

Statement by H.E. Mr. MIZUUCHI Ryuta, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia at the Handover Ceremony of Japanese Television
Programmes

Tuesday, 30 March 2021

Mr. Amos Malupenga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and
Broadcasting Services,

Mr. Ronald Kombe, Chief Executive Officer, MUVI TV

Mr. Moses Nyama, Director, QTV

Representatives from MUVI TV, QTV and other Media Houses,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to today's handover ceremony regarding 10 Japanese TV programmes to MUVI TV and QTV. As Ambassador of Japan to Zambia, I am excited to have these programmes viewed by Zambians and that, hopefully, they will meet the interest of the viewers including yourselves, your friends, and your family. Before I go further, let me express my sincere gratitude to our Guest of Honour, Permanent Secretary Malupenga of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services for gracing us with his presence today. Personally, I have enjoyed exchanges with Hon. Minister Dora Siliya and discussed how we can enhance relations between our two nations through promotion of media. This handover of Japanese TV programmes is a modest but solid step toward that goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Culture is obviously an attractive tool for diplomacy because it awakens the interest of people toward different countries and contributes to deepening the understanding between them. In other words, it is a source of education and enlightenment. Since Zambians and Japanese seem to share some common values such as affection for art, nature, and sport, I am immensely optimistic that these TV programmes that are handed over will be welcomed and loved by the Zambians.

Another important aspect in cultural exchange is the language. I am positively surprised to learn that many young Zambians are enthusiastic fans of Anime and Manga. Some of them are picking up simple phrases of Japanese by reading or watching these Manga and Anime on the internet; and teaching their parents what these phrases mean. Therefore, I hope that these programmes will reach out to many Zambians, young and old, and encourage them to start learning the Japanese language, as well.

COVID-19 has affected many industries, and TV stations are no exception. Social distancing and travel restrictions, for example, made it difficult even for Japanese TV stations to produce new programmes for broadcasting, and they have, indeed, relied heavily on reruns of past programmes. On the other hand, the call by the Government to “stay-home” and “stay-safe” can be a chance for the TV industry, with people having seen a number of same programmes repeatedly. The appetite of the viewers for good programs has grown considerably, and that must be met by the provision of good ones. If this gap can be filled by these Japanese TV programmes in question, this can be seen as another contribution by Japan to Zambians’ fight against COVID, apart from the healthcare sector, if they can keep the viewers in front of their TV sets at home.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, let me briefly touch upon the background and the content of the programmes to be handed over. First, the provider. The Japan Foundation is Japan's only institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchanges throughout the world. Over the years, the Foundation has provided Japanese TV programmes to many countries around the world. In Zambia, so far, 27 programmes have been provided between 2008 and 2020 by the Foundation. Today, I am elated to hand over 8 programmes to MUVI-TV and 2 programmes to Q-TV respectively, elevating the total number of programmes presented to Zambia to 37. Now, a preview of some of these programmes:

JIN is a drama in which a brain surgeon is hurtled back in time to the Edo period in mid-19th Century. He finds himself having to save human lives

without the luxury of modern medical equipment or medicine. Taking to heart the words, “God only presents you with challenges that you can overcome”, Jin endeavours to make the most of his lot in life, as if convinced that he will “discover something in the past which he has lost in the present”. Awash in a different time and a different world of epic scale and grandeur, Jin finds that history now turns on him.

Tico and Friends is a touching story about a young girl, Nanami, whose mother dies when she is only 3 years old. However, she is not left alone in her navigation through life, striking acquaintances with those who accompany the girl as she voyages through her life; among her friends is Tico, an orca with her son Junior. A worthy lesson about the importance of family and friends, as well as the relationship between humans and nature.

World Pro Wrestling goes without saying....it is full of action! We see exciting fights by different, sometimes eccentric characters, manifesting their personalities through their wrestling techniques, and relationships with their rivals. Intriguing, thrilling and a must-watch if you love action!

Wonderful Science is a four-part educational series, centering on science education. It is ideal for children between 3rd and 6th grades, providing invaluable scientific insight!

If I were to go too far, I would risk violating the copyright of those programmes, so I will stop here and urge you, instead, to watch them yourselves. You may find that the making of Japanese programmes is different from the Zambian, or there are similarities in the way the people perceive. Whatever you think, we are now talking about an encounter of different cultures. Some may call it a collision of civilisation, but some may perceive it as an enrichment for your own.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the cooperation that the two TV stations have rendered the Embassy of Japan thus far and been airing Japanese programmes for Zambian citizens. I cannot but hope

that other TV stations including ZNBC would also be interested to join our effort to bring Japanese and Zambian cultures and people closer together – by broadcasting many other programmes, such as documentaries or historical dramas. One such example, by the way, can be about an African who traveled to Japan 440 years ago and became the “First African Samurai”. With these remarks I now wish the Muvi TV and QTV all the best and success.

Thank you for your attention.