

Greetings of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic
of Zambia at the Zambia-Japan Handball Friendship Match
on Saturday 3 March 2018

Mr. Gibson Muyaule, Deputy Director of Sport, Ministry of Youth, Sport and
Child Development of the Republic of Zambia,
President Victor Banda, Secretary-General Josab Changa, and Officials of
the Handball Association of Zambia,
Referees, Coaches, and Players,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Boys and Girls,

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

Just a week ago, Pyeong Chang Winter Olympic Games ended.
As these were winter games, only 8 African countries, not including Zambia,
had sent delegations of small numbers of athletes to Pyeong Chang, the
Republic of Korea.

The next Olympic Games will be hosted by Tokyo, Japan in 2020.
These are summer games, and we look forward to receiving the Zambian
delegation then.

Since my arrival in Lusaka, 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 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 areas.

Sports including handball is one such area for further advancement.

This is my second Zambia-Japan Handball Friendship Match to observe,
after the match held a year ago.

In March last year, referring to the successful visit of the Zambian handball team to Japan in December 2016, including the President and the Secretary-General of the Handball Association of Zambia, I paid tribute to Mr. Seiji Tashiro, a former member of the Embassy of Japan in Zambia, and about 100 Japanese people who made their respective financial contributions resulting in a total of about 3.5 million Japanese Yen, or roughly 350 thousand Kwacha to fund the visit.

Some of the donors are present here now, including Ms. Kaori Ishiguro. Thank you again.

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

Surely I should repeat what I said a year ago.

I hope that the Zambian handball team will develop to become strong enough to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

To this end I will continue to cheer and support the Zambian handball team.

I have already witnessed a good match.

I look forward to further good matches today.

Thank you.