

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia,
On the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Upgrading of
Health Centres to District Hospitals in the Copperbelt Province
Thursday, 22nd August 2024**

Your Excellency Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia,

Hon. Elijah Muchima, Minister of Health,

Hon. Elisha Matambo, Provincial Minister, Copperbelt Province,

Senior Government Officials present,

Her Worship Madam Mpsa Mwaya, Mayor of Kitwe,

Mr. Lawrence Mwanza, Kitwe District Commissioner,

The Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour that I am here with you all today at the handover ceremony of the Chamboli District Hospital, constructed by Japan's Grant Aid through "the Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in the Copperbelt Province." I would like to express my deepest gratitude to His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema for attending this important ceremony despite his busy schedule. It is a profound privilege to have the opportunity to address you on the occasion of the official opening of the Chamboli District Hospital.

On 1st February 2023, during the presentation of my credentials at State House, I expressed my commitment to further strengthen the friendship between our two countries and to contribute to the development of our bilateral relations. Today, I am truly delighted to celebrate the opening of this hospital with the people of Zambia.

Your Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between

Japan and Zambia. Over these six decades, our two countries have built a profound cooperative relationship across many fields, including the health care sector. In particular, since 2013, Japan has provided approximately 43 million US dollars of grant through the "the Project for Upgrading Lusaka Health Centres to District Hospitals" to enhance five health centres in Lusaka City—namely, Chipata, Matero, Kanyama, Chawama, and Chilenje—into Level 1 hospitals, significantly improving the quality of medical services and access for Lusaka citizens.

In Zambia, health indicators such as child mortality rates, maternal mortality rates, and HIV infection rates still remain high, necessitating further efforts to achieve the targets outlined in "Vision 2030" and the "National Health Strategic Plan." In particular, the strengthening of health centres providing basic health services in the Copperbelt Province is an urgent task. In these areas, there is a shortage of Level 1 hospitals capable of providing advanced health services, including Caesarean sections and basic surgeries, failing to meet the local needs adequately.

Moreover, the rapid population growth due to the expansion of the copper industry has exacerbated the shortage of Level 1 hospitals in the province, placing an excessive burden on Level 3 hospitals that should provide more advanced care, resulting in these hospitals being unable to fulfil their primary roles and also getting congested.

Against this backdrop, Japan's "Project for Upgrading Health Centres to District Hospitals in the Copperbelt Province" provides a total of approximately 32 million US dollars to upgrade the Chamboli and Mushili Health Centres in Ndola and Kitwe, Zambia's second-largest metropolitan areas, to Level 1 hospitals. This project will enable the provision of the much-needed advanced medical services, significantly strengthening the local health care services and greatly improving access to health services for the regional population. It aims to realise the goal of "access to quality health services" outlined in Zambia's "8th National Development Plan" and to promote Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and strengthen health care systems as declared at the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) held in August 2022.

Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's handover ceremony marks a significant milestone in the opening of the Chamboli District Hospital and is of great importance to the local community. It is my sincere hope that this new medical facility will allow local residents to receive better medical services and contribute to improved health and well-being. I would like to seek continued support from the Zambian government to ensure that this facility is fully utilised for the benefit of the community. The handover of this new medical facility in this 60th year of our diplomatic ties represents our commitment to further development.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt sympathies for the drought-related challenges currently Zambia is facing. The drought has had a significant impact on agriculture and food supplies, and this impact extends to the health sector as well. In response, the Japanese government decided on 15th August, to provide emergency food aid through grant aid of 2 million US dollars to alleviate the effects of the drought. We hope this will contribute to mitigating the health impacts caused by the drought.

Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan remains committed to further strengthening its cooperation with Zambia, particularly in the field of health care, and to ensuring that our support contributes to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage in Zambia. I am confident that our partnership will deepen further and contribute to Zambia's sustainable development and the well-being of its people.

In closing, I wish to express my sincere gratitude once again to His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema and hope that the benefits of this project will endure for many years to come. I trust that the bonds between Japan and Zambia will continue to strengthen and that our two countries will

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progress together.

Thank you.

(End)