

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. KIYOSHI KOINUMA,
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF THE GRANT CONTRACT
WITH ONE PLANET CAFE ZAMBIA, 18TH DECEMBER, 2015.**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here today at this signing ceremony for the Grant Contract between the Embassy of Japan and One Planet Cafe Zambia. Today, the Government of Japan is pleased to provide a Grant amounting to 90,572 United States Dollars, or approximately 1 million Zambian Kwacha for **The Project for Expansion of Banana Paper Making Factory in Mfuwe.**

This Grant has been provided under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme of the Government of Japan. The programme was introduced in Zambia in 1990, and its primary objective is to support various development and human security projects at the grassroots level. More than 160 projects have been funded and implemented around Zambia since its inception.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Do you know that paper can be made out of stems of banana plants? The recipient organization, One Planet Cafe Zambia operates a project to extract fibers from banana stems, which are cut after the harvest of fruits and to export these fibers to

Japan. The fibers exported are processed into the shapes of paper or paper products at the factory in Japan, and are sold under the name of “Banana Paper”. Thanks to this project, employment has been created for the local residents in Mfuwe, Eastern Province, which has been contributing to the poverty reduction. Now, about 20 local people work for the project, and the income is used for the improvement of their lives and education for their children. Thus, the total beneficiaries are accumulated to about 250 people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the hope to create more employment for the unprivileged local residents in order for them to accomplish social and economic independence, the Government of Japan is pleased to support the implementation of The Project for Expansion of Banana Making Factory in Mfuwe. The fund will be used for construction of factory buildings and procurement of machines, which will enable the production of not only fibers but also pulp, paper, and paper products in Mfuwe. Thus, it will generate new employment and benefit local residents.

This is a public-private collaboration project with a Japanese private company, One Planet Cafe Ltd,. This company does marketing for Banana Paper and is responsible for controlling commercial distribution from import to sales. Through the activities of One Planet Cafe in Japan, more individuals and companies started to relate to the idea of this eco and ethical paper, and through awareness of Banana Paper, the amount of sales has been increasing. With broader distribution of Banana Paper, more people in Japan, despite being far from Zambia will indirectly

contribute to the development of Zambia. As the Government of Japan, it is a pleasure to support the business which has good influence on the welfare of the people around the world. The Government of Japan will continuously contribute to the economic growth of Zambia by utilizing both public and private entities.

Finally, allow me to emphasise that the funds that were used for this Project came from Japanese taxpayers. It is thus my sincere hope that this project will benefit the people of Zambia and the bilateral relationship between Zambia and Japan will be accentuated through both aid and business.

Thank you for your attention.

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