

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. AKIO EGAWA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF
THE VCT-CENTRE AT THE CHIPAPA CLINIC
3rd OCTOBER, 2012**

Mr. Patrick Phiri, Chilanga District Commissioner,

Mr. Jairo Shimukoko, Kafue District Administrative Officer,

Ms. Hiromi Kawano, Country Director, Association for Aid and Relief, Japan
(AAR Japan)

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here today on behalf of the Government of Japan to witness the official handover of the Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (VCT-Centre) to the Kafue District Health Management Team.

The construction of the facility and provision of equipment for the VCT-Centre were implemented by the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) with funding made available under the Government of Japan's Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects.

The Government of Japan introduced its Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects in Zambia in 2002. Its primary objective is to support various

development projects piloted by Japanese NGOs which would enhance economic and social development in the community. Over 17 projects which amount to about 7 million United States dollars have been funded and implemented in Zambia since its introduction.

Since 2009, the **Chipapa HIV/AIDS Project** has been funded by the Government of Japan, with the total assistance so far provided amounting to approximately **1.10 million United States dollars**, or approximately **5.5 billion Zambia Kwacha**. This assistance has been implemented by AAR Japan in collaboration with the Kafue District Health Management Team, stakeholders in HIV/AIDS prevention, and other local partners in the health sector.

I have heard that in Chipapa, comprehensive HIV/AIDS intervention programs had been inadequate in the past until AAR Japan came to the area in 2009. Since then, the Japanese NGO has successfully provided training and workshops for youth groups and the home-visiting nurse group, thereby strengthening community-based HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention initiatives.

Owing to AAR Japan's continuous support to local initiatives in Chipapa, the youth groups and the home-visiting nurse group have managed, over the years, to

offer VCT counseling for people and their families living with HIV/AIDS, provide emergency transport, and even raise funds for awareness activities.

It is gratifying to hear that AAR Japan's intervention has brought about a significant increase of the number of people receiving VCT. More and more people in the community are willing to come voluntarily to receive counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS. This is also a good move towards eradicating discrimination and stigma, which is an important aspect of the combat against HIV/AIDS.

Today, as the Project draws to a close, AAR Japan is handing over the VCT-Centre to the Kafue District Health Management Team. Now, the newly-constructed VCT-Centre, located in the Chipapa Clinic, is expected to become a hub where the local community can receive medical check-ups and counselling even more effectively.

The **Chipapa HIV/AIDS Project** has significantly expanded access to appropriate care, support and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as to their caregivers and to their families. These are exactly the goals set out in the Sixth National Development Plan as the Government of Zambia strenuously tackles HIV/AIDS issues.

The Government of Japan attaches importance to supporting self-initiated activities as the one we are witnessing today in Chipapa that would lead the whole community forward to achieve sustained health. I would like to take this opportunity to urge AAR Japan and all the stakeholders to work together to further strengthen the existing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment system in order for the community to sustain the project.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, allow me to emphasise that the funds that were used to undertake this Project have come from Japanese taxpayers. At the same time, AAR Japan's staff are on the ground in the Chipapa, working hand in hand together with the community to tackle the HIV/AIDS issue. Thus, Japan's Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects is not merely funding for a project but rather building of a close partnership between the peoples of both countries.

It is my sincere hope that the facilities we are officially opening today will be well utilised and maintained so that it will have a positive long-lasting impact on the health conditions of the residents in Chipapa. And I also hope that this successful

Project will contribute to the further strengthening of friendship between Japan and Zambia.

I thank you.

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