

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to the  
Republic of Zambia at 2019 National KAIZEN Conference  
on Wednesday 20 February 2019

The Hon. Christopher Yaluma, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry of  
the Republic of Zambia,  
Mrs. Kayula Siame, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and  
Industry,  
Mr. Chola Mwitwa, CEO, KAIZEN Institute of Zambia,  
Distinguished Participants in the Conference,  
Senior Government Officials,  
Representatives from the Media,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to deliver a statement at 2019 National  
KAIZEN Conference with the theme of “Continuous Improvement Towards  
Business Excellence through Quality Control Circles”.

At the outset, I would like to join the organizers of this Conference,  
particularly in welcoming the KAIZEN performers here who, I understand,  
are 13 organizations, including 4 manufacturing companies, and their  
members, as they are expected to play a leading role in adding values to  
Zambia’s economic growth and development.

(Zambian Economy)

The Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Zambia, upholding “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 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.

For this purpose, I believe that KAIZEN Project of quality and productivity improvement leading to international competitiveness, among other undertakings, will play a very important role.

Before going into some details of KAIZEN Project in Zambia, let me outline the history of the Japanese economic development, as KAIZEN Project is a project of work ethics based on Japanese experience.

(Japanese Economic Development)

The Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Japan lacks natural resources, it depended on the hard work of its people for its development.

Simply put, we imported raw materials and parts for products and with these we made final products and exported them to gain incomes, and became a major economy in the world.

The education and the good relationship between the employers and the employees which facilitated development of KAIZEN activities, among others, played important roles in this process.

Japan achieved a rapid economic growth until the early 1990's, including more than doubling its national income from 1961 to 1970.

Hard work and resultant quality and technological innovations worked well then.

Japan is now struggling to grow again, coping with the problems of the rapidly aging population due to the decreased birth rate and the prolonged life expectancy, among other challenges.

The Abe Government promotes “Abenomics” of aggressive monetary policy, flexible fiscal policy and structural reforms, including various innovations, to get out of the deflation and achieve growth.

I am optimistic about Japan's future, because a huge number of Japanese

companies are undertaking some forms of KAIZEN activities, and positive signs of innovations are found in Japan.

(KAIZEN in Zambia)

The Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
TICAD VI held in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2016, attached importance to the KAIZEN Initiative, among other initiatives, to create “Quality Africa”, among other priority issues.

National KAIZEN Project (Phase I) was implemented in Zambia from February 2014 to December 2016.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia established KAIZEN Institute of Zambia (KiZ), and KiZ, with the cooperation from JICA, trained 16 KAIZEN consultants and 44 KAIZEN coordinators, and assisted KAIZEN activities of many scores of organizations, as a total of more than 270 organizations have considered adopting KAIZEN activities in both the public and private sectors.

I understand that to date more than 1,100 Zambians in a total of 236 teams have participated in KAIZEN activities.

Since July 2017, National KAIZEN Project Phase II is under way, for all Provinces of Zambia, for strengthening management capacity of KiZ, strengthening training systems of KAIZEN consultants, providing KAIZEN consulting services, and spreading the KAIZEN movement nationwide, and thus continuously developing the foundation for KAIZEN dissemination and expansion and contributing to the improvements of quality and productivity in both the public and private sectors in Zambia.

In October 2018, the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Convention on Quality Control Circle was held in Singapore, and the winners of Zambia’s KAIZEN Conference in that year, Strongpak and Hitachi Construction Machinery Zambia won the Gold Award there.

Congratulations!

On the occasion of the visit of H. E. Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia to Japan in December last year at the invitation of H.

E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan ( - By the way both the Hon. Minister and the P.S were members of the delegation of the President. Thank you for your contribution to making the visit fruitful. - ), the two leaders confirmed the importance of KAIZEN Project, while declaring the relations between the two countries would enter a new phase of cooperation.

(Conclusion)

The Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to reiterate that for Zambia to become a prosperous middle income country, producing good and abundant results of KAIZEN activities is essential.

As I mentioned earlier, we have confirmed the progress made.

However, further progress is hoped for to achieve “Vision 2030”.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to encourage all parties concerned, including KiZ, and those participating in National KAIZEN Project Phase II in both the public and private sectors of Zambia to make their utmost efforts to achieve the best results in their own places, and also, if possible, to influence the neighbors of their reach to do so as well, so that the KAIZEN movement will spread as widely as possible in Zambia.

To this end, the Government of Japan is determined to offer its utmost cooperation through JICA.

The Hon. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us all work together for Zambia to become a prosperous middle income country!

Thank you.