Remarks by H.E. Mr. TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia, at the Ceremony of Exchange of Notes on Japan’s Grant Aid “The Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in Copperbelt Province”

Thursday, 16 March 2023

Hon. Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane, Minister of Finance and National Planning,

Permanent Secretaries and Senior Government Officials Present,

Representatives from Media Houses,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to sign and exchange of notes with Finance Minister, Hon. Dr. Musokotwane, That inaugurates significant cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Zambia in the health sector, amid our joint endeavor to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. It is called “The Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in Copperbelt Province”, amounting up to 4.534 billion Japanese yen or almost 42 million US dollars.

This project will be provided with additional funding to improve health centres in the Copperbelt Province. The project was originally planned with the budget of 2.654 billion Japanese yen, and with the signing of the Notes today, we will provide an additional grant of 1.88 billion yen, making the total amount of the grant 4.534 billion Japanese yen. We have been cooperating in the health sector for many years in Zambia, and as a result, many more citizens of such places as Lusaka have improved access to high-level medical services. Once this project is completed, citizens of Ndola and Kitwe Districts will directly benefit from the improvements of medical facilities. The fundamental improvement of health services in densely populated areas such as these two districts is yet another significant initiative by the Zambian Government to effectively overcome the challenges arising from medical problems such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and lifestyle-related diseases like hypertension.

The project aims to strengthen the Zambian health system itself, and in particular to enable the Zambian Government to deal with infectious diseases and other common but serious illnesses in the long term. Pandemics , such as the current COVID-19, occur at regular intervals. As we deal with current challenges, we must prepare for the future when we face the surge of a new pandemic. Japan expects that Zambia, with a wholly strengthened health system, will emerge as a stronger and more resilient player in sub-Saharan Africa and demonstrate its success stories. This is how Japan sees its own role in Zambia's development and Zambia's role as a model for Africa in the course of achieving sustainable development in the health sector of the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Japanese Government has been providing grant aids to multiple sectors in Zambia. Aside from this project of upgrading Health Centres, we implemented several technical cooperation projects in Copperbelt Province in various fields in close collaboration with JICA. From 2011 to 2013, through the grant aid project titled “The Project for the Improvement of Water Supply Condition in Ndola City”, amounting to 2.116 billion Japanese Yen or approximately 19.42 million US dollars, Japan renovated the water supply facilities in Ndola District and constructed public faucets for the areas where substantial number of low-income people live. The project contributed to the amelioration of the accessibility to the safe water and reduction of mortality due to water-borne diseases in the District. It is also noteworthy that Japan funded 2.692 billion yen or approximately 24.7 million US dollars in 2009 to the Zambian Government through “The Project for Improvement of Ndola and Kitwe City Roads”, in order to assist the government to improve the total of 24 kilometers of roads, detailed design for sidewalks and drainage, and relevant construction management. This project successfully revitalized the economy of Copperbelt Province by way of capacity upgrade on goods and passenger transportation.

Health-related projects include the Lusaka District Hospital Development Plan, Phase 1 of which began in 2013, and Phase 2 in 2017. With this project that was completed last year, we built 5 district hospitals in Lusaka with a total cost of 5.8 billion yen or about 51 million US dollars.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation anew to all those who are involved in this project and wish them good luck and continued health, and this important project a great success. And also, please allow me to say, May the cooperation between Japan and Zambia flourish forever!

Thank you for your attention.