

Our Guest of Honour, Honourable Douglas Syakalima, Minister of Education of the Republic of Zambia,  
Prof. Mundia Muya, Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia,  
Prof. Takahashi Aya, Executive Vice President for international relations of Hokkaido University,  
Prof. Michelo Shakalima, Professor of the UNZA School of Veterinary Medicine and the President of the MEXT Scholarship Association of Zambia,  
Distinguished Japan Scholars,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all to my residence for the Assembly of the Japan Scholars Alumni 2024 today.

The last meeting of the alumni was held in March this year. Only six months has passed since then. But we decided to hold another meeting today because we have a special guest from Japan. Professor Takahashi Aya, Executive Vice President for international relations of Hokkaido University, is visiting Lusaka to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Zambia. Thank you, Professor Takahashi.

I am sure that all of you are aware of unprecedentedly close cooperation between Hokkaido University and the University of Zambia over the decades. The two universities have cooperated in the fields of veterinary science, researcher and student exchange and Japanese language teaching, which has resulted in a number of brilliant achievements. This is why we are also honoured by the presence of Professor Mundia Muya, Vice-Chancellor of UNZA.

Today, researchers from Kyoto University, who are visiting UNZA to implement a SATREPS project, have joined us as well. Kyoto University is another Japanese leading university which vigorously promotes cooperation with Africa. I would like to warmly welcome the delegation of Kyoto University.

Dear Scholars, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Guest of Honour, Honourable Minister Shakalima, knows the importance of international inter-university cooperation. It promotes the sharing of cutting-edge

knowledge across borders, and the implementation of such knowledge in different societies. It enables countries to develop young people and societies, and to foster friendship for the future. Dear Japan Scholars, the individual experience of each of you, who have studied at Japanese universities, is important just in the same manner for Japan and Zambia, and for our peoples.

This is why, at the last meeting, I expressed my hope that you would be a driving force in promoting friendship and cooperation between Japan and Zambia. Today, I would like to share with you a beautiful example achieved this year by one of the MEXT scholars.

Dr Chihena Banda studied at Mie University as a medical student on MEXT scholarship from 2018 to 2023. His keen awareness of the need for micro plastic surgery in Zambia and his enthusiasm for collaboration inspired various stakeholders in Japan and Zambia. This finally led to the opening of the first ever Reconstructive Surgery Training Centre in Zambia this year, at UNZA with the funding of US\$80,000 from a Japanese Rotary Club based in the area where Dr Banda studied. This is a great achievement, and perfectly fitting tribute to the 60th anniversary. Let us give a round of applause.

Dear Japan Scholars,

Today, I would like to invite you to meet and exchange ideas with Japanese and Zambian researchers present, and with your fellow members. The idea of cooperation is always born out of interaction among different people. Good sake and Japanese food always help to stimulate good exchanges.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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