

Remarks by Ambassador Akio Egawa

At the Reception for the JICA Volunteers

Ambassador's Residence, Lusaka, 14 December 2012

Guest of Honour, Hon. Nicholas Banda, MP, Deputy Minister of  
Agriculture,

Ms. Pamela Chibonga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance,  
Government Officials,

Mr. Yoshihide Teranishi, Resident Representative of JICA

JICA Volunteers,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all and thank you most sincerely for coming this afternoon. I would especially like to thank the Guest of Honour, Honourable Deputy Minister Nicholas Banda for having spared some time from his busy schedule to come and grace this occasion.

There are some 65 JICA volunteers who are present here today.

They are mostly young generation volunteers, officially called “Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers” or JOCV but we also have some members from Senior Overseas Volunteers.

JICA, Japan International Cooperation Agency, runs its overseas volunteer program as part of Japan’s Official Development Assistance. The JOCV program was started in 1965 in Asia and soon after was expanded to include Africa as well. The Senior Volunteer program was introduced later in 1990.

JICA volunteers are deployed across the country, from Ministry offices in Lusaka to schools in remote rural villages. Whether young or old, these Japanese volunteers are high spirited and full of energy, engaged in transfer activities of technology, skills and knowledge, working hand in hand with Zambian colleagues at local communities and work places. In so doing, they foster friendship and mutual understanding with colleagues, villagers or students.

I believe that is the cream of Japan’s developments assistance:

that is, transferring technology and nurturing friendship at the same time on a person-to-person level.

Since 1970 when the first JICA volunteers arrived in Zambia, a total of more than 1200 Japanese volunteers have served in the country. Over the years, they have made immense contribution to Zambia's economic and social development and promotion of friendship between our two countries.

The conditions where the volunteers work and live may not be perfect in terms of hygiene or comfort. I have met many volunteers who had been infected with malaria. Most volunteers live where there is no Manda Hill Mall. However, their moral is high and they have a very positive attitude. I wish to pay tribute to the JICA volunteers for their dedication and true volunteer spirit. I want to thank them for their contribution to Japan-Zambia relations. They are the pride of Japan's international cooperation.

I am also very grateful to the Government and the people of Zambia, in particular, those who work closely with the volunteers

for the warm hospitality and cooperation extended to them.

Many of the past volunteers choose to come back to Zambia on holiday or business. This fact shows how they loved Zambia and reflects how well they were received by respective organizations or communities they worked with. It is my sincere hope that each volunteer will become a bridge between Japan and Zambia. I am sure the number of those bridges will surpass that of bridges over the Zambezi.

As I close, I would like to encourage you today to share your volunteer experiences with each other. I also hope that useful exchange of views and ideas will be conducted between the volunteers and the officials from related Government Ministries and other guests.

Thank you.