

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Mizuuchi
at the Conferment Ceremony of Decoration
to H.E. Mrs. Ndiyoi M. Mutiti on 28th June 2022**

Madam Isabelle Lemba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,

Mr. Joseph Akafumba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security,

H.E. Amb. Godfrey Simasiku, Former Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia to Japan,

H.E. Ambassador Ndiyoi Mutiti, our distinguished Laureate of the Japanese Order today,

Family and friends of H.E. Mrs. Mutiti,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to host the Conferment Ceremony of Decoration for H.E. Mrs. Ndiyoi Muliwana Mutiti, who received the “Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star” of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan and authorized by the Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Mr. KISHIDA Fumio. First, I wish to express my warm welcome and gratitude to you all for gathering today. Now, let me extend to you, Ambassador Mutiti, my heartfelt congratulations to you on this special occasion.

Twice a year, the Government of Japan confers decorations to individuals who stand out in their contributions and achievements in various fields, and H.E. Ambassador Mutiti, who served as Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia to Japan from August 2015 to November 2020, was awarded the afore-mentioned order for her service to promote and strengthen bilateral relations and friendship between Japan and Zambia. The announcement was made already in November 2021, but we had to wait for the actual conferment ceremony till today because the certificate, with a stamp of His

Majesty the Emperor and signed by the Prime Minister, and the decoration could not reach us during the COVID-19 pandemic. You may wonder why... Well, these items are so precious and important that they can only be delivered by a diplomatic courier – a person to carry most important diplomatic correspondence. And this was reopened only a couple of months ago.

Therefore, I thank Ambassador Mutiti for having waited so long. In retrospect, however, the timing looks perfect. Just in two months' time, on 27-28 August, we will have the TICAD8 in Tunisia. And among many achievements of Ambassador Mutiti was that which came out of her role as “Chairperson of the Trade and Investment Committee of African Diplomatic Corps” for the last TICAD7 held in Yokohama in 2019.

To this effect, let me elaborate a little more.

In a nutshell, and if I can rely on the information available to me, her achievements that have led to her decoration can be summarized as follows:

- 1) women empowerment in foreign policy
- 2) promotion of trade and business exchanges and
- 3) promotion of academic, sports and community exchanges.

As for the first point, Ambassador herself was the embodiment of women empowerment. With her physical appearance and active engagement, she was one of the most visible Ambassadors at the time of her service in Japan. No wonder, she was selected as one of 22 female Ambassadors out of 160 Missions in Japan on the occasion of “the 23rd International Conference for Women in Business” held in 2018 in Tokyo and presented her views – very much in support of Prime Minister Abe’s policy of “womenomics”. Further, she was a regular participant at the annual “World Assembly for Women”, known as “WAW!” Earlier at the 2016 WAW, she reported with her video

message on young girls and women in Zambia, including such problems as child marriage and lack of access to education, thus appealing for global support for advancing women's status.

As I mentioned before, promoting trade and business exchanges between our two countries has always been Ambassador Mutiti's key interest. Prior to the TICAD7 held in 2019, She actively called for Japanese investment on such occasions as African Development Bank's pre-TICAD7 seminar in 2018 or other various business seminars.

I think I heard her say that she visited almost all the Japanese prefectures – even more than I have been to. One such a place where she was, and I never have been to, is the summit of Mt. Fuji. So active as she was, she went to a small town called Marumori in northern Japan. It was thanks to her lobbying that this town volunteered to become the host town for Zambian Olympic contingents. When the town suffered a heavy flooding from a typhoon in 2019, Ambassador visited the town with funds raised to support the town's recovery. Although the athletes were not able to visit the town due to the strict COVID restrictions, the mayor and other officers of Marumori-town visited the near-by Sendai Stadium and cheered for Copper Queens' football match.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Returning home to become an Election Commissioner for the Presidential and General elections of August last year meant a great loss for the Japan-Zambia relations. However, thanks to her presence at the ECZ, it was easier for me to access the distinguished Commissioners of ECZ. She and other Commissioners enlightened me considerably concerning the preparations for the elections and the challenges thereof. ECZ at that time was highly sensitive to voices raised by Western countries, but I could easily argue that

the Japanese elections have always been monitored by Ambassador Mutiti and that Japan and Zambia stand on a completely equal footing. What came out of it was the manifestation of Zambia representing the true democratic values that are shared by both of our nations, which I appreciate very much.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I confer the “Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star” on Ambassador Mutiti, let me express my hope that our friendly relations between Japan and Zambia will be further strengthened and flourish, building on the achievements by her and all our predecessors. I would like to call upon you all who are gathered here to make your own contributions in this regard. I am sure that I can count on Ambassador Mutiti with her vast knowledge, experience and expertise on Japan. Nevertheless, allow me to call on you, Ambassador Mutiti, and say, “may you remain a true friend of Japan for long”. With these remarks I wish to reiterate my congratulations to Ambassador Mutiti for this honour.

“Omedetou-Gosaimasu”.

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