

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobahsima, Ambassador of Japan
at the Commissioning of Matero Hospital

Your Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia,

The Hon. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, Minister of Health of the Republic of Zambia,

The Hon. Ambassador Japhen Mwakalombe, Minister of Lusaka Province,

Other Ministers present here,

Officials of Political Parties present here,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to say a few words on this occasion for Matero Hospital to be commissioned by His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia.

Since I presented the letter of my credentials to His Excellency the President in November last year, 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 relations between Japan and Zambia extending from political and economic to cultural and other areas, and in cooperation with the Japanese experts, volunteers, NGOs and companies in Zambia, to further advance our bilateral relations in such fields as ODA, trade and investment, particularly by implementing the TICAD VI initiatives.

At TICAD VI, that is the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in Nairobi, Kenya in August last year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed Japan's determination to promote universal health coverage, including its target of increasing the number of people in Africa who can enjoy the basic health services by 2 million in three years. TICAD VI attached importance to promoting resilient health systems for quality of life, among other priority issues.

Under these circumstances, I am particularly glad to join His Excellency the President, the Ministers and officials and people of the Republic of Zambia in

celebrating the commissioning of this Hospital.

Japan provided the grant assistance of 1 billion 999 million Japanese Yen or about 200 million Kwacha, for the Project for Upgrading Lusaka Health Centres to District Hospitals, for the purpose of upgrading the health centre here at Matero and the other at Chilenje to the first level hospitals by constructing the buildings including an outpatient department and an inpatient department and providing the necessary medical equipment, and thus contributing to the reduction of the congestion at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) that is the third level hospital, and recovering the expected functions of the third level hospitals.

As a result of this cooperation, this facility, now Hospital is able to conduct Caesarean operations.

So this Hospital need not request the UTH to conduct them, and the number of the obstetrics operations at the UTH is expected to decrease by 40 %.

In addition, other basic operations have become possible here, leading to, we believe, a large scale reduction of congestion at the UTH.

And indeed great improvements in child mortality rate and maternal mortality rate are expected, among other achievements, for a greater number of citizens of Lusaka now have access to quality health services here. Congratulations!

Japan has conducted cooperation in the health sector of Zambia, in such specific fields as maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases, by constructing this Hospital and other health facilities and providing medical equipment including to the UTH, as well as technical cooperation including capacity building vis-a-vis medical equipment and prevention and treatment of diseases in various ways.

Last month our Embassy hosted an interactive seminar entitled “Global Health Landscape for achieving Universal Health Coverage through Resilient Health Systems” with a medical expert from Japan.

We were glad that, at the well-attended seminar, Minister Chilufya and senior officials of the Health Ministry participated fully in the seminar from the beginning to the conclusion, showing their genuine intention to improve

the health situations in this country.

We believe that for Zambia to continue to achieve further development in a sustainable manner, the strengthening of the health sector is important, among other sectors.

Therefore, the Government of Japan intends to contribute to this process in cooperation with its private sector, in various ways, including promoting further introduction of high quality Japanese medical equipment to Zambia.

In conclusion, I hope that this Hospital will play a key role, among other health facilities, to promote universal health coverage in Zambia and will develop to become a symbol of friendship between Japan and Zambia.

Thank you.