

Remarks by H.E. Mr. MIZUUCHI Ryuta, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia on the Occasion of Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects on 14th November 2022

Dr. Brilliant Habeenzu, Permanent Secretary, representing Minister, Hon. Felix Mutati, Minister of Technology and Science,
Mr. Robert Kamalata, Permanent Secretary, representing Hon. Sheal Mulyata, Minister of Lusaka Province,
Ms. Bridget Moya, Director of Child Development, representing Hon. Doreen Mwamba, Minister of Community Development and Social Services,
Prof. Lackson Kasonka, Permanent Secretary, representing Hon. Sylvia T. Masebo, Minister of Health,
Sr. Nirmala Savarumuthu, Mission Superior of Congregation of the Immaculate Conception Sisters,
Senior officials,
Representatives from the Media Houses,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to my residence on the occasion of the Signing Ceremony of the Grant Contract of a project within the framework of “Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects” by the Government of Japan. Today, it is the project titled “The Project for Construction of Amala Vocational School for Vulnerable Orphans and Disabled Children” with a total budget amounting to 96,000 US dollars. At the outset, I wish to express my special appreciation to Hon. Doreen Mwamba, Minister of Community Development and Social Services for accepting the role of Guest of Honour. Unfortunately, important Government duties have prevented her from attending this ceremony in person, but she has sent her official, Ms. Bridget Moya, Director of Child Development, on her behalf. I also thank Hon. Ministers Felix Mutati, Minister of Technology and Science, Hon. Sylvia T. Masebo, Minister of Health, and Hon. Sheal Mulyata, Minister of Lusaka

Province, for their positive response to my invitation but were likewise prevented from attending due to other commitments. My special thanks go to Dr. Brilliant Habeenzu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Technology and Science, Mr. Robert Kamalata, Permanent Secretary, Lusaka Province and Prof. Lackson Kasonka, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, representing their Ministers most warmly. With today's signing, the project will be officially sealed and launched to be implemented.

Our signing partner, "Congregation of the Immaculate Conception Sisters" has been engaged in philanthropic activities in Zambia since 1994, mainly in the fields of education, medical care and social development. Our support is responding to the organization's request to construct a vocational school for vulnerable orphans and disabled children. As far as I know, this is the first case since I came to Zambia in which we were requested to help construct a vocational school exclusively for vulnerable orphans and disabled children.

Any society, be it Japan or Zambia, must strive to be inclusive so as to embrace those with handicaps or disabilities who desire to be part of society and willing to make their contributions. The uniqueness of this project lies in the fact that in addition to vocational training relevant to labour market needs and jobs suited to their skills, education possibilities are also offered. This will make it easier for the children not only to acquire skills for their daily livelihood but also to think ahead and make their living in the longer term, if, for example, someday they wish to run their own businesses.

All in all, this project is expected to serve as a stepping-stone for the children to access a wider work environment. It will also contribute to better chances of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and social isolation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hon. Doreen Mwamba, Minister of Community Development and Social Services, stated the following at the 15th session of the

conference of the state parties to the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (COSP15) in New York, in June this year:

“With support from partners, the Government has embarked on the process of training disability focal point persons in community based inclusive development to ensure the effective mainstreaming of disability in action plans and programming”.

This statement is very true – and important for the Government, communities and other stakeholders to closely work together if Zambia aims to realize Government’s goal of increasing the rate of employment of people with disabilities to 10% at every workplace. I hope that our assistance will enable the recipient organization, “Congregation of the Immaculate Conception Sisters”, to work more vigorously towards that goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this context, I wish to tell you a story of a disabled boy in Japan in the 19th century. His name is NOGUCHI Hideyo.

He was born on 9th November 1876 to a poor farmer family in Fukushima, Northern Japan. The climate is very severe with the winter having the snow reaching more than 1 meter. The only heat the family could get was from a hearth of firewood on the ground.

At the age of one, the boy fell on it and had his left hand severely burnt. He could no longer open and close his fingers.

Despite this handicap, the schoolmaster of the elementary school recognized his talent and encouraged him to go to the higher education. The boy was also supported by the community and a number of patrons with fund raising. Later, he had his hand operated on by a surgeon with success. Finally, he was able to move his left hand again. This inspired Noguchi to pursue medical studies. The surgeon became the mentor of Noguchi for the rest of his life.

At the age of 24, he got a chance to travel to USA and work at the newly established Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. There, he established himself as a competent bacteriologist. After completing several academic works that led him to become a candidate for the Nobel Prize in medicine, he decided to dedicate his life to the research of Yellow Fever in Accra, Ghana. Unfortunately, he was infected with the virus and succumbed to the disease.

But his name and his spirit, and his dedication to Africa, will be remembered eternally as the Governments of Japan and Ghana jointly established the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) at the University of Ghana in 1979.

The portrait of Noguchi can also be seen on the Japanese 1,000 yen banknote.

The success story of Dr. Noguchi is applicable to Zambia, as well, isn't it? So will the Amala Vocational School be the platform for such an auspicious development in the future, won't it? And the community, the Government and the other stakeholders – they will all come on board, won't they?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the vocational school is supported by Japanese Grass Roots Project scheme, my personal hope is that as many sons and daughters as possible from Amala Vocational School for Vulnerable Orphans and Disabled Children will be able to find their way of living and a place in society where they can further develop their possibilities. At the end of the day, Zambia will definitely value the contribution by these children and will cherish sustainable economic growth with inclusiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With these remarks I now wish the project every success and all of you present here all the best. Last but not least, let me express my hope that the Japan-Zambian cooperation, will continue to flourish in the decades to come.

Thank you for your attention.