

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. KIYOSHI KOINUMA,
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF SOLWEZI ACADEMY
LEARNING CENTRE FOR VISUALLY AND HEARING-IMPAIRED
SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ZAMBIA, ON 19th SEPTEMBER, 2016**

The Guest of Honor,

Right Reverend Charles Kasonde, Bishop of Solwezi,

Mr. Mateo Ephraim, Permanent Secretary - North Western Province,

Mr. Chishiko Steven, Provincial Education Officer,

Sister Nirmara, Savarimuthu, CIC Mission Superior,

The Sisters of CIC,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Government of Japan to handover Solwezi Academy Learning Centre for Blind and Hearing-Impaired Special Needs Children to the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception Zambia (CIC). This project has been implemented through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme of the Government of Japan. The Grant Contract for this project amounting to 100,029 US Dollars was signed on 11th March, 2016.

The Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme was introduced in Zambia in 1990. The primary objective of this programme is to support various development and human security projects at grassroots level. Until now, more than 160 projects have been funded and implemented in this country.

CIC started their social contribution work in Zambia in 1994, focusing on education, social and medical services. Now, it operates an orphanage in Lusaka, a girls' high school in Mazabuka, and the Business and Secretarial College in Kasiya. Also, since 1999 CIC has been providing special education for deaf and hearing-impaired children in Ikelenge, North Western Province, thus gaining wide experience in the field of special education.

The Government of Zambia promotes the provision of education for Children with Special Educational Needs (CSEN). However, with only 149 such facilities in the entire country, very few have access to formal education. For example, in North Western Province, there are only 5 basic schools which provide special education units while there are over 3,000 visually and hearing children in the area. The demand for special schools for CSEN is high, and with CIC which operates special education units in North Western Province, the residents as well as Government have requested for an expansion of their project.

I hope this newly constructed facility will promote social equality in this country through providing education for children living with disabilities, empowering them to take charge of themselves, enabling them to be independent members of the society.

We held TICAD VI on 27th and 28th in Nairobi, Kenya. As we declared, Japan will support African countries to empower youth, women and persons with disabilities. Through affirming quality education and requisite skills, the Government of Japan will contribute to structural economic transformation and industrialization in African Countries.

Japanese people have been supporting the economic and social development of Zambia since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1964. It is my sincere hope that the facility will be fully utilised with sustainability. I hope this project will benefit the people of Zambia and then the bilateral relationship between Zambia and Japan will be further accentuated.

Thank you for your attention.

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