

Remarks by
H. E. Mr. Akio Egawa, Ambassador of Japan to Zambia
On the Occasion of the Exchange of Notes for
The Project for Upgrading Lusaka Health Centres to District Hospitals
Lusaka, 17th July, 2013

Honourable Alexander B. Chikwanda, MP, Minister of Finance,
Honourable Dr. Joseph Kasonde, MP, Minister of Health,
Dr. Peter Mwaba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health,
Mr. Yoshihide Teranishi, Resident Representative, JICA Zambia Office,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Government of Japan to sign the Exchange of Notes for the Project for Upgrading Lusaka Health Centres to District Hospitals. The Government of Japan is providing a grant of 19.08 billion Japanese Yen, equivalent approximately to 19 million US dollars or 100 million Zambian Kwacha, for the Project.

The aim of this Project is to improve and upgrade Matero and Chilenje Urban Health Centres (UHC) of Lusaka to District Hospitals. The Project includes construction of new wards, provision of medical equipment and transfer of skills in the operation and maintenance of the medical equipment.

At Matero, General Outpatient Ward, Casualty Ward, Maternity Ward, and Paediatric Ward will be newly constructed. At Chilenje, General Outpatient

Ward and Maternity Ward will be constructed. Other facilities will also be constructed at both places.

I am certain that, once completed, the new District Hospitals in Matero and Chilenje will play even more significant roles in advancing healthcare services for the communities in Lusaka.

Over the years, Japan has made good contributions to the improvement of health and healthcare for the people of Zambia. Our focuses have been on mother and child health, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, health infrastructure and human resources development. I believe this Project will become Japan's another important contribution in Zambia's health sector.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been pointed out that the lack of primary- or secondary-level hospitals has been causing too much burden on the University Teaching Hospital (UTH). Currently, patients from the health centres needing caesarean section, for instance, are directly referred to UTH. Accordingly, UTH has to serve as a primary-level hospital for Lusaka in addition to its role as the top referral hospital, creating an undesirable overcrowding at UTH.

Upon implementation of this Project, it is anticipated that, by 2018, the Matero and Chilenje District Hospitals together will have the capacity to perform more than 700 caesarean sections per year. This will translate into a

reduction of more than 20% of patients directly referred to UTH from the two institutions. Further, the new Casualty Ward in Matero will accommodate more than 480 patients, bringing about a 6% reduction of patients directly referred to UTH. In this way, the Project will help enable UTH to re-establish itself as the nation's top referral hospital.

As I said earlier, this Project also involves the provision of medical equipment. Japan has placed emphasis on transfer of technology and human resources development in its delivery of development cooperation so that the capacity of partner countries for self-help development efforts will be strengthened. Under this Project, a team of Japanese experts will come and work together with the medical and technical staff at both places for skills transfer in the operation and maintenance of the medical equipment to be provided.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Zambia's health sector is faced with various challenges. To take mother and child health for example, according to the latest Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals for Zambia compiled by the Ministry of Finance and UNDP, the under-five mortality rate in the country is 138 per 1,000 live births. The rate has declined dramatically since the late 1990s, but more than 1 out of 8 children still do not survive to celebrate their fifth birthday. And the maternal mortality ratio in the country continues to remain very high, which is 483 per 100,000 live births. It indicates that 38 women die every month in Zambia during pregnancy and child births.

I am confident that this Project will bring about significant improvement of healthcare services in Lusaka and the entire country, including through the re-establishment of UTH as the nation's top referral hospital. I also believe that the Project will accelerate the improvement of mother and child health and achievement of the related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Zambia.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere hope that the Project will promote the economic and social development of the country through improvement of health services for the people of Zambia. It is also my hope that the friendship existing between Japan and Zambia will further be strengthened through the Project.

Thank you very much.

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