

Remarks by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan in Malawi at the Lilongwe Bridge Clean Campaign on 10th February

Honorable Minister of Local Government and Rural Development,

Dr. Ben Malunga Phiri MP,

Your Worship, Counsellor Peter Alex Banda, Mayor of Lilongwe City,

Mr. Kelvin Mphonda, Director of Roads, Ministry of Transport,

Mr. Yukinari Tanaka, Chief Representative of JICA Malawi

Members of the press, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mwadzuka bwanji nonse/Good morning.

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to join all of you today for this important clean-up campaign. We are humbled with the presence of Honorable Minister Dr. Ben Phili to also join us this morning. Thank you for the leadership.

We gather here in such large numbers in anticipation of the handover ceremony of the Lilongwe Main Roads Improvement Project this week, which includes the beautiful Lilongwe Bridge, the landmark of friendship that literally bridges people of Japan and people of Malawi.

In Japan, there is a long-standing tradition where residents regularly gather to clean and maintain public spaces such as roads, parks and community centers and even after soccer matches in the stadium. We do it because we feel good when it is cleaned with sense of appreciation, and we wish to share the joy and fun of cleaning this morning. It is also a show of respect to everyone else.

I would like to reaffirm Japan's commitment to supporting Malawi's development efforts. True development is not merely about constructing physical infrastructure; it is equally about fostering a sense of responsibility and appreciation, cultivating a culture of respect and of joint ownership and stewardship. Let this bridge truly be a living symbol of mutual respect for all.

Zikomo kwambiri.

Thank you for your dedication and let us all have fun together. End