

REMARKS BY
AMBASSADOR AKIO EGAWA ON THE OCCASION OF
THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S NATIONAL JUDO TOURNAMENT
OLYMPIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER, LUSAKA
11th NOVEMBER, 2012

Mr. Benard Nakacinda, Director of Sports, Minister of Youth and Sports,
Mr. Alfred Foloko, President of the Zambia Judo Association,
Representatives from the National Sports Council of Zambia,
Participating Judokas,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to witness the finals of the Japanese Ambassador's Judo Trophy 2012 and to make some remarks on behalf of the Government of Japan.

The Japanese Ambassador's Judo Trophy was inaugurated as a major annual event in 1986 and ran until 2002. It was re-introduced in 2005 and has been held every year since then. This occasion marks the second time that I have been afforded the opportunity to witness this annual event on the calendar of the Zambia Judo Association.

As you may know, Japan is well known for Martial Arts such as Karate, Kendo, Aikido and Shorinjikempo, not to mention Judo. Among them, however, Judo is the only one which has been adopted as a formal event at the Summer Olympic Games. In this year's Olympic Games in London, one Judoka whose name is Mr. Boas Munyonga competed as one of the seven athletes sent from the Republic of Zambia. Unfortunately, he was defeated

by a Japanese Judoka at Round of 32 but I feel very proud to see Zambian Judokas now fight with top class Judokas at the Sports Summit, the Olympic Games.

The Japanese Government has been associated with Judo in Zambia since the early 1970s. We have dispatched many Judo experts through JICA and the Japan Foundation and provided the first grant of Judo equipment worth K540 million in 1998 and the second grant of K350 million in 2002. In addition, a grant worth K1.4 billion of Judo equipment was handed over to the Zambia Judo Association in April 2010. The equipment included 820 Judo uniforms, 630 Judo mats, scales, scoreboards and Judo timers.

One of the major characteristics of Judo is that it does not only provide physical exercise but also inculcates self-discipline and character-building into true sportsmanship. The Japanese Government has assisted the promotion of Judo not just because this sport has its origin in Japan but also because the attributes of Judo can significantly contribute to the healthy growth of the youth who will build the future of this country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan and Zambia have enjoyed a very friendly relationship as cooperation partners since Zambia's independence in 1964. In recent years, as Zambia's economy has developed steadily, momentum is building for the expansion of economic relations with the Japanese private sector showing a growing interest in business and investment opportunities in the Republic of Zambia. Moreover, relations between our two countries have grown in sports, culture and academic exchanges nowadays.

Please allow me to refer to the latest development between Japan and Zambia. H.E. Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, President of the Republic of Zambia, paid an official visit to Japan last month. I was fortunate to have accompanied the President in Japan. During his stay in Japan, President Michael Sata held a Summit Meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Noda and met Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. President Michael Sata also had meetings with economic and industrial circles. There is no doubt that this visit has elevated the bilateral relationship between Japan and Zambia to a much higher level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I take this opportunity to commend the Executive Committee of the Zambia Judo Association for having successfully organized the tournament for the eighth consecutive year following its re-introduction. During this period, men and women and boys and girls in all categories have continued to compete for honors and the sport has gained more recognition and more popularity in this country.

Finally, may I congratulate the Judokas who have reached the finals and wish all of them the very best as they compete for the topmost position this afternoon. May I also commend all the clubs that have taken part in this year's tournament, without whose participation the tournament would not have been possible.

Thank you.