

REMARKS BY MR. SHUICHI SAKAKIBARA
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES AD INTERIM OF JAPAN TO ZAMBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF
THE MATERNITY WAITING HOUSE AND OTHER FACILITIES
AT KALWEO RURAL HEALTH CENTER, MPONGWE DISTRICT,
ON FRIDAY 7th OCTOBER, 2016

Dr. Consity Mwale, Provincial Medical Officer,
Mrs. Chisanga Ruth Kabwe, Mpongwe Administrative Officer,
Ms. Sumie Ishii, Chairperson of Japanese Organization for International Cooperation
in Family Planning (JOICFP),
Dr. Mary Zulu , Chairperson of Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ),
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Government of Japan to witness the launching ceremony of the Maternity Waiting House and other facilities at Kalweo Rural Health Center.

The construction of a Maternity Waiting House and other related facilities within the Kalweo RHC was implemented by JOICFP during the second phase of the three-year comprehensive project, **the Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) One Stop Service Project in Masaiti and Mpongwe Districts in Zambia.**

This project has been funded by the Government of Japan under the Government of Japan’s **Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO projects**, with the total assistance provided amounting to 1,202,359 United States Dollars or approximately 12 million Zambian Kwacha.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may recall that JOICFP handed over the Maternity Waiting House and other facilities in Mutaba Rural Health Center to Masaiti District in September, 2015. Before JOICFP implemented this project, expectant mothers in Masaiti and Mpongwe

Districts had limited access to facility-based deliveries due to poor infrastructure of the clinic and long distance from their communities.

Since the opening of the Maternity Waiting House at Mutaba RHC, around 90 expectant women have already stayed at the facility for one week or more. From these facts, we believe that Kalweo RHC, too, will allow expectant mothers to receive comprehensive medical services at a single location, thus, contribute to further reduction of mortality rate of mothers and newborn babies in the community.

JOICFP has also implemented the training of Safe Motherhood Action Group (SMAG) and Peer Educator (PE) in order to facilitate sensitization activities related to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). I heard that since the inception of this Project, nearly 40,000 residents in this province have learnt the importance of facility-based delivery and prevention of unwanted pregnancies from SMAG and PE.

In addition, the newly-constructed youth center has a significant function in that it enables volunteers to transfer the knowledge regarding SRH to the community, mainly youth members. In this regard, I am confident that both SMAG and PE will continuously play a pivotal role in raising awareness to the community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me introduce another interesting effort of this grant project. In July, JOICFP invited stakeholders from PPAZ, Ministry of Health, Copperbelt Provincial Medical Office and Masaiti/ Mpongwe District Medical Office to Japan. The purpose of this visit was to provide them with opportunities for learning how Japanese municipalities and local communities are cooperating in order to sustain efficient medical services in the field of maternal and child health. I heard that the Zambian counterparts had a meaningful dialogue with their Japanese counterparts. Therefore, I am confident that this visit enhanced not only sustainability of this project but also efficiency of medical service provision in Copperbelt Province.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In August, the Government of Japan and the Government of Kenya co-hosted **the**

Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi. It was the first time that TICAD was held in Africa. One of the priority areas of the conference was ‘Promoting Resilient Health Systems for Quality of Life’. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced Japan’s intention to increase the population benefiting from basic health services by 2 million people in Africa, over the next 3 years. In this regard, this project by JOICFP is in alignment with the policy goal of the Government of Japan, with the aim to improve the health status of the people in Zambia.

At the occasion of TICADVI, JOICFP and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Africa jointly held a side event with a theme of ‘Partnership among NGOs, Private Sector and Governments for Improving Women’s Health’. I heard that this Project was introduced to the audience as best practice of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Therefore, I hope that this project will also draw the attention of many stakeholders within Zambia.

In closing, please allow me to emphasise that the funds that were used to undertake this Project came from Japanese taxpayers. It is thus my sincere hope that the facilities officially being opened today will be well-utilized and maintained so that they will have a positive long-lasting impact on people in the region. I also hope that this project will symbolize the cordial relationship between the people of Japan and Zambia.

I thank you. Natotela.