

**REMARKS BY H. E. MR. KIYOSHI KOINUMA,
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO ZAMBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF
THE ART-CENTRES AT THE MWEMBESHI HEALTH CENTRE
ON WEDNESDAY, 11th DECEMBER, 2014**

Mr. Wamunyima Muwana, Permanent Secretary of Lusaka Province,

Mrs. Edith Muwana, District Commissioner of Chilanga District,

Mr. Ryota Hirama, Acting Country Representative, 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 Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Centres to the Chilanga District Community Medical Offices.

The HIV/AIDS Project has been funded by the Government of Japan under the Government of Japan's Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO projects, with the total assistance provided amounting to **761,979 United States Dollars**. The construction of the facilities and provision of equipment for the ART-Centres within the Mwembeshi clinics was implemented by the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan).

The **HIV/AIDS Project** was implemented by AAR Japan in 2013 in collaboration with the Kafue and Chilanga District Commissioners, Medical Officers, and the local community. You may recall that AAR Japan constructed the facilities and provided equipment for the ART-Centres within the Mount Makulu Clinics and the Nangongwe Clinic last year.

Since 2013, AAR Japan has been making commendable efforts in order to improve the facilities for implementing appropriate Antiretroviral Therapy and train medical personnel and local volunteers who support the patients of HIV/AIDS. Before the implementation of the AAR Japan's project, the community had challenges in determining the actual number of patients of HIV/AIDS who successfully continued to receive Antiretroviral Therapy at the Nangongwe Clinics or the Mount Makulu Clinics. The project by AAR Japan has helped to ease the burden which the community was facing and currently there are three thousand and eleven (3,011) patients, which is over eighty percent of the total number patients, who have continued to receive Antiretroviral Therapy without encountering delays and setbacks. It was in appreciation of these laudable efforts that the Government of Japan has decided to give its consent to AAR Japan to continue implementing the **HIV/AIDS Project**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today it is gratifying to witness some of the significant groundwork that AAR Japan has done. The ART centre in the Mwembeshi Clinics will provide the local community with ART treatment and counselling, with due respect for visitors' privacy. In addition, the Clinics are expected to provide more effective care toward those living with HIV/AIDS as a result of improved client data management. It is my hope that these newly equipped facilities will give those living with HIV/AIDS an opportunity to receive appropriate and efficient medical treatment.

I would like to point out that the project by AAR Japan is also in alignment with policy goals in the health sector set by the Government of Japan. You may be aware that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made an address at the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, 2013. In his address, Prime Minister Abe announced that the Government of Japan will promote Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which ensures that all people can obtain the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. In addition, Prime Minister Abe mentioned the Global Fund aimed at fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The Government of Japan is committed to play a leading role in combatting HIV/AIDS

issues. The project by AAR Japan is expected to promote this policy of the Government of Japan in a way that the project contributes to the establishment of universal access to appropriate care and support for HIV/AIDS patients and their families in the Kafue and Chilanga Districts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the Golden Jubilee of Zambia's Independence as well as the 50th anniversary of Zambia-Japan diplomatic relations. Japanese Imperial Highnesses, Prince and Princess Akishino made a visit to Zambia from the end of June to the beginning of July to commemorate Zambia's Golden Jubilee of Independence and also the 50th anniversary of Zambia-Japan diplomatic relations. During this visit, their Imperial Highnesses visited the Mount Makulu Clinics. I am confident that this significant visit has further strengthened the close friendship between our two countries, more so in such a momentous year.

In closing, please allow me to emphasise that the funds that were used to undertake this Project came from Japanese taxpayers. It is therefore my sincere hope that the facilities officially being opened today will be well utilized and maintained so that they will have a positive long-lasting impact on people in the region, and will symbolize the cordial relationship between the people of Japan and Zambia.

I thank you.

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