

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. AKIO EGAWA
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF FAO REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
RICE-FISH FARMING
IN EAST, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
LUSAKA, 28TH OCTOBER, 2013**

Dr. Benson Mwenya, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock,
Mr. George Okech, Representative of Food and Agriculture Organisation,
Senior Officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock,
Representatives of Cooperating Partners,
Representatives of Agricultural Stakeholders,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to attend this opening ceremony of the FAO Regional Workshop on Rice-Fish Farming in East, Central and Southern Africa. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Zambia and the FAO for organizing it. The Government of Japan holds its economic cooperation with the Republic of Zambia in high esteem, most particularly in the agriculture sector. Therefore, this Workshop is indeed commendable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me elaborate on the background of holding this workshop. In 2007, Japan gave a contribution to FAO to implement the Project of Intra-African Training and Dissemination of Technical know-how for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development with Africa-ASEAN Countries within the Framework of South-South Cooperation. The purpose of this project was to integrate developing countries into the multilateral trading system and to increase agricultural production and productivity in Africa.

Under this Project, FAO has implemented Regional and National Workshops on Rice-Fish farming for productivity and market development. Regional

Workshops have been held on four occasions respectively in West Africa, East and Southern Africa. So far, 29 countries have participated in these workshops. National Workshops have been held in Ghana, Madagascar, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Cameroon. In Zambia, a Regional Workshop was held in February 2011 and a National Workshop took place in June 2012. This is the second time a Regional Workshop is being organized in Zambia.

The Workshops focus on South-South cooperation transferring know-how and technology through visiting experts from ASEAN countries. At the same time, participants in this Workshop have the opportunity to share experiences of current activities in their regions, including those taking place in Asia. They then hold interactive discussions and exchange ideas and lessons learned, in order to promote rice-fish farming in Africa. These Workshops supported effectively the formulation or review of the National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) and National Aquaculture Development Strategy (NADS). I hope that the same resultant effect will be achieved through this Workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Japanese Government hosted the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama, Japan from 1 to 3 June this year. You may recall that representatives of 51 African countries including 39 heads of State and Government engaged in high level dialogue at the Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation for their participation at this event. I am also grateful to all the officials from various Government Departments who were in attendance. The Government of Japan put up 'Empowering Farmers as Mainstream Economic Actors' as one of the main support themes of TICADV. And, at the same event, Japan pledged its commitment to "Doubling rice production in Sub-Sahara Africa to 28million tons by 2018" This means stepping up efforts of the Government of Japan to support rice production in Zambia and other African countries, building on the efforts already being made through CARD (Coalition for African Rice Development). In light of this, the Workshop being held today is well-timed and of utmost significance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I am optimistic that the deliberations here today will bear fruitful results, and have long-lasting rewarding effects. It is my sincere hope that this Regional Workshop will contribute to enhanced food security as well as sustainable development through the promotion of Rice and Fish farming in each of your respective countries.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.