

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to the  
Republic of Zambia at the Signing Ceremony for the Project for Procurement  
of Carpentry Tools for the Production of Assistive Devices at Apters in  
Lusaka on Thursday 14 March 2019

Mr. Kenneth Habaalu, Director, and Members of Apters,  
Representatives from the Media,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to represent the Government of Japan at this Signing Ceremony for a project of “Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects by the Government of Japan”, for Procurement of Carpentry Tools for the Production of Assistive Devices at Apters in Lusaka, amounting to up to US\$ 43,498, or about 522 thousand Zambian Kwacha.

TICAD VI, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2016, attached importance to human resources development to promote economic diversification and industrialization in Africa to create “Quality Africa”, among other priority issues.

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, H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan expressed Japan’s commitment to continuing its support to Zambia, in the areas including economic diversification through manufacturing and human resources development, in line with Zambia’s Seventh National Development Plan.

The Seventh National Development Plan 2017 – 2021 has the subtitle of “Accelerating Development Efforts towards Vision 2030 without Leaving Anyone Behind”.

We appreciate the activities of Apters which manufactured assistive devices for rehabilitation using used paper, among others, and provided the products to a total of about 2,000 children with disabilities in the recent 5 years at affordable prices.

While the needs for such devices from hospitals and families of the children

with disabilities not only in Lusaka Province but also in distant places increased, however, Apters was not able to respond to these needs, as it did not have sufficient carpentry tools and the tools in its possession were depreciating.

Thus Apters prepared a proposal for procuring new carpentry tools as well as for building fences for its factory, and requested the Government of Japan to fund the proposal.

We have considered and decided to respond positively.

With the completion of this project, the production time for the assistive devices is expected to be shortened from the current two weeks to about one week, and the number of products per year is expected to double from the recent annual average of 520, so that more children with disabilities will be able to obtain the assistive devices in Zambia.

In conclusion, I hope that this project will proceed smoothly to contribute to human resources development in Zambia, and creating “Quality Zambia”, and Apters will develop to become a symbol of friendship between Japan and Zambia.

Thank you.