significantly vulnerable to water-related disasters, and has suffered enormous losses in the past.

Japan is no exception. It has experienced all sorts of natural disasters in its history. We have made great efforts to overcome our difficulties time and time again. Although this earthquake and tsunami was of an unprecedented scale and was one of the worst calamities in our history, I am sure we can persevere with the support of people all over the world.

At the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit, held in Beppu in 2007, the Ministers for Water Security Initiative was proposed by UNESCAP, ADB and the JWF as one of the concrete initiative of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum. In response to this
initiative, Team Water Japan was established in 2009, aimed at resolving domestic and global water issues. This is a new collective effort to combine the experiences and expertise of all stakeholders in Japan, crossing administrative and corporate boundaries under the leadership of the national government in Japan.

In the wake of the recent earthquake, Team Water Japan has formulated recommendations for the creation of a strong and resilient water-recycling and low-carbon society. We intend to report on specific efforts and progress made towards implementing these recommendations at the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit.

Water issues are border-less. They are too difficult for any one nation to tackle. Therefore, I believe that the people of the region must work together under political leadership in order to solve them. I look forward to your earnest discussions during our two-day meeting.

In conclusion, I have to apologize for the inconvenience we have caused you. We were compelled to cancel the meeting in Japan due to the Great East Japan Earthquake. However, with the support of the Thai government, UNESCAP, and other organizations, we are able to hold the meeting here in Bangkok. I would like to say thank-you to everybody.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.