

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia at the Reception to Celebrate the Birthday of the
Emperor of Japan on Tuesday 5 December 2017

The Hon. Vincent Mwale, Minister of Local Government of the Republic of
Zambia, the Guest of Honour,
Officials of the Government of the Republic of Zambia present here,
Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners, and Heads of the
U.N. and Other International Organizations present here,
Distinguished Guests,
Representatives from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to welcome you all present here this evening
to a reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty The Emperor of
Japan.

The Emperor will be 84 years old on the 23rd of this month.

The visits from the Japanese Imperial Family to Zambia including that of
Their Majesties The Emperor and Empress in 1983 as Crown Prince and
Princess then, and of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess
Akishino in 2014 to celebrate Zambia's Golden Jubilee as well as the 50th
anniversary of the diplomatic relations of Japan and Zambia, among other
high-level visits between our two countries, such as those of former
Presidents of the Republic of Zambia to Japan, underpin our strong friendly
relationship.

This year Mr. Shinsuke Suematsu, State Minister of Land, Infrastructure,
Transport and Tourism of Japan and Mr. Shunsuke Takei, Parliamentary
Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan visited Zambia, in January and
June, respectively.

The Hon. Margaret Mwanakatwe, Minister of Commerce, Trade and
Industry of the Republic of Zambia attended the TICAD Ministerial
Conference co-hosted by Japan and Mozambique in Maputo in August.

Ever since I arrived in Zambia at the end of October 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 friendly and 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 - many of them are present here - , to further advance our bilateral relations in such fields as ODA, trade and investment, particularly by implementing the TICAD VI initiatives.

Japan started TICAD, i.e. Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 1993, and TICAD VI was held in Nairobi, in August last Year. Japan's initiatives announced at TICAD VI uphold, (1) Economic Diversification and Industrialization: "Quality Africa", (2) Promoting Resilient Health Systems for Quality of Life: "Resilient Africa", and (3) Promoting Social Stability for Shared Prosperity: "Stable Africa", as the three pillars for Japan's cooperation to Africa.

(Political Situation)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We admire that Zambia has continuously maintained its peace and stability after its independence, upholding the motto of "One Zambia, One Nation". The changes of government took place only as a result of elections. We saw an opposition political leader arrested in last April, but released in August. We saw the threatened state of emergency declared in July, but lifted in October. We hope that Zambia will continue to maintain its peace and stability.

Internationally, Zambia has contributed to the peace and stability of the region, including by its mediation of peace for Angola and DR Congo, among other initiatives.

We highly appreciate the efforts of the Government in accepting refugees and former refugees, not only from neighboring DR Congo and Angola, but also from Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia, totaling about 60,000 people. What is very unique here is that Zambia recognizes many long-term refugee immigrants from Angola and Rwanda totaling about 25,000 people as "Former Refugees", and is implementing "the Local Integration Programme" to sustainably resettle them.

In May, Japan extended to the U.N. Agencies here about 20 million Kwacha to contribute to "Stable Africa". With this funding, the Resettlement

Coordination Office of the Office of the Vice President, was built and officially commissioned in Meheba, North Western Province, in October, among other achievements.

(Economic Situation)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Zambia, upholding the “Vision 2030”, aims to become a prosperous middle-income country by 2030. For this purpose, the Government is promoting the diversification of the Zambian economy which is currently heavily dependent on the mining industry. Agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, among others, are identified as the sectors with large potentials for growth. Diversifying the mining industry itself is also under consideration. “Smart Zambia”, based on innovative methods, is also pursued.

At the same time, the Government attaches importance to healthy budgetary management, and is consulting the IMF.

We admire these efforts of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and we would like to support these efforts for Zambia to become a prosperous middle-income country.

(Japan’s Development Cooperation)

To date, the Government of Japan has extended Official Development Assistance to Zambia totaling more than 230 billion Yen, for both building infrastructure, and developing human resources in this country.

A total of more than 1,500 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and Senior Overseas Volunteers (SVs) have been sent to Zambia, and more than 3,500 Zambians have received JICA training in Japan and other countries. Currently about 100 Japanese Experts, JOCVs and SVs are working all over Zambia. Japan annually receives about 150 Zambians for training in Japan.

Recently, in order to contribute to “Quality Africa”, under the ABE initiative, that is the Africa Business Education Initiative for Youth, where trainees from Africa are expected to obtain a master’s degree from a Japanese university as well as to experience work at a Japanese company, Japan has received 26 Zambians. Other contributions to “Quality Africa” under way include the Rice Dissemination Project covering 7 Provinces of Zambia, and National Kaizen Project Phase 2, of work ethics based on the Japanese

experience, for dissemination throughout Zambia.

Currently, Japan is implementing various health projects in Zambia to contribute to “Resilient Africa”.

Having completed the Project to Upgrade Health Centres in Lusaka District to First Level Hospitals (Phase 1) amounting to about 200 million Kwacha, Chilenje and Matero Hospitals were officially commissioned by H. E. Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia in April.

In May, 14 Japanese thermal cameras were installed at 4 international airports and 10 land borders of Zambia, to check and prevent the people who have contracted infectious diseases from entering Zambia.

In July, additional medical equipment was provided to the University Teaching Hospital, as the follow-up cooperation to the UTH.

Among a number of technical cooperation projects being implemented by JICA, the Project for Surveillance of Viral Zoonosis in Africa plays an important role in infectious diseases prevention and control in this country.

In the past 12 months, I attended a number of handover ceremonies of various projects implemented by Japan, including the above mentioned health projects and the following projects, not only in Lusaka, but in various places in Zambia: in Lusaka Province, 3 grassroots and NGO projects for health, in Lusaka City, Kafue District, and Chongwe District; in Eastern Province, a grassroots school project in Katete, and a grassroots project of an innovative Banana Paper Making Factory in Mfuwe; in Copperbelt Province, an NGO health project in Mpongwe District; in Luapula Province, the Grant Aid Project for Ground Water Development in Luapula Province Phase 3.

In January, Japanese State Minister Suematsu co-hosted with the Hon. Ronald Chitotela, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, a Zambia-Japan Public Private Conference on Quality Infrastructure in Lusaka, which resulted in signing of one MOC by the two Governments, as well as three MOUs by 3 Japanese companies and Zambia National Council for Construction. At the follow-up Quality Infrastructure Dialogue held in April in Lusaka, 4 Study Groups were established on Urban Transportation, Roads and Bridges, Power and Batteries, and PPP.

In June, at the meeting between Japanese Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Takei and the Hon. Harry Kalaba, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in Lusaka, agreement was reached to launch negotiations on an investment

agreement between our two countries.

(Japanese Community and Japanese Companies)

In July, the terrible fire engulfed Lusaka City Market. Having learned of this, the Japanese Society in Zambia, collected 10,000 Kwacha from among the members of the Society, and brought it to the Office of the Vice President in September, to show their sympathy to the victims and solidarity to the Government and people of Zambia.

As Prince Takamado Primary School, which was built by the cooperation from Japan and opened on the occasion of visit of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Takamado in 1999, and named after the Prince, needed more computers, several Japanese companies and JICA donated a total of 70 computers and a Japanese company renovated the computer room, both of which were handed over to the school in October.

I am proud of these Japanese people and companies!

The donation to Prince Takamado School is just one example of numerous corporate social responsibility activities of Japanese companies in Zambia.

Today Japanese companies have exhibited here their renowned automobiles and cutting-edge product displays. Please have a look later, if you haven't yet.

(Sport and Culture)

The Embassy co-hosted with Zambia Judo Association, the 29th Judo Tournament for about 200 male and female Zambian Judokas in September, and co-hosted with Martial Arts Federation of Zambia, the 7th Karate Tournament for about 100 male and female Zambian Karatekas in October. On both occasions the athletes showed their strength and good manner.

In October, we hosted Japan Day to introduce examples of Japanese culture here and Japan Film Festival during which more than 400 people viewed 3 Japanese films.

Today we have prepared Sushi made of a top grade Japanese rice, and Tempura, among other Japanese food items, as well as a selection of Sake, Japanese rice wine. Please enjoy them later.

(Looking Ahead)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year, while Japan may make new commitments, we will witness the progress of a number of on-going projects committed by Japan.

Lusaka District Hospitals Project Phase 2, amounting to about 400 million Kwacha, to upgrade the health centres at Chawama, Chipata and Kanyama to first level hospitals, is under way.

Consultations are progressing between our two Governments for the provision of X-ray equipment to a number of hospitals throughout Zambia, with the budget of around 20 million Kwacha.

2 NGO health projects in Lusaka Province, and 3 grassroots school projects, 2 in Lusaka Province and 1 in Central Province, are under way.

As the next Quality Infrastructure Dialogue is planned early next year in Japan, I look forward to tangible outcomes of that meeting.

I look forward to an early conclusion of the investment agreement which will expand investments between our two countries.

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games gradually approaching, we intend to further promote such sports as Judo and Karate, including continuing to host the tournaments of these sports.

We will continue to host Japan Day and Japan Film Festival, as well.

I particularly look forward to extensive exchanges of people between our two countries at various levels in 2018.

In all these areas, I intend to fully engage myself and my Embassy in cooperation with the Japanese experts, volunteers, NGOs and companies in Zambia, to contribute to the economic growth and development of Zambia, and to further development of the relations between Japan and Zambia.

(Toast)

Ladies and Gentelemen,

Having said this, now I would like to propose a toast to H.E. Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, wishing for His Excellency's continued good health and leadership, and to the Guest of Honour the Hon. Vincent Mwale and all of you present here, for your good health and happiness, as well as for further development of the friendly and cooperative relations between Japan and Zambia.

Cheers!

Thank you.