

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. TAKEUCHI Kazuyuki, Ambassador of Japan to the
Republic of Zambia, at the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for the Grant
Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects
Thursday, 9th January 2025**

Honourable Mtolo Phiri, Minister of Agriculture,
Mr. Lawrence Mwanza, District Commissioner of Kitwe District,
Her Worship Mpsa Mwaya, Mayor of Kitwe City,
Prof. Hoyce Jacob Lymo-Mbowe, Executive Director, Mindolo Ecumenical
Foundation,
Members of the Press,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to my residence today on the occasion of the signing ceremony of the Grant Contract for “the Project for the Improvement of Sustainable Agriculture-Management of Soil Fertility in Kalulushi District, Copperbelt Province,” which is funded by Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

Let me start by expressing my gratitude to Honourable Minister Phiri for accepting the role of Guest of Honour today. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Mwanza and Her Worship Madam Mpsa for their presence to witness and celebrate the signing for the project.

With today’s signing, the project is officially sealed and launched for implementation by the recipient of the grant, Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF). With the total budget of up to 71,874 US dollars, MEF will build a compost centre and azolla ponds and drill a borehole for providing practical training in sustainable soil fertility management for the people of the Chilobwe community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

MEF is an educational institution established in Kitwe, Copperbelt Province in 1958 to train Africans in modern agriculture and religious activities. In addition to its educational activities, MEF has been supporting the Chilobwe community by

providing farm works and also providing some pieces of land for each household to farm for survival. However, due to climate change and repeated use of chemical fertilisers, the community's land is becoming infertile, and their harvests are diminishing every year. At present, combined with the severe draught, most of the community members can only eat once a day.

This project aims at constructing facilities to train the community members in sustainable, organic methods to maintain soil fertility and increase yields. Each household will provide monthly labour at the facilities as practical training to learn how to produce and use compost and azolla for livestock feed, and will receive enough organic fertiliser produced through the training for their own field. This sustainable method will enable the community to produce more crops at less cost and to be more resilient to severe climate change. As a result, it is expected that more than 100 households in the Chilobwe community will be able to practice organic farming and replenish the soil for more crops.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The environment surrounding small-scale farmers has changed drastically and their traditional way of farming is no longer viable in this era of climate change. When we experienced this severe drought this year, we truly realised the urgent need for support in the agricultural sector, and the strength of GGP is its flexibility and speediness.

This is the very first agricultural project under GGP in the last 10 years, and I am pleased that that we have been able to demonstrate Japan's commitment to the welfare of the Zambian people by responding promptly to the current situation.

In concluding my remarks, I wish the project every success and I hope that the effort of MEF and the contribution of this project will help the Chilobwe community for generations to come. As we celebrate the signing for this project, I would also like to thank the government and people of Zambia for its longstanding friendship with Japan. I believe that the cooperation we have had in various sectors including agriculture, has enhanced the capacity of the Zambian people over the past 60 years since its independence, and I renew my commitment to contribute to the development and prosperity of Zambia.

(Check against delivery)

Thank you for your attention.

(End)