

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobahsima, Ambassador of Japan
at the Ceremony to Hand Over the Digital X-ray Equipment to Beit CURE
Hospital in Lusaka

Councillor Shakafuswa,
Dr. Giorgio Lastroni, Acting Executive Director, Beit CURE Hospital,
Mr. Anton Meyer, FUJI FILM South Africa,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to participate in this Handover Ceremony, representing the Government of Japan, of a project of “Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects”, i.e. the Project for the Improvement of X-ray Equipment of Beit CURE Hospital in Lusaka.

The Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects was introduced in Zambia in 1990, and its primary objective is to support various development and human security projects at the grassroots level. So far more than 160 projects have been funded and implemented by this scheme throughout Zambia.

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 have access to the basic health services by 2 million in three years. TICAD VI attached importance to resilient health systems for quality of life, among other priority issues.

On the occasions of the commissioning last week of Chilenje and Matero First Level Hospitals which had been completed by assistance from Japan, His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, emphasized the importance of health on his Government’s agenda.

Under these circumstances, we highly appreciate the activities of Beit CURE Hospital, as it conducts about 1,600 surgeries every year, of various diseases

including hydrocephalus, spina bifida, and cerebral palsy, and for children it conducts surgeries free of charge, among its other activities.

However, as the X-ray equipment it possessed was of an analogue type which had been used for a number of years, its staff had to develop the X-ray images manually in a darkroom, and the patients had to wait for a long time for them, and the images produced were not as clear as these made using the latest technologies.

Therefore the Hospital wished to obtain new digital X-ray equipment and requested the Government of Japan to assist it.

We considered the request and decided to provide the grant assistance of 91,138 US Dollars or about 1 million Kwacha for the Project for the Improvement of X-ray Equipment of Beit CURE Hospital.

The equipment procured was made by a Japanese company FUJI FILM.

Thus FUJI FILM South Africa installed the equipment and offered its application training, free of charge, among other contributions.

A good example of Japanese public-private collaboration for Zambia, doubly benefiting the recipient!

As a result of this cooperation, the quality of the surgeries at Beit CURE Hospital will improve, among other achievements, as high definition X-ray images will be produced in much shorter time without the trouble of work in a darkroom.

Congratulations!

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, just like this case.

In conclusion, I hope that, with the new X-ray equipment donated by Japan,

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.