

Remarks by Mr. Hideki Yamaji, Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy of Japan to the Republic of Zambia
on the Occasion of the Handover Ceremony
for the Fire Engine and Fire Fighting Equipment
by the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD), Lusaka,
6th December, 2013

Hon. Emerine Kabanshi, Minister of Local Government and Housing

Hon. Forrie Tembo, Deputy Minister,

Hon. John Kufuna, Deputy Minister,

Hon. Nicholas Banda, Deputy Minister,

Rev. Howard Sikwela, Permanent Secretary,

Director,

Town Clerk, Lusaka City Council,

Local Government Administrator, Lusaka City Council,

School Commandant, Chief Fire Officer,

Representatives from firehouses,

Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Government of Japan and to participate in the handover ceremony of fire engines and other firefighting equipment, provided by the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD) to the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH). I wish to highly appreciate the relentless effort by the SPJD, the MLGH and all stakeholders for realizing this valuable undertaking.

First and foremost, I would like to introduce Ambassador – designate of Japan, H.E. Mr. Kiyoshi Koinuma. He arrived in Lusaka on 18th November.

(Short remarks by Ambassador Koinuma)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me briefly explain the SPJD to you. The SPJD is a non-profit organization for promoting grassroots diplomacy, established in 1947, by a renowned politician, Mr. Yukio Ozaki, who is widely called ‘the father of constitutional government’ in Japan. Its activities are extensive, ranging from improving public understanding of diplomatic activities through publications and seminars, to international cooperation activities, such as

distribution of food to refugees. In 2002, the SPJD started donating restored and refreshed second-hand ambulances and fire engines in Japan to African countries.

Zambia has benefited most among African countries out of this project. For instance, Zambia received 1 micro-bus and truck in 2004, 2 ambulances in 2009, 10 fire engines and 6 ambulances in 2010. This time around, Zambia has received the largest number of equipment ever donated by the SPJD, namely 1 chemical fire engine, 1 special rescue car, 15 water pumps and 4 refuse collection trucks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have learned that the Government of Zambia is now formulating the National Fire Policy for enhancing fire services, and that fire station in each city is carrying out training for fire fighters and enhancing measures for fire prevention. Approximately 46 cases of fire incidences are reported to have occurred in Lusaka each month in 2012. The scale of fire and its damages is expanding as Lusaka marks rapid economic growth. We hope the vehicles and equipment donated by the SPJD will be of assistance to the Zambian Government in tackling fire occurrences hereafter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

About 50,000 fire cases occur each year in Japan and local governments and fire stations are working on prevention of fire, patrolling and fire fighting. I can safely testify that Japanese fire-fighters are well-trained individuals with high integrity. The vehicles being donated today are of first-rate standard, as they have been regularly serviced and well-maintained. I trust that this contribution will have a positive impact on the initiative being undertaken by the Zambian Government to mitigate disasters arising from fire outbreaks.

In closing, please allow me to express my sincere hope that this handover of fire engines, ambulances and other equipment will contribute to personal safety of Zambian people, and will be received by the Zambian populace as a token of goodwill and friendship from the Japanese.

Thank you. Zikomo.

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