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Remarks of Mr. TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Zambia,
At the Premiere Evening of Japan Film Festival 2024
At Ster-Kinekor Manda Hill Mall, Lusaka
13 September (Fri) 2024

Hon. Rodney Sikumba, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Zambia,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the opening night of the Japan Film Festival 2024! It is a great honour for me to be here with you. First of all, I would like to thank Honourable Minister Sikumba, Minister of Tourism, for being our guest of honour tonight. I would also like to thank the staff of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts as well as Ster-Kinekor for their support in various ways in making this festival possible.

I am delighted to host the Japan Film Festival twice in this special year when we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of Zambia's independence and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Zambia. Last February, in your presence, Honourable Minister, we resumed this festival after a 5-year interruption due to COVID-19. This is the 14th festival that we have held here in Zambia since 2018.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 60th anniversary year provides us with an invaluable opportunity to deepen mutual understanding between Japan and Zambia. Nothing brings the people of the two countries closer than learning about each other's culture. Our Embassy has intensified its cultural events this year. Last month, we held the authentic Japanese Doll Exhibition at the Lusaka National Museum, which featured about 70 Japanese dolls. We also invited a Japanese drumming group to perform at the National Arts Festival and other events. Thanks to the cooperation of the Ministry of Tourism and the

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Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, both events were successful and attracted many Zambians. These events have beautifully or powerfully demonstrated Japan's present-day culture, which combines traditional arts, pop culture and futuristic imagination. I would be delighted if Zambians discover, or rediscover, and enjoy our culture. I would be even happier if Zambian artists and people are inspired by their encounter with Japanese culture, and motivated to create something new and splendid, whatever it may be.

And now, another opportunity: the Japan Film Festival. Here at Ster-Kinekor, Manda Hill Mall, we are going to screen three new Japanese films of various genres. One film deals with a heartfelt and comical story of the great Japan mapping project team of 200 years ago, in the samurai era. Another is an animated film with a fantastic story of love and overcoming life's sorrows. The other is a coming-of-age story of a girl in a rural town in Japan, living between traditional and contemporary pop culture.

I hope you will enjoy the Japanese film and return home safely, hopefully filled with excitement and satisfaction, and feeling today's Japan a little closer.

Thank you.

(End)