

Remarks by H. E. Mr. Akio Egawa
Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia
At the Opening of Hokkaido University Lusaka Office
Lusaka, 28 August, 2012

Hon. Dr. John Phiri, Minister of Education, Science, Vocational Training and
Early Education,
Prof. Hiroshi Saeki, President, Hokkaido University,
Prof. Stephen Simukanga, Vice Chancellor, University of Zambia,
Prof. Masahiro Okumura, Director, Hokkaido University Lusaka Office,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to say a few words on this auspicious occasion.

Hokkaido University is one of the most prestigious national universities in Japan, with a history of nearly 150 years. Its research activities are cutting edge in various fields, attracting students and researchers from around the world. The University boasts a wide range of international exchange and cooperation programs.

Here in Zambia, Hokkaido University has long had a successful partnership with the University of Zambia. Their partnership dates back to 1984 when the School of Veterinary Medicine was established at the University of Zambia with grant aid assistance from the Government of Japan. Ever since, Japan has steadfastly supported the School by providing various equipment and helping human resources development. Hokkaido University has played a key role in human resources development through exchange of students, instructors and scholars. In 2008, the two universities created the Centre for Zoonosis Control at the University of Zambia, which gave a new momentum

to their cooperation.

The long thriving partnership between the two universities resulted in the signing of formal university-wide exchange agreement last year and the establishment of Hokkaido University Lusaka Office at the campus of the University of Zambia this year. The agreement and the Lusaka Office will hopefully lead to expansion of their collaboration in additional academic disciplines.

It is quite opportune for Hokkaido University to establish its Lusaka Office as the collaborative efforts by the two universities have now advanced so well that they benefit the people not only in Zambia but in the region and beyond. Indeed, Hokkaido University has made a right choice, for Zambia is strategically located in the heart of Southern Africa.

I am told that Hokkaido University Lusaka Office is its first ever overseas office in Africa. For that matter, Hokkaido University is the only Japanese university that has set up an office of this kind in Africa. This is very befitting for Hokkaido University, which is famous for its “frontier spirits”.

I am also told that Hokkaido University Lusaka Office has the role to disseminate information and promote academic exchanges beyond the Zambian borders to cater for institutions in the region and the entire continent. This ambitious goal is again fit for Hokkaido University, whose motto is “Boys, be ambitious!” This motto, which is quite famous in Japan, was taken from the words of Dr. William Clark, the first Vice Principal of the University in the late 1870s.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan and Zambia have enjoyed a very friendly relationship as development partners since Zambia's independence in 1964. In recent years, as Zambia's economy has developed steadily, momentums are building for expansion of economic relations with the Japanese private sector showing a growing interest in business and investment opportunities in Zambia. Moreover, our relations have grown in sports, culture, academic and scientific exchanges. Thus, the scope of Japan-Zambia relationship has been broadened and at the same time placed on a stronger foundation.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of academic exchange, for vibrant academic interaction will expand the horizons of the two countries' ties through two-way traffic of knowledge and persons. Spearheaded by Hokkaido University, some other Japanese universities, such as Osaka University and Yokohama City University, have followed its steps and recently started collaborative activities with Zambian institutions.

It is my sincere hope that the launching of Hokkaido University Lusaka Office will further invigorate cooperation between Japanese and Zambian universities and institutions and thus elevate Japan-Zambia relationship to a much higher stage.

Thank you very much.