

Remarks by Ambassador Akio Egawa  
On the Occasion of the Reception  
To Celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan  
Ambassador's Residence, Lusaka, 29 November 2012

Guest of Honor, Hon. Miles Sampa, MP, Deputy Minister of Finance,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, who will turn 79 on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.

As we look back at the developments in Zambia during the past year, I am pleased to observe that the country has continued to enjoy peace and democracy, which the people of Zambia have cherished and upheld staunchly since the country's independence. I also welcome Zambia's valuable contribution to peace and democracy in the region.

On the economic front, the Government of Zambia is making praiseworthy effort to accelerate sustainable growth with an emphasis on creation of wealth for all Zambians and more job opportunities, especially for the youths. I believe those policy goals are quite appropriate, as the benefit of Zambia's high economic growth in recent years is yet to widely permeate the entire population. The Government's endeavors have also brought about improved investment climate. The successful issuance of sovereign bond, in which I hear Hon. Miles Sampa played a key role, was a fine testimony to the confidence the international investor community has in Zambia's economic soundness and good governance.

Certainly, there still are various challenges Zambia has to tackle, but the country is steadfastly moving in the right direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year 2012 has become a monumental year for Japan-Zambia bilateral relations. In October, H. E. President Michael Chilufya Sata paid an official

visit to Japan. While in Japan, President Sata and the First Lady met with Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress. Their Majesties visited Zambia in 1983 when they were Crown Prince and Princess. The President had fruitful talks with Prime Minister Noda, where the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening of the two countries' relations. President Sata's visit to Japan has consolidated the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two countries and elevated them to a new and higher stage.

In addition to the Presidential visit, high level two-way visits flourished this year. From Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Zambia in January. A team of Japanese parliamentarians was in the country on a mission to inspect Japanese ODA projects in Zambia. Former Minister of Finance of Japan was also in the country. From Zambia, Foreign Minister Hon. Lubinda, Agriculture and Livestock Minister Hon. Chenda and Tourism and Arts Minister Hon. Masebo accompanied H.E. the President on his visit to Japan. Education Minister Hon. Dr. Phiri visited Japan to attend a Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology. Deputy Minister of Finance Hon. Sampa visited Japan to attend the Annual Meetings of the IMF and World Bank Group.

Indeed, Japan-Zambia relations have continued to grow during the past year in the areas of development cooperation, investment promotion, academic exchange as well as sports and culture.

Last fiscal year, the amount of Japan's ODA to Zambia reached 70 million US dollars, a record high in the past 20 years. At the time of President Sata's visit to Japan, a momentous agreement on ODA loan was signed by the two Governments for the construction of Kazungula Bridge, which will become a vital transport infrastructure for Zambia and Botswana and the entire region. This year, Japan made a contribution to the Education Sector Pool Fund, the first-ever budget support to Zambia from Japan. The much-awaited construction of the Inner Ring Road in the southern part of Lusaka will start soon with Japanese grant assistance.

Japan's economy and production are now back to normal, after suffering serious disruption caused by the earthquake and tsunami and by the floods in Thailand last year. Against such a background, economic and business relations between Japan and Zambia have grown over the past year. Hitachi

Construction Machinery commenced operation of its Lusaka re-manufacturing factory this year. In July, JICA and UNIDO organized a Zambia investment seminar in Tokyo and Osaka, with the involvement of Zambia Development Agency, which turned out to be quite successful. A business delegation comprising leading Japanese companies visited the country in August. During his visit to Japan, President Sata had a good meeting with Japanese business leaders.

As a matter of fact, we have here today exhibits by Hitachi Construction Machinery. I encourage you to go inside to view the exhibits. JICA, Japan International Cooperation Agency, also has exhibits inside. As you can see, we also have Toyota, Mitsubishi and Honda vehicles on display, courtesy of Toyota Zambia, Southern Cross Motors and Honda Zambia. Please take a good look at the vehicles.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sports, cultural and academic interchanges have expanded between our two countries. In sports, the annual Japanese Ambassador's Tournaments were held successfully for Judo and Karate. Speaking of sports, Tokyo is a candidate city to host the 2020 Summer Olympic Games. It is my hope to see Zambian Judo players win medals at 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games.

In academic exchange, Japan's Hokkaido University opened its Lusaka office in August. Hokkaido University has a more-than-30-year history of fruitful cooperation with the University of Zambia and the University Teaching Hospital in veterinary medicine and virology. Other Japanese universities also stepped up their programs with Zambian institutions of higher learning, including collaboration between Osaka University and Copperbelt University on peace studies and between the medical schools of Yokohama City University and the University of Zambia.

On the cultural side, we are holding the annual Japanese Film Festival at Ster Kinekor Arcades Mall Cinema on December 4 through 6. Admission is free and everybody is welcome to come.

Exchange of people forms a basis of our bilateral relations. More and more Japanese are traveling to Zambia. In 2011, over 11,000 Japanese visited

Zambia for business, tourism and other purposes, recording a 36% hike over the previous year.

All in all, Japan-Zambia relations have grown and broadened during the past year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan will be hosting TICAD V, the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama, Japan in June next year in partnership with co-organizers, namely UN, UNDP, AU Commission and the World Bank. TICAD V will be a historic event, marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of TICAD and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OAU. A major theme for TICAD V will be enhancement of quality of economic growth, including spreading of the benefit of economic growth to the population at large. An information material on TICAD V is available inside. I am sure we will see Japan-Africa and Japan-Zambia relations strengthened further through TICAD V next year.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please join me in a toast to the health and prosperity of H.E. Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, President of the Republic Zambia, Guest of Honor, Hon. Miles Sampa, Deputy Minister of Finance, all the Zambian people and all of you gathered here.