

**Remarks by Mr. OMINATO Satoshi,
Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Zambia,
On the Occasion of the Launch Ceremony of the "Climate Smart
Smallholder Farming for Productive, Sustainable and Resilient
Agriculture in Zambia" Project with the World Food Programme
Thursday, 30th October 2025**

Good afternoon. Mwapona Buti.

Let me begin by acknowledging the distinguished guests present today:

Dr. Ndashe Kapulu, Director at the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI), representing the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture,
Mr. Malambo Mwanza, District Commissioner for Monze,
Ms. Mundia Hamaundu, Area Councillor,
Mr. Emmanuel Gondwe; Head of Programmes (OIC) of the World Food Programme (WFP) Zambia,
Government officials,

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join this launch ceremony of the project "Climate Smart Smallholder Farming for Productive, Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture in Zambia."

This project is implemented by the World Food Programme with the financial support of up to 1 million US dollars from the Government of Japan. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am pleased to note that this project will significantly enhance the climate resilience of around one thousand smallholder farmers in five drought-affected districts, namely, Mazabuka, Monze, Chipangali, Maimwene, and Kambilombilo.

As you are aware, Zambia faced an unprecedented drought during the 2023-2024 farming season due to the El Niño phenomenon, and its extensive impact continues to be felt across the country even to date. This crisis has had a serious effect especially on smallholder farmers. Maize yields or Zambia's staple crop declined sharply, threatening millions of people into

acute food insecurity. In response, President Hichilema declared a national disaster in February 2024, underscoring the urgency of our collective action.

To help address this imminent challenge, the Government of Japan mobilised one million US dollars from its supplementary budget, and, in partnership with WFP, launched this innovative project. The programme harnesses the technology of NEC, a leading Japanese IT company, using satellite imagery, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to strengthen climate resilience and promote sustainable agricultural practices. By providing such real-time and practical insights, the project is aiming to empower smallholder farmers to make data-driven decisions that will enhance crop productivity and support its diversification.

This project brings together several complementary benefits. Smallholder farmers will enjoy improved access to reliable climate and agricultural information through seasonal advisories and crop monitoring data derived from advanced observation technologies. It will also strengthen the capacity of government officials, development partners, and farmers to use these technologies effectively. Moreover, in collaboration with relevant government ministries, agencies, and other partners, the project will provide comprehensive support by monitoring and evaluating its implementation and outcomes to generate reliable evidence that guides policy coordination and supports future expansion to additional districts.

This project aligns closely with the multiple SDG goals, namely SDG 2 on ending hunger, SDG 13 on climate action, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. It also embodies the spirit of the theme “Co-Create Innovative Solutions with Africa,” which was presented at the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development or TICAD 9, held in Yokohama this August. By promoting innovation and technology in the food system, this project will contribute to strengthening agricultural systems and building resilience against poverty and food insecurity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 24th October, Zambia celebrated its 61st Independence Day. Allow me

to offer my heartfelt congratulations. This year also marks the 61st anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Zambia. Over the past six decades, Japan and Zambia have built a deep and lasting friendship, growing together through cooperation in such areas as agriculture, water, education, health, and disaster management. Japan's approach to development is based on the belief that true progress comes from working side by side—not just us but with Zambian people and other stakeholders as well—sharing knowledge, experience, and determination for better growth. This project will also be carried out through close partnership among the Government of Zambia, local authorities, WFP, and the communities themselves. It is through such collaboration that we can turn shared challenges into shared achievements.

In closing, I wish to express my deepest sympathy to all those who continue to suffer from the impact of drought. I firmly believe that this project will help rebuild livelihoods and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable future for agriculture in Zambia.

Thank you. Ndalumba.