

Handover Ceremony of Five Staff Houses and One Police Post in Meheba Resettlement Scheme through Program on “Promoting Human Security through Sustainable Resettlement in Zambia”

Wednesday, 23rd March 2022

Remarks by Mr. OMINATO Satoshi, Deputy Chief of Mission,
the Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Zambia

Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Embassy of Japan to attend the handover ceremony of five staff houses and one police post in Meheba Resettlement Scheme.

First and foremost, I wish to thank Permanent Secretary Retd. Col. Grandson Katambi, the Department of Resettlement and UNDP for arranging the handover ceremony. For nearly three years, the officers of the Embassy of Japan including the Ambassador didn't have any opportunity to visit Meheba Resettlement Scheme. It is for this reason that the significance of my presence today goes beyond attending this ceremony. The visit to Meheba Resettlement Scheme will help us better understand the situation on the ground and contribute to the formulation of our assistance programme in the future that will best reflect the actual needs of refugees and former refugees.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us commend the Government of Zambia in its efforts to accept refugees and integrate them into Zambian society. I recognize that Zambia started to host refugees mainly from its neighboring countries in the 1950s. To my surprise, it was even before its independence. My understanding of the standard practice of refugee support is to protect those who have been displaced from home and they are expected to return to their homeland once

the cause of the displacement has ceased to exist. Nevertheless, Zambia's effort is unique in that it has not only provided the refugees with temporary shelters, but also new homes – opportunities to settle and start a new life in Zambia. For those who have reasons not wanting to go back to their countries of origin, this is certainly a welcoming gesture. For this reason, Zambia's effort in hosting refugees and former refugees is highly commendable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Impressed with Zambia's respectable gesture, Japan has been engaging in refugees and former refugees support with the Zambian Government and international organisations for more than fifteen years. Japan's engagement can be classified into three categories: (1) financial support to international organisations, (2) technical cooperation through JICA and (3) financial support to non-governmental organisations under the scheme called "Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects."

The staff houses and the police station that we have handed over today are the fruit of our contributions through UNDP, some of which went through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. The staff houses are expected to play a principle role in providing former refugees with improved social services such as health and education and enhancing staff engagement, which will further facilitate the community activities. As for the police station, we believe that it will serve the public safety and enhance the quality of life in the community. I hope these facilities are effectively used to improve the access to basic needs in the resettlement scheme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Zambia's policy for refugees and former refugees have served the regional stability. I strongly believe peace is one of the indispensable aspects of its economic growth as President H.E. Mr. Hakainde Hichilema mentioned in his statement at the AU Summit last month. He stated, "For our continent to achieve its objectives of economic growth, poverty reduction and improving the lives of all our people, we must be firmly committed to continental peace, security and stability." I regard Zambian gesture toward

refugees and former refugees as evidence of its commitment. Japan will continue to support the efforts of the Zambian Government, through international organisations, JICA and NGOs, not only from a humanitarian viewpoint, but also to help achieve the goals President Hichilema mentioned.

Thank you for your attention.