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World Bank Country Director for Kenya Visits Japan

Tokyo, February 21, 2007 - The World Bank's **Country Director for Comoros, Eritrea Kenya, Seychelles and Somalia, Mr. Colin Bruce**, has arrived in Japan for high level talks with the Government of Japan to discuss a new strategic collaboration for Kenya.

"I am delighted to come to Japan at a time when Africa is a priority on Japan's development agenda," said Mr. Bruce. *"Japan has been a major donor in Africa for decades and Africans will continue to count on the strong support of Japan in the coming years to help promote growth and trade, and reduce poverty. World Bank President Wolfowitz has made African development his first priority and his agreement with the Japanese Government to provide greater collaboration and joint attention to the African continent is making good progress. I hope to work with our counterparts in Japan to continue to find new ways that will help Comoros, Eritrea, Kenya, Seychelles and Somalia."*

Japan's assistance to Kenya focuses mainly on five areas – capacity building, agriculture, infrastructure, health and environment – all areas in which the World Bank also puts great emphasis in its assistance to Kenya. In January 2007, Japan extended grant aid of 70 million yen (approximately \$583,000) to Kenya for the improvement of district hospitals in the western region in order to improve the healthcare, hygienic environment, and living environment of the local residents. The World Bank has also been assisting Kenya's health sector through credits totally US\$100 million to improve mother and child health through more integrated and decentralized delivery of child survival, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS services. Further assistance from the World Bank, totaling US\$160 million, is planned in these service areas over the next 18 months.

In July 2005, Japan announced a doubling of its development assistance to Africa in three years. Japan has also been extending its support to Africa through the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development), co-organized with the World Bank, UNDP and others which aims to raise global interest in Africa and encourage Africa's efforts to improve the welfare of the African people. The Bank and Japan have collaborated successfully since the start of the TICAD process over many years and the Bank has taken a leadership role on private sector development.

Mr. Bruce, who is in Tokyo until February 23rd, will meet senior representatives of Japanese government and development agencies. He will also meet with a diverse group of partners and stakeholders in Japan's development community who provide advice and assistance to these African countries and to discuss priorities and challenges for further collaboration.

Mr. Bruce, a Guyanese national, joined the World Bank in 1988. Since then, he has held regional and corporate assignments such as a country economist for India and Kenya, and an adviser in the Office of the Managing Director, Operations. His most recent assignment was as Senior Manager in the World Bank's Operational Policy and Country Services division where he served as co-chair within the global working group on aid effectiveness and donor practices set up by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Mr. Bruce is a strong believer in a well-coordinated approach to donor assistance and has played a strong role in international fora to encourage greater collaboration and harmonization in providing development assistance to the world's poorest countries. He became Country Director in May 2005 and is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

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