

Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, on the Passing of
H.E. Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Former President of the Republic of South Africa

December 6, 2013

Upon receiving the news of the passing of H.E. Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa, I was filled with great sadness.

Former President Mandela was a man of conviction. Despite 27 years of imprisonment, he kept fighting to abolish apartheid. May I pay sincere tribute to his indomitable spirit.

Not only was former President Mandela a tireless fighter, he was also a promoter of reconciliation. Indeed, after bringing about the abolition of apartheid at the end of long years of suffering, he devoted himself to the pursuit of national unity rather than seeking vengeance. For his selfless devotion to this worthy cause I am full of respect and admiration.

Moreover, he was a beacon of hope for the future. I still recall how people placed upon him their hopes for the future and for the realization of a better society through the building of a new South Africa.

Former President Mandela, a Nobel Laureate, visited Japan three times. During his visits, he demonstrated keen interest in the history of Japan's development. He also promoted friendly relations between Japan and South Africa. The Government of Japan is determined to walk the "long way toward freedom and a better world" together with South Africa, taking inspiration from the vision and achievements of former President Mandela.

A man of conviction. A promoter of reconciliation. A beacon of hope for the future. The world has lost a great person today. However, his noble spirit lives on in our hearts and will do so forever.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Japan, I offer my sincerest condolences to the people of South Africa upon the passing of former President Mandela.

- * This is a provisional translation. The date indicated above denotes the date of issue of the original in Japanese.