

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to Zambia
at the Handover Ceremony for the Project for Expansion of Banana Paper
Making Factory in Mfuwe

Mr. Patrick Mwanawasa, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Eastern Province,
His Royal Highness Chief Mnkhanya, who came here earlier today and may
be coming back,

Ms. Caroline Mwanza, Mambwe District Commissioner,

Mr. Billy Nkhoma and Members of One Planet Café Zambia,

Representatives from the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my honour and pleasure to participate in this Handover Ceremony,
representing the Government of Japan, of a project of “Grant Assistance for
Grassroots Human Security Projects”, i.e. the Project for Expansion of
Banana Paper Making Factory in Mfuwe.

The Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects was
introduced in Zambia in 1990, and its primary objective is to support various
development and human security projects at the grassroots level.

So far more than 160 projects have been funded and implemented by this
scheme throughout Zambia.

We appreciate the activities of One Planet Café Zambia for the innovative
undertaking of making paper from banana stems which are usually thrown
away, starting extracting fibers from banana stems in 2007, and constructing
a factory in 2014, with the current employment of 23 residents here, to
benefit more than 250 members of their families.

The extracted fibers having been sent to Japan and made paper there for
such products as paper for business cards, One Planet Café Zambia prepared
a plan for making banana paper and paper products here, and requested
Japan to assist it.

We considered and decided to extend a total of US\$ 102,170 (about 1 million Kwacha) for the expansion of the factory and procurement of necessary equipment.

With the completion of this project, about 80 additional residents are expected to be employed to benefit about 1,000 members of their families.

Congratulations!

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the funds used for this project came from Japanese tax payers.

Therefore it is my sincere hope that the expanded factory of banana paper will be used efficiently and effectively, and will develop to become a symbol of the friendship between Japan and Zambia.

Thank you.