

Greetings of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to Zambia
at the Zambia-Japan Handball Friendship Match
at OYDC on Saturday 18 March 2017

President Victor Banda, Secretary-General Josab Changa, and Officials of
the Handball Association of Zambia,
Referees, Coaches, and Players,
Distinguished Guests including from Madison General,
Boys and Girls,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to say a few words at the opening of the
Zambia-Japan Handball Friendship Match.

I have repeatedly stated on various occasions that, as Ambassador of Japan
to Zambia, I am determined to do my best, building upon the long-standing
cooperative relationship between Japan and Zambia, and in cooperation with
the Japanese people in Zambia, to further advance our relations between
Japan and Zambia in various fields.

I was glad to learn that a Zambian handball team had visited Japan for two
weeks in December last year, consisting of 12 players, one coach, and two
officials, that is the President and the Secretary-General, of the Handball
Association, to compete with a number of Japanese handball teams of similar
ages and older ages, sometimes winning sometimes losing, and also to
participate in several occasions of exchange with the Japanese people.

The visit was really successful.

Congratulations!

This visit was planned by Mr. Seiji Tashiro, a former member of the Embassy
of Japan in Zambia, who appealed for donation for the travel costs, to which
about 100 Japanese people responded positively, including some of those
present here, resulting in a total of about 3.5 million Japanese Yen, or
roughly 350 thousand Kwacha.

I would like to join the Zambian handball team for thanking Mr. Tashiro and
other Japanese donors.

The visit was also assisted by the Government of Japan as part of its Sport for Tomorrow initiative.

Last Sunday night, the whole Zambia was hot, very hot with joy, as Chipolopolo Jr. won the U-20 Africa Cup of Nations final.
Congratulations!

After football, it's the time for handball.

I hope that the Zambian handball team will develop to become as strong as Chipolopolo Jr. to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.
To that end I will continue to cheer and support the Zambian handball team.

Now I look forward to witnessing a good match between the Zambian team and the Japanese team.

Thank you.