

Check against delivery

Remarks by Mr. OMINATO Satoshi, Chargé d’Affaires Ad Interim of the Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Zambia, on the occasion of the Handover of Health Kits to Health Centers in Zambia on 2nd June 2021

Dr. Kennedy Malama, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health,

Mr. Emmanuel Ngulube, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health

Mr. Kazamu Chipopa, Ag Director General, Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA)

Ag Director General, Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA)

Mr. Dino Bianchi, Representing Missionpharma Zambia

Senior Officials from the Ministry of Health,

Members of the Press,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here with you on the occasion of the handover of Health Center Kits to Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency, which will be distributed to various Health Centers in all over Zambia. The provision of these Health Center Kits was made possible through the Government of Japan’s “Economic and Social Development Program”. Its total budget amounts to 300 million Japanese Yen or approximately 2.75 million US Dollars. This is another significant cooperation by Japan in the healthcare sector within one year, on top of the projects to upgrade Health Centers in Lusaka and Copperbelt and to provide medical devices to frontline hospitals nationwide in Zambia. First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to all those concerned who have worked so hard to make this event come true today, and in particular, to Dr. Kennedy Malama for his leadership as Acting Minister of Health.

Zambia has 2,233 government health facilities dotted across the country, all offering free medical services. Let me share a story from my Ambassador, H.E. Mr. MIZUUCHI Ryuta, who was keen to attend this ceremony, but is currently out of

the country. “I have visited one small health post near Kaoma in the Western Province, donated by a Japanese tobacco producer called JT. It was run by a young lady, shy but motivated. I saw no medical doctor, so I assumed that she was handling most cases all by herself. The building was relatively new, but the equipment such as beds and medical instruments was minimum and not well maintained. Therefore I imagined that a person like this lady does require basic medicine and medical tools in order to give the patients appropriate first aid. Indeed, malaria, TB, pneumonia, HIV-AIDS and other infectious diseases are still common in Zambia, and many people, particularly those in rural areas, need to travel a far distance to access the nearest health center. The Health Center Kits that are handed over today will certainly help those in need and ease the burden of medical workers on the frontline.”

At a time the COVID-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on the healthcare sector and the economy as a whole, the handover of the various medical kit through this program is also of significance. It will strengthen Zambian healthcare system by assisting in fighting various other diseases and ease the financial burden of the Zambian Government as it strives to fight the COVID-19, as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also underline that the producer of the Health Center Kits, Missionpharma, is an affiliate of Japan’s Toyota Tsusho Corporation, a general trading company. Thus, the quality of the Kit and its content can be assured. I hope that the activities of Missionpharma in Zambia will be brought back on track, overcoming the COVID-19 and restoring its full operation.

In a nutshell, Japan remains committed to supporting Zambia in its effort to strengthen its healthcare system. This policy is based on Japan’s pledge at the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) of August 2019 to contribute to Universal Health Coverage all over the world including Zambia. It also aligns with Zambia’s health policy direction stipulated in the 7th National Development Plan (7NDP), as well as the “Zambia National Health Strategic Plan of 2017-2021.” A strengthened healthcare system will subsequently help the country strive the way forward to its goal, namely becoming a prosperous middle-income country as stipulated in Zambia’s Vision 2030.

I sincerely hope that these Health Center Kits will be distributed countrywide without any hindrance, and thereby contribute to the wellness and happiness of a

wide range of the people of Zambia, and ultimately enhancing the labor productivity needed to steer the country's economy to prosperity. I would like to express my appreciation anew to all medical doctors and workers in this country for their tireless services at this time of challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Last but not least, let me wish you all the best and mush success with these Health Center Kits.

I thank you!