

**Remarks by H.E. MR. MIZUUCHI Ryuta,
Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia
On the Occasion of the Workshop on Grassroots Grant Assistance for
Human Security Projects
Wednesday, 30th September 2020**

Hon. Sydney Mushanga, Province Minister, Central Province,
Mr. Bernard Chomba, Permanent Secretary, Central Province,
All high-ranking officials of the Central Province,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all – the delegation of the Central Province – today at my Residence in Lusaka, for a set of programmes that my staff at the Embassy has organized. First of all, the workshop that we have now is aimed to explain to you what we call “the Grassroots Human Security Project” of the Japanese Government. This scheme has enabled our Embassies around the world to support activities of grassroots organisations seeking to enhance the wellbeing of the local population, including in Zambia. The workshop will be followed by the Handover Ceremony of Sanitary goods for schoolchildren and parents donated by Japanese stakeholders that are active in the Central Province; namely Rosinantes, a Japanese NPO, Hokkaido University (KAMPAI Project) and Trade Car View, a Japanese Used Car Exporting Company.

This initiative goes back to the time when I received messages from Hon. Minister Mushanga in late May. He asked me if Japan could help schoolchildren of the Central Province as the school was about to reopen, albeit partially, by mobilising stakeholders from Japan to provide various sanitary goods for the children so that they are well protected from COVID-19. Thereafter, I visited Kabwe in early June. I had discussions with Minister Mushanga and visited a local school where the School Director and Provincial Education Officers enlightened me on the infrastructure needs at the school.

In the course of discussions, including the one I had with Minister Mushanga one more time, I made the point that I can ask some Japanese organisations that are active in humanitarian activities in Central Province to respond to that call, and some of them did respond. As for the need that goes beyond, the Embassy has a tool and been implementing various projects in many provinces using that tool. This is the scheme that we call “Grassroots Human Security projects” (GGP). However, we have never partnered with the Provincial Administrations before, although theoretically PA’s can be our partners. This thought has brought us all the way to today’s workshop.

At this workshop, our experts will explain to you the possibilities and restraints of this scheme including the budgetary and technical limitations. There are, indeed, conditions and regulations for the application and implementation. After all, much homework must be done for a project proposal to be accepted. Therefore, there will be a lot of challenges. However, if we can bring together ideas and concepts that meet these criteria, then we might be able to come up with a good project proposal – something that may bring Japan and Central Province even closer together while contributing to accommodating the sanitary needs at schools. And this will be the main goal of our endeavour.

Since 1989, we have funded a lot of small-scale projects in Zambia, with a total of 172 projects altogether. Most recently, we funded the District Hospital in Chirundu to procure a digital X-Ray machine to effectively handle TB and other infectious diseases. As Chirundu has been facing COVID19 most intensively due to the cross-border traffic, I am sure it is truly serving both the public in the District and the forefront healthcare workers confronting COVID19.

As for the global fight against COVID-19 pandemic, Japan and Zambia have been very close in their health and economic policy as well as in the management of infection cases and recovery. In Japan’s case, the fact that the masking and hand washing had been the “Old Normal” was one of the decisive factors which explains the relatively low positivity and mortality cases. I was told that the outbreak of Cholera diseases triggered the use of plastic buckets for hand washing in Zambia. Now that COVID gives us

another incentive to top up our health and sanitary behaviour, it would not be a bad idea to maintain the newly established practice of masking and sanitizing as well as social distancing at public spaces. Here I think that Japanese and Zambians are natural partners.

I hope that the solidarity thus emerging will be even deepened as we try to come up with a cooperation project out of this workshop. Further, I hope that we can foster deeper understanding of our mutual systems and lead to a successful preparatory work of the required documents for application. Should a project in Central Province be approved after the careful consideration by our Head Quarter in Tokyo, it will be the first Provincial Administration to implement a grassroots project in Zambia. This will then encourage us to engage in other Provinces for future possible cooperation. In addition, cooperation in the educational sector may induce teachers and students to learn the Japanese language and even study in Japan in the future, which is also of significance.

As I mentioned earlier, I will also hand over a list of sanitary goods in response to the request by Hon. Minister Mushenga. The call by the Minister was met with an extremely positive goodwill which has led to the donation of 600 Hand soaps, 70 Sanitizers, 9 buckets with faucet for hand washing, 9 Thermometers and enlightenment posters from Rocinantes, Japanese NPO, 1000 Masks and educational movie for children from Hokkaido University and 1000 Masks from Trade Car View Corporation, Japanese Used Car Exporting Company.

Following the main event, you will be awarded with the Sake tasting and the lunch session. We hope that you will fully enjoy the Japanese traditional culinary culture. I wish you all a fruitful interaction at the workshop.

Thank you for your attention.