

REMARKS BY H.E. AKIO EGAWA
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR
THE PROJECT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT
IN THE SOUTHERN AREA OF LUSAKA
26TH APRIL 2013

Hon. Emerine Kabanshi, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Housing,

Hon. Freedom Sikazwe, M.P., Minister of Lusaka Province,

His Worship Daniel Chisenga, Mayor of Lusaka City,

Mr. Ashwel Kampengele, District Commissioner of Lusaka Province,

Hon. Nicholas Banda, M.P., Deputy Minister of Local Government and Housing

Hon. John Kufuna, M.P., Deputy Minister of Local Government and Housing

Mr. Chileshe L. Mulenga, PhD, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Housing,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to represent the Government of Japan at this momentous ground-breaking ceremony for the Project for the Improvement of the Living Environment in the Southern Area of Lusaka. Japan takes pride in being a partner in this project, which is of vital importance to the lives of people and the economic development of Zambia.

Upon the bilateral agreement concluded on 29 June, 2011, the Government of Japan has extended grant aid to the Republic of Zambia, amounting to 2 billion and 776 million Yen, or approximately 150 million Zambian Kwacha Rebased or 28.3 million United States Dollars for the project. This project involves the construction of approximately 14.6 kilometres of road network covering the Inner Ring Road.

The road is being constructed by Shimizu Corporation, one of the largest construction

companies in Japan, which was founded in 1804. Shimizu Corporation has a sound track record of supporting economic activities in Zambia for many years by building and improving roads, bridges, hospitals, schools and water supply facilities with their high standard of technology and reliability. As for roads, since the 1990's, Shimizu Corporation has constructed about 130 kilometres of road network in Lusaka, including the Great East Road, the Great North Road as well as other main roads.

The consulting service for this project is being provided by Katahira Engineering International, who designed this road. Katahira Engineering International also did the design and provided consulting service for the Project for Improvement of Ndola and Kitwe City Roads, completed in November last year with grant aid from the Government of Japan. At the present time, the road is playing an important role in supporting industrial activities and daily lives of the residents. I am confident that Katahira Engineering International, with its vast experience in designing and consulting service, will ensure the success of the construction of the Inner Ring Road at the highest standard.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Zambia occupies a strategic, central location in the Southern African region, its capital Lusaka is a hub of the regional road network with three radiating roads, which are the arteries of economy in the region. These include the Kafue Road, forming a part of the North-South corridor, which leads from the city to Zimbabwe and South Africa; the Great North Road, a part of the Lobito corridor, leading to the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the Great East Road, a part of the Nacala corridor, extending from east to west in Zambia and leading to Malawi and Mozambique. For inbound traffic, all these roads narrow to their end in Lusaka City, where heavy freight vehicles compete with passenger cars to make traffic congestion on the current road network extremely challenging. Furthermore, there are anxieties about such situation, which in the long run might hinder the progress of economic development of not only Zambia but the region as a whole.

The Inner Ring Road will go right round Lusaka City and by design will divert traffic from the centre of Lusaka and provide motorists with alternative routes to those already existing. Consequently, mitigation of traffic congestion in Lusaka will contribute towards more efficient transport in the Southern African region. Furthermore, as the Inner Ring Road is designed to be connected to the Lusaka South Multi Facilities Economic Zone (LS-MFEZ), it is hoped that the completion of the Inner Ring Road will promote the development of the LS-MFEZ, which would accelerate industrial development and thus create jobs and lead to wealth creation

among the people. In addition to the positive outcomes of this project, it is expected that more than six hundred jobs will be created from the construction work of the road itself.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The construction of road infrastructure undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in economic and social development of Zambia not only through improving the welfare of the people but also attracting domestic and foreign investment in Zambia and thereby creating jobs. From such a perspective, the efforts by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, under the initiative of His Excellency President Michael Chilufya Sata, on the projects such as Link Zambia 8000, Pave Zambia 2000 and Lusaka 400 shall be highly commended, as they will significantly contribute to expanding and improving the road infrastructure in Zambia.

The development of infrastructure including roads and energy is designated as one of the top priority areas of Japan's assistance policy for Zambia along with other fields, including private sector development, agriculture, water and sanitation, and education. In accordance with this policy, Japan is determined to continue to contribute to the improvement of Zambia's road infrastructure.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Japanese Government will host the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama, Japan from 1 to 3 June this year with the participation of Heads of State and Government from African countries. The overarching theme of the conference will be "Hand in Hand with a More Dynamic Africa". The development of infrastructure is identified as one of the priority areas to be deliberated upon at TICAD V under one of its key agendas, namely, "Robust and Sustainable Economy". It is my sincere hope that the TICAD V will see a great step forward in Japan's contribution to quality economic growth of Zambia and other African countries through infrastructure development.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, may I make a proposition. I think it would be wonderful if the road to be constructed be given a Japanese name such as "Tokyo Road" or "Sakura Road", if it meets with the approval of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, Lusaka City Council and other stakeholders. "Sakura" means cherry blossom, which is Japan's national flower. In this way, I hope the road will become a true symbol of

friendship between Japan and Zambia for many years to come.

It is my earnest hope that through this project, the partnership between our two countries will be further strengthened and be never-ending like the completed Inner Ring Road.

Thank you for your attention.

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