

Remarks by Ms. OZAWA Nobue, Head of Economic Affairs and Development Assistance at the Embassy of Japan, at the Opening Ceremony of the Mutaba GBV One-Stop Centre at Kapiri Mposhi District, Central Province, Zambia

Friday, 11th April 2025

Good afternoon, *Mulishani bonse*

Allow me to start by acknowledging the presence of;

Ms. Mainga Kavika, Permanent Secretary, Office of President, Cabinet Office, Gender Division,

Mr. Francis Hasalama, District Commissioner, Kapiri Mposhi District,

Ms. Sampa Mwanza, Member of the National Executive Committee, Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ), representing the PPAZ National Chairperson,

Ms. Etsuko Yamaguchi, Executive Director, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP),

Mr. Brilliant Munyeke, Council Chairperson, Kapiri Mposhi District, Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here today at the opening ceremony of the Mutaba GBV One-Stop Centre, implemented by the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP), with funding from the Japanese Government under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Zambia, especially the Ministry of Health and the District Health Office, the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ), and all those present here today for their support in implementing this project and making today's opening ceremony possible.

This project began in 2023 as a three-year initiative, and over the past two years, JOICFP and PPAZ have been implementing this significant project with approximately 1.1 million US dollars in funding from Japan. The project aims to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) by promoting gender equality, strengthening support networks, and providing

care and services for survivors.

In recent years, severe droughts due to climate change have had a significant impact on people's lives across the country. Rising concerns over food security and economic challenges due to power shortages have severely affected people's livelihoods. In this challenging environment, the child marriages, increase in early pregnancies, and gender-based violence (GBV) have become a growing concern, necessitating comprehensive interventions to address these issues.

Over the past two years, I am pleased to learn that significant progress has been made, including increased awareness among key stakeholders, strengthened support systems, and greater engagement of community leaders in GBV prevention. District health offices have also been working to integrate psychosocial counsellors into healthcare facilities, and traditional leaders have taken independent initiatives to support survivors, such as providing temporary shelter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls remain critical priorities worldwide, as reflected in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Zambia, GBV prevention and response are key priorities under the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), which promotes stronger health systems, maternal and child health, education, and skills development.

This project aligns with Zambia's national development agenda by addressing GBV through a multi-sectoral approach that involves healthcare, education, gender, justice, and community development. By engaging both central and local governments, as well as grassroots communities, it aims to contribute to sustainable social development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I am delighted to officially launch the Mutaba GBV One-Stop Centre. This facility will serve as a safe space where survivors can access counselling and healthcare services under one roof. The project will also continue to raise

awareness, encourage male engagement, and support economic independence for survivors. I am pleased to mention that, there are plans to also establish a safe space for GBV survivors in Lukomba, as well, to further expand the reach of this initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude my remarks, last year, Japan and Zambia celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations. From this year, our partnership enters a new phase, further deepening our cooperation and friendship. I sincerely hope that this project will not only strengthen GBV prevention and support systems in Zambia but also serve as a meaningful example of our continued commitment to building a more inclusive and resilient society.

Thank you.

Twatotela sana