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**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki at the Kick-Off Symposium
of the SATREPS Project “Risk-based Participatory WASH Planning and Citizen-
data WASH Statistics for African Peri-urban Settlements (SPLASH Project)”**

Tuesday, 24th September 2024

Dr. Brilliant Habeenzu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Technology and Science,
Eng. Romas Kamanga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water Development and
Sanitation,
Prof. Trywell Kalusopa, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Zambia,
Mr. Victor Kagoli, Director - Public Health, Lusaka City Council,

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here with you today on the occasion of the Kick-Off Symposium of the "SPLASH Project", a project under the SATREPS initiative.

Before anything, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Zambia, the University of Zambia, Kyoto University and all other stakeholders who have contributed to the realisation of this project.

I had the privilege of attending the signing ceremony of the Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA) between the University of Zambia and Kyoto University in November last year. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my keen interest in the SPLASH Project and express my strong expectations for its significant contribution to improving sanitation in Zambia.

At the end of last year, Zambia experienced a severe cholera outbreak, with over 20,000 infections and more than 700 deaths. My heart goes out to all those affected. In response, the Government of Japan provided emergency relief supplies, technical support for infection control, and assistance in operating the Cholera Treatment Centre (CTC) at the Heroes Stadium. We were honoured to receive words of appreciation from His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia. It gives us great satisfaction to know that Japan's support has helped Zambia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The improvement of water and sanitation infrastructure is a key priority in Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan and is one of Japan's focal areas of cooperation.

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Currently, only 65% of Zambia's population has access to safe drinking water, while only 32% has access to basic sanitation services. This challenge is especially acute in the urban peripheries of Lusaka, where insufficient water and sewage systems have contributed to repeated cholera outbreaks. Diarrhoeal diseases, particularly among young children, represent a serious health risk that demands urgent attention.

It is therefore with great confidence that I look to the role of the SPLASH Project. I firmly believe that this initiative will help improve sanitation in Zambia and contribute to the prevention of cholera outbreaks, which have unfortunately occurred all too frequently in the past.

The SPLASH Project, which will be implemented over the next five years with a grant of approximately 2 million US dollars (300 million Japanese yen) from the Japanese Government, operates within the SATREPS framework. One of its key strengths is the ability to visualise the risks of faecal contamination and diarrhoeal diseases, allowing local residents to actively assess the effectiveness of risk-reduction measures. This participatory approach encourages communities to take charge of their own environment, fostering sustainable development from the ground up.

Although water and sanitation challenges are often invisible in everyday life, but I believe this project will enable people to recognise the importance of improving their living conditions and empower them to make meaningful changes. This will be an incredibly significant achievement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am certain that the collaboration between the University of Zambia and Kyoto University will make a lasting contribution to improving Zambia's water and sanitation infrastructure, curbing the spread of cholera, and promoting healthier, more resilient communities.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Zambia. I sincerely hope that the SPLASH Project will serve as a symbol of our enduring friendship and help to further strengthen the ties between our two nations, and I wish for every success.

Thank you.

(End)