

Remarks by Mr. OMINATO Satoshi, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim at the
Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Zambia, on the Occasion of the
Launch Ceremony of the Voice and Accountability Project
29th April 2022

Hon. Douglas Siakalima, Minister of Education,
Ms. Noriana Muneku, Permanent Secretary (administration), Ministry of
Education,
Mr. Sahr Kpundeh, Country Manager, World Bank,
Ms. Faides TembaTemba, Executive Director, Civil Society for Poverty
Reduction (CSPR),
Senior Officials from the Government of the Republic of Zambia,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here on behalf of the Embassy of Japan for the Launch Ceremony of the project titled “Voice and Accountability: Community Empowerment for Improved Local Service Delivery.” The Government of Japan is providing funding for this project through the World Bank under the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). The objective of JSDF, established by Japan in 2000 and administered by the World Bank, is to provide grants in support of community-driven development and poverty reduction projects that empower the poorest and most vulnerable groups not reached by other programs and improve their lives through direct benefits. With the financial support from that Fund which amounts to \$3 million US dollars (ZMW 54 million) including that for the project management by the World Bank, the CSPR in partnership with the World Bank is implementing this project to strengthen community awareness and participation with school management, as well as accountable primary and secondary education services by local authorities. This project is currently underway in nine districts in Eastern and Western Provinces.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To date, Japan has been providing various assistance in the education sector in Zambia. For instance, in 1999, eight primary and secondary schools in Lusaka, were built through Japanese grant aid. In addition, Japan believes that creating a learning environment with a special focus on STEM disciplines, namely science, technology, engineering and mathematics, together with the development of human resources capable of utilising this learning for industry, is an essential element for Zambia to accelerate its socioeconomic development. With this in mind, a STEM training centre was established with Japan's cooperation and it became operational in 2020. Also, we have dispatched experts to the Ministry of Education, provided training to teachers and improved curriculum and textbooks, particularly in science and mathematics. This cooperation in the field of teacher education has been lasting for almost 15 years, and we hope to continue contributing to the betterment of basic education in Zambia in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is important to highlight that the "Voice and Accountability Project," which is being launched today, aims to raise awareness of the importance of education among the communities, as well as engagement and participation of the communities in the delivery of education services through a range of training and capacity-building activities. In Japan, from the post-war period to the present day, there is a long history of parent-led initiatives to form a robust education system through the establishment and management of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), as well as the promotion of community involvement in various school events, in sound collaboration with the education sector. From these experiences, we are convinced that this project, which strongly focuses on community empowerment, will indeed contribute to enhancing the basis of Zambia's education system.

Last but not least, I sincerely wish this project and everyone involved a successful future. Furthermore, through the implementation of this project, it is my hope that young people in Zambia will develop a greater interest in Japan and become bridges between the two countries in the future.

Thank you for your attention.