

Remarks of H.E. Mr. Mizuuchi Ryuta, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia at the Opening of Japan Day2020 at Arcades
Shopping Mall on Tuesday 2nd March 2020

Mrs. Agnes Nyendwa, Vice Chairperson, National Arts Council Board,
Ministry of Tourism and Arts,
Mr. Dennis Banda, President of Nurd Otaku,
Mr. TOKUHASHI Kazuhiko, Chief Representative of JICA Office
Zambia,
Distinguished Guests,
Representatives from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the occasion of the opening of the “Lusaka-Japan Day 2020”, I would like to welcome you who are gathered here and thank all of you most sincerely for your interest and commitment to Japan.

Having said that, let me express my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Agnes Nyendwa who has come to deliver a message on behalf of the Zambian Government. I also thank Mr. Tokuhashi, the new JICA Chief Representative in Zambia for his comradeship to join me in the opening event of the Japan Day.

“Japan Day” is actually not new to me. In Düsseldorf, Germany, I was co-hosting, together with my German colleagues, the so-called “Japan Day” every year – three times in a row. There, the event was gigantic. It attracted more than 600,000 people from all over Germany and beyond to the festival – in a city whose population is little more than 700,000. When it started more than 20 years ago, it was just a hand-made, small event which was not much different from “our” Lusaka-Japan Day we are launching right now, but has evolved over time to the extent that I explained earlier. With your cooperation and commitment, in 20 years’ time, this Lusaka-Japan Day may also become as huge an event as that in Düsseldorf. I call upon you, therefore, to join me in our project to make a future Lusaka-Japan Day that can surpass the popularity of the Japan Day in Düsseldorf.

I do have some reasonable grounds to believe that we can develop a Lusaka-Japan Day like that one. Why? Because since I came

here, I am very much impressed with the level of knowledge in Zambia concerning our country. When I went to a gas station to fill up my car, the serviceman looked at the number plate of my car and asked, “You are from Japan, aren’t you?” When I replied, “Yes”, then that person asked me further, “Your “President” Abe is doing very well, isn’t he?” While I was not quite sure if this Zambian was closely following Japanese politics, I could hardly imagine that in Europe, somebody could spontaneously tell the name of the Prime Minister of Japan!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, we have the following spaces for you here to come closer to the Japanese culture: Shodo (Calligraphy), Origami (Paper Folding), Kimono (Yukata) Modeling and Pop Culture (Anime and Manga). Also, a pair of dolls are exhibited to show you how little girls in Japan celebrate their “Puppet Festival” on March 3rd. It is a festival to pray for the daughters to grow healthy and be blessed with a happy marriage in the future.

For those who are interested in studying or intends to study in Japan, an information stand is available for them to access relevant information of universities and subjects they wish to study in Japan nationwide. As a small attraction, we have, like last year, a “Sake tasting corner”, where you can experience how Japanese citizens can be merry by drinking a toxic beverage after work in bars or at home. But I warn you not to drink too much because, as the authorities say, alcohol can endanger the life of the people.

We hope very much that many people will come over and enjoy the “Lusaka-Japan Day for the next six hours and experience as if you were in Japan.

422 years before Tom Cruise played in the Hollywood film “the Last Samurai” in 2007, the first African person whose Japanese name was “Yasuke” made a debut in Japan in the year 1581 to become the real “First African Samurai”. This means that Japan and Africa were already connected with each other for the last 439 years. And once the Lusaka-Japan Day is established as an event that can attract many more people, you may one day call Lusaka a “Little Tokyo in Africa”. As you experience and enjoy the “Lusaka-Japan Day”, I am sure you will feel the distance between Japan and Zambia much shorter and the

Japanese culture come alive within your reach. I would also be pleased if today's event would contribute to deepening the mutual understanding between our two countries and bringing about yet another impulse for fostering friendship among ourselves.

With these remarks I wish you all a pleasant "Lusaka-Japan Day 2020" and an unforgettable experience of your encounter with the Japanese culture. I now declare the "Lusaka-Japan Day 2020" opened.