

Remarks of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to Zambia
at the Installation Ceremony of the Thermal Cameras at Kenneth Kaunda
International Airport on Wednesday 17 May 2017

The Hon. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, Minister of Health of the Republic of Zambia,
The Hon. Japhen Mwakalombe, Minister of Lusaka Province,
Mr. Davidson Mulenga, Lusaka District Commissioner,
Mr. Hitoshi Fujiie, Acting Chief Representative, JICA Office, Zambia,
Mr. Kentaro Maekawa, NEC Africa,
Senior Government Officials,
Representatives from the Media,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning.

It is my honour and pleasure to say a few words on the occasions of the official installation of a thermal camera at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia adopted the Zambia National Ebola Virus Disease and Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response Plan and decided to procure 14 thermal cameras for installation at this airport as well as three other international airports and 10 land borders with its neighboring countries, in Zambia.

For this purpose, about 346 thousand US Dollars or about 3.4 million Kwacha was necessary, and the money deposited at the Counterpart Fund of the Japan's Non-Project Grant Aid was used.
Thus the original source for this funding came from Japan.

The thermal cameras procured are the products of a Japanese company NEC.

NEC thermal cameras have been installed in Japanese international airports, and have successfully detected patients of infectious diseases. Some African countries also have installed NEC thermal cameras.

As for infectious diseases, the Government of Japan has been supporting the cooperation between Hokkaido University and the University of Zambia, among other cooperation, and the Hokkaido University Research Centre for Zoonosis Control in Zambia was recognized by the Government of the Republic of Zambia as the sole entity in Zambia to effectively examine the Ebola Virus Disease in 2014, when that disease became an awful pandemic, particularly in West Africa.

That pandemic had once been contained.

However, WHO has been warning that since 1970 more than one newly emerging diseases have been found every year, and only several days ago we heard the report of the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease again, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

And indeed it is difficult to predict the occurrence of a new pandemic.

Although there has not been any incident found of Ebola Virus Disease yet in Zambia, particularly in view of the recurrence of that disease in its neighboring country, the policy adopted and the action taken by the Government of the Republic of Zambia which attaches importance to public health, to prevent the entrance of Ebola and other infectious diseases are worth high appreciation.

We believe that for Zambia to continue to achieve further development in a sustainable manner, the strengthening of the health sector is important, among other sectors.

Therefore, the Government of Japan intends to contribute to this process in cooperation with its private sector, in various ways, including promoting further introduction of high quality Japanese medical equipment to Zambia, just like this case.

In conclusion, I hope that the thermal cameras procured from Japan will play a key role, among other health equipment and facilities, to promote universal health coverage in Zambia and will develop to become a symbol of friendship between Japan and Zambia.

Thank you.