

**Remarks by Mr. Atsushi Kuwabara, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of Japan
to Zambia on the Occasion of the FAO National Workshop on Rice and
Aquaculture Development in Zambia
PAMODZI HOTEL, Lusaka, 18th June 2012**

Mr. Adranus Spijkers, Representative of Food and Agriculture
Organization (FAO) in Zambia,

Mr. Yukio Suzuki, Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries of Japan,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to speak on behalf of the Embassy of Japan at this occasion of the opening of the FAO National Workshop on Rice and Aquaculture Development. I would like to extend our cordial congratulations and sincere appreciation to the Government of Zambia and the FAO for organizing it. I would also like to thank the experts from Asian countries, the participants from each province in Zambia and all others involved in this seminar.

There are mainly two reasons for which Japan decided to support this workshop.

First, this workshop provides valuable knowledge for attaining and maintaining food security for Zambians. The global soaring of food prices in 2008 is still fresh in our memory. Today, there is increased demand for food in emerging countries such as China and India. On the other hand, supply has been short due to natural disasters such as floods and drought. Some countries which used to export food are no longer able to do so because of increased domestic demand and natural calamities. Consequently, prices have recently tended to rise again. Soaring food costs significantly affect many people around the world, in particular the poor. As a net food importing country, Japan will contribute to the stabilization of the world balance of grain supply and demand. We take the initiative in the promotion of rice cultivation in Zambia and other African countries, not

only because Japan has extensive rice knowledge of rice farming but also because rice is a suitable and sustainable crop for the attainment of food security.

The second reason we support this workshop is because this is an important event implemented under the FAO's initiative. Japan's contribution to FAO, which stands at 16.7% of the total FAO budget, is the second largest, only after the United States. This level of contribution reflects the importance Japan attaches to the FAO and its activities in agriculture. In particular, Japan thinks highly of the FAO's efforts in Africa vis-à-vis hunger eradication as well as the attainment of sustainable social and economic development.

Besides rice, fish is also an indispensable ingredient for the Japanese cuisine. Fishery aquaculture in Japan has been often interconnected with rice cultivation and has a long history, dating back to the 17th century. Currently, the overexploitation of marine resources has become a source of concern on a global scale. Fishery aquaculture is earnestly researched and pursued in Japan today from the perspective of sustainability. The approach to fishing is now being shifted from "catching" to "rearing."

It is our strong belief that the experience of Japan and Asia in rice farming and aquaculture has a lot to offer to benefit Zambia in the elimination of hunger and poverty.

In closing, I hope you will have fruitful deliberations during the course of the workshop and will yield far-reaching recommendations on how the Japanese and Asian experience can be practically applied to enhance food security and sustainable development in your country.

Thank you very much and for your kind attention.