

**Remarks by Mr. Hideki Yamaji,
Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan
At the Launch of the Japanese Language Course,
Hokkaido University Lusaka Office at University of Zambia
29th November, 2013**

Mrs, Christine Mayondi, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Minister of Education, Science,
Vocational Training and Early Education

Prof. Stephen Simukanga, Vice Chancellor, University of Zambia

Prof. Masahiro Okumura, Director, Hokkaido University Lusaka Office,

Mr. Tetsuhiko Yamano, General Manager, Johannesburg Representative Office, Toshiba
Corporation,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honor and pleasure to be here today to witness the inauguration of
the Japanese language course.

First, I would like to introduce Ambassador-designate of Japan, H.E. Mr. Kiyoshi
Koinuma. He arrived in Lusaka on 18th November to assume his post.

(Short remarks by Ambassador Koinuma)

Now, on behalf of Ambassador, I would like to congratulate the University of Zambia
and the Hokkaido University Lusaka Office on having successfully initiated the course
as well as organizing this ceremony. Also, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation
to a leading Japanese electric company, TOSHIBA Corporation for generously donating
a dozen of tablet computers for this course.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me mention the significance of the inauguration of this language course from our
point of view. First of all, this course is the very first undertaking in the Southern
African region. So, Zambia now positions herself as a pioneer in promoting Japanese
language in this region, and in developing better understanding of Japan in Africa. It is
well-known that the University of Zambia is a regional hub of veterinary studies due to

its high research standard. By initiating this language course, Zambia could become a regional leader in this field as well. This regional dimension is important for us, because we would like to see the countries in this region grow and prosper together.

This course is also meaningful in the sense that it will help broaden the bilateral relations between Japan and Zambia, especially in the cultural and academic field. Generally speaking, in the last 49 years, the development of our bilateral relations have been centering around economic activities. We now need to further broaden our relations in the cultural and academic field. This course should be a major step forward to this end. In this connection, the University of Zambia is currently offering French and Chinese as an official foreign language to learn at an undergraduate level. We have been informed that Japanese will be included as an official foreign language from next year. So, we can now foresee the expansion of Japanese language lessons at the University of Zambia. It is our hope that the language course will ultimately evolve to become an established department of Japanese language or Japanese studies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As introduced in a video clip, Hokkaido University is one of the most prestigious national university in Japan with a history of nearly 150 years. Here in Zambia, the university has long had a successful partnership with the University of Zambia. Their partnership dates back to the 1980s when the School of Veterinary Medicine was established at the University of Zambia with grant aid assistance of about 220 million ZMW extended by the Government of Japan. Ever since, Hokkaido University has played a key role in human resources development through academic exchanges. Last year, Hokkaido University Lusaka Office was established at the campus of University of Zambia, greatly contributing to expanding cooperation between both universities. Meanwhile, Japan has steadfastly supported the School of Veterinary Medicine by providing about 6.3 million ZMW for various types of research equipment. In addition to such financial support, JICA has dispatched about 200 specialists and volunteers to the University of Zambia since the 1980s. Moreover, 11 students from the University of Zambia have studied in Japan so far by making use of the scholarship program offered by the Japanese Government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing my remarks, please let me point out that language cannot be described as just a communication tool. In my experience, learning another language gives the learner the ability to step inside the mind of another culture and society. Second language acquisition, therefore, will facilitate cross-cultural understanding, which forms a foundation for international mutual understanding.

Japanese language lessons in Zambia will start here from this class of 12 students. This might be a small seed now, but it will grow up to a large tree rooted in Zambia, and further branching out to other parts of Africa.

From these viewpoints, the Embassy of Japan would like to continue to support cordial cooperation between the University of Zambia and Hokkaido University, to enhance mutual understanding of the people of Japan and Zambia, and thus to broaden and strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Thank you very much for your attention.