

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. KIYOSHI KOINUMA
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF
THE MATERNITY WAITING HOUSE AND OTHER RELATED FACILITIES AT MUTABA
HEALTH CENTER, MASAITI DISTRICT,
ON THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2015

Your Royal Highness Chief Chiwala,
Honourable Mr. Obvious Chisala, Deputy Minister of Community Development
Mother and Child Health,
Honourable Mr. Mwenya Musenge, Copperbelt Minister,
Honourable Mr. Brain Chitafu, Kafulafuta Member of Parliament,
Honourable Mr. Michael Katambo, Masaiti Member of Parliament,
Dr. Consity Mwale, Provincial Medical Officer,
Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki, Executive Director of Japanese Organization for International
Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP),
Mr. Edford Mutuma, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Association of
Zambia (PPAZ),
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to attend this landmark ceremony today, on behalf of the
Government of Japan.

The construction of a Maternity Waiting House and other related facilities within the
Mutaba health center was implemented by JOICFP during the first phase of the
three-year comprehensive project, **the Maternal Newborn and Child Health
(MNCH) One Stop Service Project in Masaiti and Mpongwe Districts in Zambia**.
This 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 751,253 United States Dollars or approximately 4.7 million
Zambian Kwacha.

Today it is gratifying to witness some of the significant groundwork that JOICFP has done. In Zambia, maternal and child mortality is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. After today's launching ceremony, expectant mothers in the community will be able to stay within the Maternity Waiting House in advance of their expected delivery date and at the same time have access to safe delivery at the maternity ward. It is therefore my hope that these newly-equipped facilities will provide expectant mothers an opportunity to deliver under these facilities with appropriate and efficient medical treatment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The project activities for this year further include the training of Safe Motherhood Action Group (SMAG). Since the inception of this project last December, JOICFP has implemented training for approximately 350 SMAG members in Masaiti and Mpongwe Districts. It is expected that SMAG will play a significant role in sharing knowledge regarding pregnancy, childbirth and family planning in the community and contribute to mitigating the risks of unplanned pregnancies.

Additionally, JOICFP has implemented training for medical personnel, which includes nurses and midwives. It is essential for such personnel to provide hospital assistance towards expectant mothers in the delivery of their babies. It is therefore expected that the training by JOICFP will also contribute to the improvement of the medical services provided at medical facilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the 1990s, JOICFP has made tremendous efforts to improve the health status in the Copperbelt province in cooperation with PPAZ. You may recall that from 2011 to 2013, JOICFP embarked on the Community Safe Motherhood Project in Fiwale Rural Health Center, Masaiti District, with a focus on the promotion of facility-based delivery. The project helped to ease the burden which the community was facing and consequently, the number of deliveries at Fiwale Rural Health Center increased from 290 in 2010 to 398 in 2013. I would like to appreciate these commendable and

persistent efforts by JOICFP in the Copperbelt province.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2015 is the target year for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Currently, international discussions are underway to formulate the post-2015 development agenda, but goals related with maternal and child health are hard to achieve due to delays in progress in Sub-Saharan African countries.

In order to achieve the MDGs, the Government of Japan is placing particular emphasis on women's empowerment in the international society. In 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that the Government of Japan would implement Official Development Aid in excess of US \$ 3 billion over the next three years, which includes development assistance in the field of health and medical care for women. This Project by JOICFP signifies one of the efforts by the Government of Japan and certainly contributes to women's empowerment and achievement of MDGs in Zambia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may see colourful paintings on the wall of the Maternity Waiting House and the Youth House, where the community members are able to acquire knowledge and information regarding maternal and child health. I heard that a painting workshop was held few days ago under the instruction of Japanese female architect, Ms. Mikiko Endo. A large number of residents participated in the workshop and painted messages with a wish that the community is free from all of the dangers of unsafe delivery and other relevant issues. Regardless of age and gender, every Zambian should play a role in establishing a bright future for the country. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that the project by JOICFP will contribute to the establishment of a colourful and energetic society in Zambia as the messages on the wall imply.

In closing, please allow me to emphasise that the funds that were used to undertake this Project came from Japanese taxpayers. It is thus 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. Natotela.