

Statement of Mr. Hidenobu Sobashima, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia at His Farewell Reception
on Thursday 19 September 2019

The Hon. Given Lubinda, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Zambia,
Ambassador Chalwe Lombe, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, my Guest of Honour,
Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners, and Heads of the
U.N. and Other International Organizations Present,
Senior Government Officials Present,
Distinguished Guests,

Thank you all for coming to our farewell reception.

It is not only myself, but also Ms. Tomoe Kotani and Ms. Noa Iiboshi of the
Economic and Development Cooperation Section and Ms. Yui Hamasaki of
the Administration Section of the Embassy of Japan, as well as my chef Mr.
Kiyotaka Waki who will be leaving Zambia soon, so I asked them to join in
the receiving line.

Thus this is our farewell reception.

When I arrived in Zambia at the end of October 2016, Jacaranda flowers
had gone.

Distinguished Guests,

Ever since I arrived in Zambia about three years ago, 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, to further
advance our bilateral relations in such fields as ODA, trade and investment,
particularly by implementing the TICAD VI initiatives.

(Past three years)

In the past three years, the following high-level visits took place between
Japan and Zambia:

In 2017, the Hon. Shinsuke Suematsu, then State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, led the Japanese delegation for the Zambia-Japan Public-Private Infrastructure Conference held in Lusaka. The Hon. Shunsuke Takei, then Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Zambia.

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

In 2018, four Ministers: the Hon. Christopher Yaluma, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, the Hon. Richard Musukwa, Minister of Mines and Minerals Development, the Hon. Ronald Chitotela, then Minister of Housing and Infrastructure Development, and the Hon. Brian Mushimba, then Minister of Transport and Communication participated in the Japan Africa Public-Private Economic Forum co-hosted by Japan and South Africa in Johannesburg.

The Hon. Joseph Malanji, Minister of Foreign Affairs attended the TICAD Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo.

Japan sent a Public Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa headed by the Hon. Manabu Horii, then Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs to Zambia.

Then, in last December, H.E. Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia paid an official visit to Japan.

H.E. the President once again visited Japan last month to participate in TICAD7; the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

In the past three years, I attended a number of various ceremonies: signing ceremonies of Exchange of Notes for Japan's Official Development Assistance to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, and of grant contracts with Zambian NGOs and Japanese NGOs engaged in development cooperation activities in Zambia, as well as completion and handover ceremonies of such development projects.

While the most auspicious ceremonies among them were those of

commissioning of the First Level Hospitals at Chilenge and Matero by H. E. the President, in April 2017, I remember fondly also of various handover ceremonies organized by Zambian and Japanese NGOs, participated by local residents who showed their natural and beautiful smiles of joy.

The most memorable events during my tenure here are, of course, the visits of H.E. the President of the Republic of Zambia to Japan.

On the occasion of H.E.'s visit in last December, President Lungu and Prime Minister Abe declared in their joint statement that the relations of the two countries would enter a new phase of cooperation, both bilaterally and in international fora.

I believe that TICAD7 held with the theme of Advancing Africa's Development through People, Technology, and Innovation has borne fruitful results with the participation of H.E. the President of the Republic of Zambia, among other African leaders, as well as international organizations and partner countries.

I am a happy Ambassador in that the Head of State of the country to which I am accredited visited my country two times during my tenure of assignment.

I know my colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps envy me, jealous of me. However, the fact the Head of State has visited your country is so heavy that it will then oblige you to repay, which I will hand over to my successor.

(Vision 2030)

Distinguished Guests,

As Zambia upholds the "Vision 2030" to become a prosperous middle-income country by 2030, the diversification of the Zambian economy which is currently heavily dependent on the mining industry, and the healthy budgetary management are important.

The Government is already making efforts to these ends.

While it may take a while to produce significant results, I believe that Zambia's political stability and rich natural resources, among other favorable factors, should guarantee Zambia's development.

Zambia's political stability and people's hospitality, among others, already attracted the largest number of JICA Volunteers, 81 in total including 41

female volunteers, as at the end of July this year, larger than the numbers of JICA Volunteers in any other country in the world.

I am confident that Zambia will soon become a prosperous middle income country.

My successor Ambassador Ryuta Mizuuchi will be coming to Zambia next month.

He cannot repeat what I repeatedly said, for at least TICAD IV should be replaced by TICAD7.

He should further advance Japan's relations with Zambia with your cooperation.

Have I done well?

I don't know, but at least I made my efforts.

And I have been assisted by the officials of the Government, most notably by my Guest of Honour today Ambassador Chalwe Lombe, and Cooperating Partners and friends.

I thank all of you present here for your cooperation and friendship.

Also, although I normally refrain from appreciating my colleagues in my Embassy, as they are not my guests, I will do so now as this is my farewell occasion.

Thank you my colleagues in the Embassy of Japan, both Japanese and Zambian, for your cooperation.

Now Jacaranda flowers are in full bloom, and I am leaving.

(Toast)

Distinguished Guests,

This is not a national day reception.

So, now, with your permission, particularly of my Guest of Honour, I would like to propose a toast to the good health and happiness of all of you present here.

Cheers!

Thank you.