

Remarks by H.E. Mr. MIZUUCHI Ryuta, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia at the Ceremony of Exchange of Notes on Japan's Grant Assistance "The Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in Copperbelt Province" on Tuesday 14 July 2020

Hon. Dr. Bwalya Ng'andu, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Zambia,
Permanent Secretaries and Senior Government Officials Present,
Representatives from Media Houses,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure, together with Finance Minister, Hon. Dr. Ng'andu, to sign and exchange the Notes inaugurating our significant cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Zambia in the health sector, amid our joint endeavor to fight the COVID19 pandemic. It is called "The Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in Copperbelt Province", amounting to up to 2.65 billion Japanese Yen or almost 24 million US Dollars.

This will be the third cooperation of this kind from Japan, following our previous undertaking to upgrade the health centers to District Hospitals in Lusaka Province in the years 2013 and 2016 respectively, which exceeded 23 billion Japanese Yen. That has brought an improved access of a large number of civil population of Lusaka Province to advanced medical services. This time, citizens of Ndola and Kitwe districts will be the direct beneficiaries of such an improvement once the project is completed. Fundamental improvement of health services at densely populated districts like these two, is yet another meaningful step for the Zambian Government in its efforts toward effectively overcoming the challenges arising from healthcare issues such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria and lifestyle-related diseases like high blood pressure, diabetics, or obesity – typical risk factors for COVID19.

It is fair to say that this project is not an immediate response to our urgent challenge of new coronavirus. Rather, it aims to strengthen Zambia's healthcare system itself, enabling, among other things, the Zambian Government to deal with infectious and other common but serious diseases in the long run: Because a pandemic is not something that comes and disappears with the passage of time, or when a vaccine to that has been developed. Just

as it happened with the COVID-19 this time, the outbreak of pandemics takes place with certain intervals. Not only do we have to deal with the current challenges, but also be prepared for the future – for a time when we face the next surge of a new pandemic. With a strengthened healthcare system at large, Zambia will emerge as a more robust and resilient player in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is how Japan sees its role in Zambia’s development and that of Zambia as a model for Africa; namely, we contribute to achieving the nation’s sustainable development in the end, including the health sector and make Zambia a model case.

In addition to this project that we just signed, I am currently discussing with Hon. Minister Dr. Bwalya Ng’andu the possibility of providing medical equipment such as Portable Digital X-ray Machine, Portable Ultra Sound and Hospital tent to better tackle most of the infectious diseases all over Zambia, including Copperbelt Province, which I hope to be announcing soon. These two are the main pillars of Japan’s contribution to the Zambian government in the year 2020, which will certainly assist Zambia in effectively combating infectious diseases and other common but serious challenges in the long run.

Further, it is our sincere hope that Japan’s support for Zambia which will be thus implemented will contribute to Finance Minister Ng’andu’s effort towards achieving debt sustainability as well. Let me take this opportunity to reiterate that I am totally behind Hon. Ng’andu as he pursues his goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

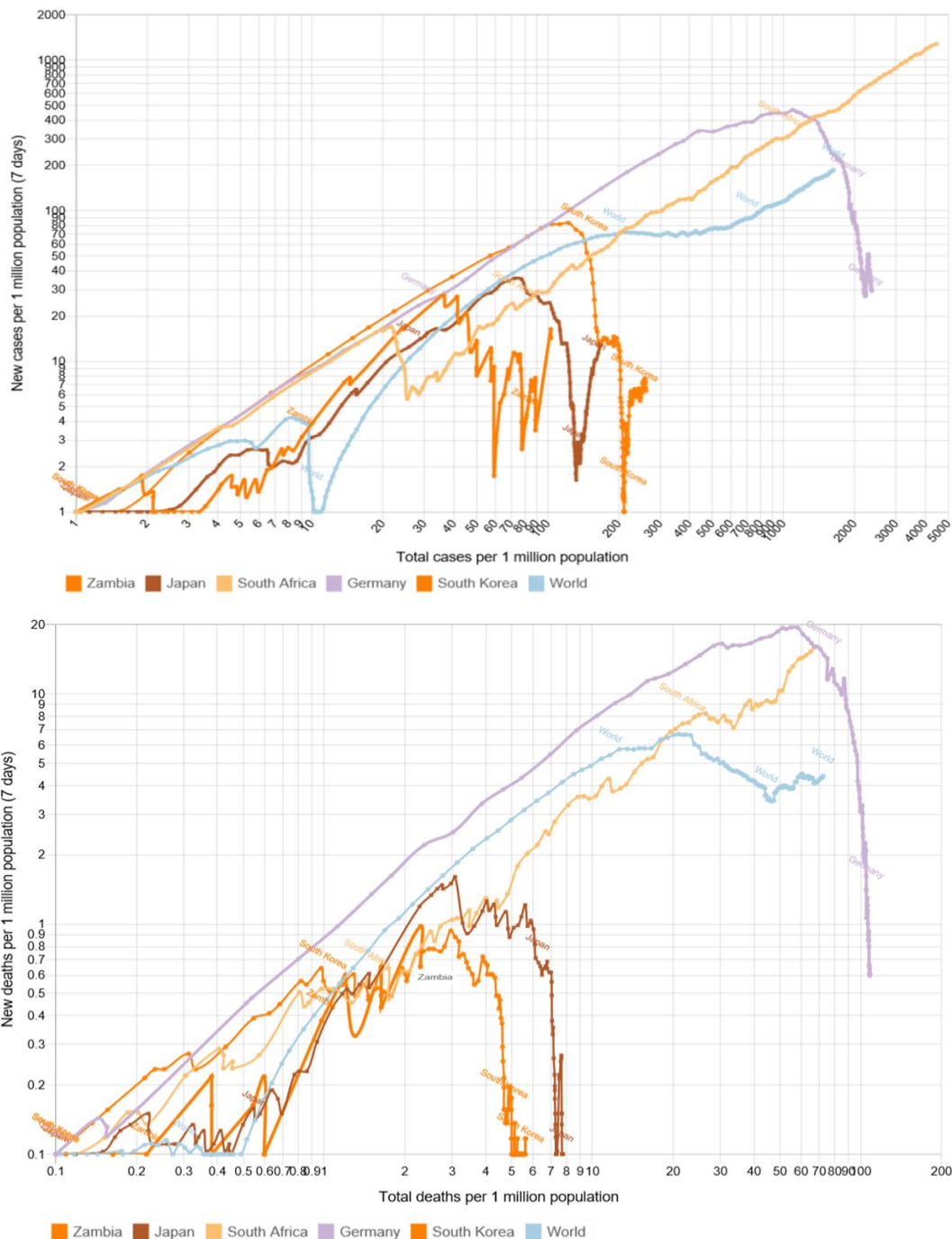
Believe it or not, Japan and Zambia have been remarkably close in our fight against the new coronavirus without coordinating beforehand. Japan has been implementing measures on the basis of what we call “indicator K”. As you all see in the statistic (see chart as attached), development of the numbers of accumulated positive cases and fatality tolls in Zambia and Japan are almost identical, at least until quite recently. Thus, it is very clear that we share some common value in our fight against COVID19, pursuing almost the same goals, namely to target small clusters and eliminate the virus at its source, with a view to protecting the most vulnerable, while ensuring that the economic activities can continue.

However, we in Japan are currently witnessing the second wave of pandemic in Tokyo. The most recent trend of Zambia’s COVID-cases, too, raises concern,

as the COVID19 is “real”. So, let us stick together and strive through this difficult time – and together we will prevail in the end.

With these remarks, I would like now to express my sincere appreciation anew to all those who are involved in this project and wish them good luck and continued health, and this important project a great success. Last but not least, allow me to say, “May the cooperation between Japan and Zambia flourish forever”!

Trajectory analysis of new coronavirus COVID-19 cases and deaths by country (Based on “K value”)



Date source:

https://web.sapmed.ac.jp/canmol/coronavirus/trajectory_e.html?fbclid=IwAR2GF8J5rrUw-7pTMzbBdKPz2wPO2_qU_Zeb-8KzGqR004q8tuSueTkLuol&d=1&t=c