

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. TAKEUCHI KAZUYUKI, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO ZAMBIA AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTER OF
CREDENTIALS TO H.E. MADAM CHILESHE MPUNDU KAPWEPWE,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF COMESA, IN HIS CAPACITY AS SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO COMESA**

28 FEBRUARY 2023

Your Excellency, Madam Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, Secretary General of COMESA,

It is a great honour and pleasure to stand here to present the letter of my credentials to Your Excellency, in my capacity as Special Representative of Japan to COMESA.

I was excited, and I am still excited to have the opportunity to serve in Zambia as my first posting to Africa. Zambia is one of the leading countries in Africa in terms of democracy proved by smooth transition of power through the general elections in 2021, and of course, in terms of peace Zambia has maintained since its independence. In this regard, I would like to say that the COMESA Secretariat is in the right place, here in Zambia as peace is a prerequisite for economic development and democracy is the foundation of political stability. COMESA was established "as an organisation of free independent sovereign states which have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people" with its main focus on "economic prosperity through regional integration." Having its secretariat in this country, COMESA can fully play its role. This applies, for instance, to creating a wider, harmonised and more competitive market among the member states. As the Special Representative of Japan to COMESA, I promise to engage more closely with the COMESA Secretariat and the member states with a view to contributing to the goals of the Organisation by further deepening and strengthening cooperation between Japan and COMESA.

Your Excellency,

Please allow me to mention one example of Japan's contribution to regional development. The Kazungula Bridge in Southern Province was designed by Japan, and we are currently supporting its One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) by providing equipment and sharing expertise with expectations for enhancing efficient movement of goods and people. The bridge started its operation in 2021, and there already exist demands for efficiency in processing cross-border procedures. These needs must definitely be taken care of. Since cross-border mobility of goods and services contributes to expanding economic activities, the borders must remain effective to secure such mobility and also to prevent terrorists and criminals from moving around freely.

The COMESA region has made a number of achievements, and among others, has expanded its intra-trade through the establishment of a free trade area. I believe the region has plenty of room for growth. I am particularly impressed with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which has expanded Japan's export destinations in Africa. I have one mission to embark on. The multi-layered structure of various regional institutions, such as COMESA, SADC, EAC, and ECOWAS, whose membership overlaps in some, but not all cases, is somewhat complicated. This often causes confusion among potential investors in Japan. I am looking forward to working with you and the COMESA Secretariat on this as the Special Representative of Japan.

Your Excellency,

With these few remarks, I have the honour to present to Your Excellency the letter of credentials as Special Representative of Japan to COMESA.