

Check Against Delivery

Statement 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 Aid Scheme "The Economic and Social Development Program" (Provision of Landfill Equipment) on Tuesday 21st April, 2021.

Hon. Dr. Bwalya Ng'andu, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Zambia,
Mr. Emmanuel Pamu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance,
Mr. Mathew Ngulube, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government,
Mr. Handson Kachengela, Acting Town Clerk, Lusaka City Council,
Senior Government Officials present,
Representatives of Media Houses,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is always with great pleasure that I come to the office of the Finance Minister, Hon. Dr. Bwalya Ng'andu, as I already did a couple of times last year. At that time, the purpose of my visit was to officially seal the development cooperation between Japan and the Republic of Zambia concerning two projects in the healthcare sector, namely the upgrading of two Health Centres on the Copperbelt to Level 1 Hospitals and the provision of medical devices to frontline medical institutions nationwide in Zambia. This time, I am here to sign and exchange Notes on another significant cooperation in support of the Lusaka City Council and the Zambian Government in tackling a "serious challenge" for the Capital of Zambia and beyond – namely the solid waste management. For this purpose, Japan has decided to provide landfill equipment within the framework of its "Economic and Social Development Program," another Japanese Government's Grant Assistance Scheme, amounting to 300 million Japanese Yen or approximately 2.76 million US Dollars.

Talking about waste, I have an unforgettable experience when I visited the Lower Zambezi National Park last September. As my wife and I were game driving with a local guide, he stopped the car because he saw a PET bottle obviously abandoned by a tourist. As he slowly stepped out of the vehicle to pick up the empty

bottle, his attention was caught by a big shadow. He turned his eyes toward it and found two lions lying approximately 10 meters away from us by the bush.

If a waste can help trace lions, then it may have some merits, but here in this case the guide must be commended. It was he who did not leave the waste unattended. How is, then, the waste situation in Lusaka? If I am informed correctly, there is still a strong need to catch up. A visit to a dumping site on the outskirts of Lusaka later last year made me wonder how this issue can be tackled smartly.

This is indeed “a serious challenge”, as I described the project at the outset. Although we are now providing landfill equipment, this alone will not solve the problem. Cognizant of the need to tackle the problem in a longer perspective, we are considering something far beyond the current cooperation. A technical assistance project is in the pipeline involving dispatch of experts and receiving trainees from Zambia who are responsible for the waste management. This project titled “The Lusaka Clean City Project” (LCCP) to be implemented by JICA will be launched soon. And this move, altogether, aims to match the efforts by the Zambian side which has put in place “Lusaka Integrated Solid Waste Management Company (LISWMC)”. Hand in hand, Japan and Zambia are now starting to bring about a sustainable solution to this problem affecting the life of Lusaka’s population.

A comprehensive planning of a long-term strategy and a sustainable operation of realistic programmes with relevant legislations on the Zambian side will be necessary. This will be a time-consuming process and require a lot of efforts by all the stakeholders involved, including financing and human resources development. No matter how hard it might be, we hope you will succeed in your endeavour – for your own future and your supreme goal; namely to attain the status of a “prosperous middle-income country by 2030”, as repeatedly underlined by H.E. President Edgar Chagwa Lungu in his statements.

More importantly, the key to the success of this project will rest with the cooperation of the local population, eventually requiring a change of behaviour and way of thinking. As I indicated earlier how I came across lions in Lower Zambezi while game driving, it is after all the human behaviour that affects whether to keep this beautiful country as is blessed by the Mother Earth, or otherwise.

As Japan was preparing for the Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics 2020, the authorities launched a campaign calling on the citizens to bring their old mobile phones to the designated stations, aiming at collecting gold, silver or even rare metals contained in such devices – with great success. Japan is known to be a country

without natural resources. However, we do have what we call the “urban mines” like these. They bring us fortunes equivalent to the Zambian copper mines. Efforts such as this, namely to select waste from home into certain categories such as “resource waste”, “glasses and/or metals” and “other waste”, like in Japan, must also be introduced, as Zambia strives through its paths towards the sustainable development of its economy, being augmented by the “urban mines” of its own.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our decision to support the Zambian Government through this project reflects Japan’s policy, announced at the TICAD7 in August 2019, called the “African Clean Cities Platform” and is in line with GRZ’s 7th NDP, which defines the provision of solid waste management services as a priority. By implementing this project, I hope to see our relationship further enhanced, enabling Zambia to emerge as a strong, self-sustainable country with good quality of life, and to become a model case in the Sub-Saharan region in the sense of “African Clean City”.

In concluding, let me extend my best wishes to the frontline staff during this difficult period facing the “New Normal” as well as in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Let it be reminded that hygiene and good health are two sides of a coin in our quest to attain good quality of life.

Thank you for your attention!