

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Mizuuchi  
at the Conferment Ceremony of Japanese Foreign Minister's  
Commendation upon Prof. Michelo Syakalima  
23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**

Mr. Joel Kamoko, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,  
Prof. King Nalubamba, Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine,  
UNZA,  
Prof. Michelo Syakalima, our distinguished Laureate of Japanese Foreign  
Minister's Commendation,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Members of the Press,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all today at my Residence on the occasion of the Conferment of Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation upon Prof. Michelo Syakalima, professor at the UNZA School of Veterinary Medicine and President of the MEXT Scholarship Association of Zambia. At the outset, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to PS Kamoko of the Ministry of Education for accepting my invitation and being here with us as Guest of Honour. I would also like to welcome Mrs. Rose Syakalima most warmly to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Now, may I call upon you all to join me in my congratulations to Prof. Syakalima: Congratulations and Omedeto Gozaimasu!

Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields, in order to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas. Prof. Syakalima received this award already in 2021, together with other 176 individuals and 41 groups from all over the world. The celebration, however, was prevented by COVID-19 pandemic, due partly to considerations on gathering restrictions. I thank Prof. Syakalima for having patiently waited until today and wish to seek his understanding for these circumstances.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Born on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1965 in the Southern Province of the Republic of Zambia, Prof. Syakalima successfully graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine of UNZA with bachelor's degree in 1989. After completing his master's course at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, he applied for the scholarship sponsored by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology and Sport (MEXT) with success. Followingly, he studied at the post-graduate course of Veterinary Medicine at Hokkaido University from 1993 to 1996 and received the PhD in 1998. While continuing his academic career at UNZA, Prof. Syakalima established the MEXT Scholarship Association of Zambia in 2005 and has been in service for the Association as its President. Thus, he has been continuously supporting the robust network of former MEXT scholars and contributing to promoting academic exchanges and friendly relations between Japan and Zambia ever since.

Now, I can assure you that establishing and maintaining the alumni organisation of MEXT scholars is far from easy. In countries where I used to serve as a Japanese diplomat, I have never heard of the existence of such a strong network of ex-MEXT scholarship students. Zambia, in this regard, is a remarkable, unique exception. On top of that, the Association of MEXT Scholarship works as the platform of all MEXT Scholarship students, old and new, for mutual support and exchanges among the members. It also invites Japanese residents in Zambia to a "culture day", where Zambians and Japanese enjoy traditional Japanese food and speak Japanese. The Association has also been actively accepting Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) for homestays when they arrive and giving them guidance on the local culture of Zambia before they are dispatched to their places of service in the provinces. Further, the alumni have been helping Dr. Sande Ngalande of the UNZA Japanese language course teaching the Japanese language. All these achievements led to the recognition by the Japanese Foreign Minister for the conferment of his Commendation upon Prof. Syakalima.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the list of invited guests for today's celebration, which happens to almost coincide with the list of the Association members, I am pleased to note that those who have studied in Japan through MEXT Scholarship are in possession of various important positions not only in academia, but also in administration and business in Zambia and having been playing very important roles. To name a few, Dr. Benson Mwenya, Former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Prof. Paul Chisale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Copperbelt University or Dr. Simon Tembo, ex-Zamtel CEO. And with all the members being connoisseurs of Japanese culture, tradition and everything concerning Japan, the Association is the stronghold of supporters for Japan by nature. We would be, therefore, very much interested to deepen relations with the Association, starting from the annual general meeting of alumni like today, or other cultural events such as "Japan Day" which our Embassy is steadily organising every year. Whenever we see the need to promote Japan in Zambia or reach out to the Zambian public, we would very much like to work together with the Association. I take this opportunity to call upon you, distinguished guests and friends of Japan, to work with us and hope that we can count on your support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Coming back to the celebration of Prof. Syakalima, let me express my hope that Prof. Syakalima will continue to work actively and successfully in his capacity as Professor at UNZA School of Veterinary Medicine and that he will promote the MEXT Scholarship Association in Zambia even further. Let me also express my hope that through our intensive collaborations of all of us here, we will further contribute to deepening the understanding between our two countries and peoples. May you, Prof. Michelo Syakalima, remain a true friend of Japan for long. Once again, congratulations to you, and to the friendship between Japan and Zambia.

Thank you for your attention!