

Check against delivery

Remarks of H.E. Mr. MIZUUCHI Ryuta, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia at the Annual General Meeting of the Zambia JICA
Fellowship Association, Saturday 29 February 2020

Dr. Jobbicks Kalumba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education,
represented by Mr. Sydney Nalube, Assistant Director of National Science
Centre,

Dr. Joseph Mulenga, Chairman, Zambia JICA Fellowship Association
(ZAJIFA),

Mr. TOKUHASHI Kazuhiko, Chief Representative, JICA Office, Zambia,
ZAJIFA Members,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak in front of you at the
Annual Garden Meeting of the Zambian JICA Fellowship Association as
Ambassador of Japan to Zambia.

First, I would like to thank Dr. Joseph Mulenga for the invitation. I
also thank Dr. Jobbicks Kalumba, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of
General Education, represented by Mr. Sydney Nalube to address the
audience on behalf of the Zambian Government. As manager of JICA's
projects, I wish to convey to the National Science Centre, for my sincere
gratitude.

As I mentioned in my remarks on the occasion of the reception to
celebrate the 60th birthday of H.M. the Emperor of Japan, this year marks the
50th anniversary of installation of JOCV in Zambia in the year 1970. Two
years earlier, in 1968, JICA's training programs for Zambia had started in
Japan. These were the times when Japan's cooperation with Zambia was born
and put in motion. It was further expanded when Japan started to extend Yen
Loans in 1972 and Grant Assistance in 1980 respectively. The total assistance
to Zambia since then to date amounts to more than 230 billion Japanese Yen
(2 billion USD). JICA training programs enabled more than 4,000 Zambians
to be sent to Japan and participate in training courses. On a yearly basis, a
total number of between 100 and 150 Zambians are trained in Japan every

year.

This is, indeed, a remarkable achievement – without doubt. At the same time, however, I cautioned at the Emperor’s Birthday Reception and asked myself whether our cooperation has effectively triggered the transformation of the Zambian economy that was long due and eagerly awaited. Since the purpose of our cooperation is to help Zambia achieve its sustainable development goals (SDGs), I think we have to take it seriously.

One thing that I clearly heard from H.E. President Edgar Chagwa Lungu himself, possibly in this context, was Zambia’s quest to strengthen the agricultural sector with a view to diversifying the economic structure and rectifying the overdependence on mining. More specifically, the Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, Hon. Luo, spoke about a possibility of a joint research with Japan in the field of animal diseases that would lead to the production of relevant vaccines in Zambia. I am wondering, if here in this area, one may attempt to explore possibilities that can herald future-oriented joint endeavors for the sake of strengthening the Zambian economy.

Personally, I wish to see a “strategic thrust” in our cooperation with Zambia – in such a way that, for instance, a schoolgirl with excellent talent would be efficiently supported by a JICA scheme in the field of gender, and promoted further to receive Japanese Language Studies at UNZA, which is already assisted by volunteers who teach Japanese. Further on, this young lady would be able to apply for a Scholarship Program of Japan’s MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology and Sports) and be sent to Japan for a couple of years. After graduation, she would then be available to join the Zambian Government at a certain Ministry. After a few years, she would be qualified to participate in the JICA training course. 30 years later, she would be hosting the Annual General Meeting of ZAJIFA as its President, together with one of my successors, the future Japanese Ambassador...

Maybe some of you are aware that I am advocating to launch a “Japan Academic Center” at UNZA as a basis of Japan-related studies. In order to ensure that such an institution can work sustainably, a supply chain of young excellent students is necessary. A constant supply of youngsters through JICA support, flanked by JOCV teachers from the level of basic to

higher education at the future Japan Academic Center at its core, I am sure, will provide an optimal system of sustainable supply chain of human resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since this is not an occasion to present a 5G super high-speed internet access smartphone but rather an annual get-together of ex-JICA trainees, it would be better for me not to go further but stop here. However, I hope you will allow me to ask you, because all the delegates who are gathered here are familiar with both Zambian and Japanese development policy and practices, to join me in my search for a clue to identify a formula that will better serve our common purpose, namely the attainment of the sustainable development of this beautiful country, Zambia.

In today's Annual General Meeting, I expect to see intensive discussions and exchanges on topics that are relevant to the time. At the same time, it is my hope that the discussions would be further expanded to explore the core target issue, namely, how to achieve a sustainable human resource development chain in Zambia. In closing my remarks, I wish this Annual General Meeting a great success and its participants all the best.

Thank you for your attention.