

*Check against delivery*

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador MIZUUCHI Ryuta on the  
Occasion of Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for Grant  
Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects at  
the Ambassador's Residence  
On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Ms. Maiwase MBEWE, Executive Director, Madaliso Widows  
Orphans and Vulnerable Children Group,  
Ms. Yvonne CHUULU, Director of Open and Distance Education,  
Ministry of General Education,  
Representatives from the Media,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you all to my residence on the occasion of the Signing Ceremony of the Grant Contract of a project within the framework of "Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects" by the Government of Japan. Today, it is the project titled "The Project for the Construction of a New School Building at Madaliso Community OVC School in Chipata District, Eastern Province" implemented by Madaliso Orphans and Vulnerable Children Group, which is represented by its Executive Director, Ms. Maiwase MBEWE. I also wish to express my appreciation to our Guest of Honour, Ms. Yvonne CHUULU who will address you later on behalf of the Zambian Government. With today's signing, the project will be officially sealed and launched to be implemented. Its total budget amounts to up to 122,561 US dollars.

Since its establishment in 2000, Madaliso Widows Orphans and Vulnerable Children Group has been supporting orphans and vulnerable children as well as people living with HIV/AIDS and contributing to improving their livelihood through networking, advocating, and farming. As part of its activities, the Group constructed a community school in 2002 and accommodated the children with the possibility of basic education. However, due to many years of exhaustion and stresses that have been done to the

facilities, the main infrastructure of the school, including the classrooms or furniture, have been worn-out. This has led to increased cases of absenteeism and dropouts.

Against this background, the Government of Japan decided to extend to the school within the framework of its Grassroots Grant Assistance Scheme a package of assistance which aims at constructing and rehabilitating classroom blocks, toilets, and a borehole with solar systems, as well as procuring furniture. Once the project is completed, around 700 pupils will be accommodated in properly furnished classrooms in an environment in which they can concentrate on their daily works at school. The problem of absenteeism and dropouts which frequented the school children in the past will be certainly remedied.

In Japan, children were often regarded as the common asset of the local communities, or even that of the nation as a whole. It is for these reasons that even before Japan was opened to the outside world at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education for the children was generally offered by the local temples or in the household of Chief of the community. When modern education system was introduced in the Meiji Period, this classical model served as a basis for the expansion of the modern educational system nationwide. Therefore, the role of the community is of great importance for raising the children so that they will become its full-fledged members.

The problem of dropping out or absenteeism is thus an issue that not only the school but also the community should take charge of, as guardians of the children. It is the adults themselves that have to keep an eye on abusing alcohol and drugs, prostitution and early-marriage – factors that isolate the children from socio-economic chains in the community and drive them into a vicious cycle.

I therefore hope very much that children who will be taken care of in the Madaliso community school with the help of the Japanese Government will be blessed with sufficient support from the community, and will be brought up to become grown-ups who, in turn, will be in the position to contribute to the community and the Zambian Nation as a whole. With these remarks I wish to extend to the Madaliso Widows Orphans and Vulnerable Children Group and

the school my best wishes for their successful and sustainable management of the school, good luck and continued support and guidance of the Ministry of Education.

Thank you