

Remarks of Mr. Ryuta Mizuuchi, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia
on the Occasion of the 31st Japanese Ambassador's Jūdō Tournament on 23
November 2019

Honourable Emmanuel Mulenga, Minister of Youth, Sport and Child Development of the Republic of Zambia,
Mr. Alfred Foloko, President of National Olympic Committee of Zambia and President of Zambia Jūdō Association,
Mr. Mabvuto Ng'uni, Secretary General
and other high Officials of Zambia Jūdō Association,
Representatives from the Media,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to co-host the 31st Japanese Ambassador's Jūdō Tournament today. I am particularly honoured to welcome Honourable Mulenga, Minister for Youth, Sport and Child Development as Guest of Honour at this Tournament.

Further, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Zambia Jūdō Association, Jūdō clubs and all the Jūdōkas participating in this tournament. My special thanks go to the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development, the Zambia Police Music Band and their sponsors for their support, and friends of Judo who are present here, all of whom have contributed a great deal to organizing this tournament.

Now, allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to welcome you all as the new Ambassador of Japan in Zambia. I will do my best to serve in Zambia and strengthen the friendly relationship between our two countries. At the same time, I need your support and assistance as I endeavour to discharge my responsibility. But together I am sure we will all be able to achieve good outcomes as we work together hand in hand.

Next year, Tokyo will host the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Looking back, on the day of closing of the last Tokyo Olympic Games on 24th October 1964, Zambia became independent. This is how Zambia and Japan are connected with each other; through Olympics and Tokyo. And so are we – those who have gathered here today. I hope very much that athletes who are participating in this tournament will be selected in the national Team of Zambia and compete for Gold

medals in Tokyo. I hope further that we all will build a bridge to bring our two countries even closer together, as did the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) held in Yokohama last August. I believe that it is the people themselves that really strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two countries.

When it comes to Jūdō, it was established in Japan in the course of the 19th century and has spread across the world over the past decades. Currently, more than 200 countries and territories are members of the International Jūdō Federation.

In Zambia, Jūdō was introduced in 1970. When Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers were dispatched to Zambia for the first time, they were teachers who trained schoolchildren with Jūdō. I understand that at present more than 3,000 Zambians are practicing Jūdō.

What, then, does Jūdō mean? The first part “Jū” have several meanings, but most commonly “Jū” stands for “flexibility” or “reflex”, or even “softness or gentleness”. “Dō” literally means a “way” or “path”. In combination Jūdō means “a way of flexibility” or “reflex” or even “a path to softness or gentleness”. The opposite of “Jū” is “Gō”, meaning “toughness” or “strength”. When we Japanese say, “Jū can often beat Gō”, it is something like “David defeating Goliath” in the Bible. Now that Jūdō is fought in weight classes, we no longer see many examples of “David defeating Goliath”. However, this concept itself seems to be still relevant and enlightening in today’s circumstances.

In concrete application, a small country from Asia – like Japan – can compete with big powers in the world – say in business, provided that you will be trained properly: a lesson that can be drawn for every country in the world. In the Rugby World Cup that we hosted from September 20th to November 2nd this year, we have beaten Russia, Ireland and Scotland. We could have beaten South Africa, too, if we have not chosen to be a good host.

In this spirit I wish all of you participating in this tournament a good fight and all the best. I wish Zambia also good luck and success in the Olympic qualification and beyond.

Thank you very much.