



## **Embassy of Japan**

**(Check against delivery)**

**Remarks of H.E. Mr. TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki,  
Ambassador of Japan to Zambia  
at the National Day Reception of Japan  
to Celebrate the 64th Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan  
(6th March 2024)**

Our Guest of Honour, Honourable Mike Elton Mposha, the Minister of Water Development and Sanitation,  
Honourables and Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To start with, I would like to express my condolences to the victims of the recent cholera outbreak, and also my respect to the effort of the Government of Zambia to contain it. Please allow me as well to refer to the declaration of a state of emergency due to drought announced by President Hichilema at the end of February. I hope the situation comes under control in due course.

This year of 2024 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Zambia, and what is important is this anniversary coincides with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence for this great country of Zambia.

The intimate friendship between Zambia and Japan started on October 24 of 1964, the very day when Zambia declared its independence. It was the day of the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Olympic Games. The Zambian athletes, who participated the Games as Team Northern Rhodesia, marched in the Tokyo Olympic Stadium with a new placard with the name “Zambia” and a brand-new Zambian national flag. Japanese audience welcomed the new country with thunderous applause.

The friendly and mutually beneficial relations between the two countries have expanded and been enhanced since then, and with this anniversary it must be taken to a higher stage.

To this end, a Joint Executive Committee has been established with Zambian stakeholders in Japan-Zambia relations including the Embassy of Zambia in Tokyo. Distinguished Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs plays a role of Co-Chair with me, and is combining her effort with mine to make this milestone year a great success through cooperation between Zambia and Japan.

Since its inauguration, the New Dawn government led by President Hichilema has upheld the universal values of freedom and democracy, and undertaken reforms on many fronts. I don't think that the path has been the easiest one, with difficulties such as tackling the debt problem or economic reforms, fight against corruption and improving social infrastructure. Nevertheless, step by step the New Dawn Government has advanced with important results for the country's future, such as free education and the Access to Information Act. We hope further reform efforts are still to come towards the free, democratic and prosperous society that the people of Zambia desire.

The Government also emphasises the importance to Zambia of global peace and stability, the rule of law and multilateral cooperation, all of which are shared values among Zambia, Japan and the entire international community. Zambia and Japan will work together to tackle a number of global challenges. We hope that this beautiful country, known as the 'Beacon of Peace', will shine not only on Africa but also on the whole world.

In the area of development cooperation, the Government of Japan this year implemented cooperation projects mainly in the areas of education, including the STEM education, and health. In an effort to fight against the cholera outbreak, Japan has provided a large number of emergency relief supplies, including medical and hygiene equipment, as well as technical assistance for surveillance. What is important is that most of these assistances for cholera situation are not the new and ad-hoc ones, but are based upon existing long-term development assistance. I am so happy and proud that our friendship really mattered.

Last year, we witnessed growing interest in Japan in economic and business situation in Zambia. For the first time ever, the Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry visited the country, with 11 mining-related private companies. Relations between the two countries in the mining sector were deepened through the signing of a Joint Statement of Cooperation in the Mining Sector, the signing of a MOU with JOGMEC on mineral exploration and holding the Japan-Zambia Mining Investment Roundtable. In addition, 2 MP teams visited Zambia to enhance cooperation between the two countries. I, as Ambassador of Japan, make every effort in keeping this tide alive or even making it higher.

The momentum of the 60th anniversary is so important in laying a foundation for next ten, twenty or sixty years to come, the start of which is marked by TICAD 9 in 2025 as well as

the World Expo in Osaka Japan.

This year, we also wish to strengthen cultural exchanges. To our greatest pleasure, long-awaited JICA volunteers have started coming back in various fields, including Japanese language teaching and music education. While the first-ever Japanese Language Contest and the Film Festival have been held this year already, the traditional Japanese doll exhibition, a music event featuring Japanese drum performance and others are to come. Judo, Karate and pop culture promotion will also play important parts. Furthermore, we put importance in working with young people, one of the keys for our future friendship. To this end, I refer to the first time ever participation of Zambian young people in the “Ship for World Youth” programme of the Government of Japan. Zambian youth received a leadership training with their fellow colleagues from other countries, in a ship cruising around Japan. I am happy to add that this marked the kick-off of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

None of my ambition for this milestone year will be realised without the cooperation of all of you gathered here today. Today, as part of our cultural exchange for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we have prepared Japanese sake and cuisine, sushi and tempura. We hope you will enjoy Japanese food and have a friendly exchange with us.

Thank you.

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