

Speech at Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for The Project for the Construction of School Kitchen to Primary Schools in Mzimba District on 10th February 2026

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Ms. Chikondi Mngelezi, School Feeding Officer, Seibo Maria

All Government Officials

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

Muli Bwanji nonse...!

I am pleased to welcome you all to the Embassy of Japan for this Grant Contract Signing Ceremony. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you for sparing your time to witness this signing ceremony.

And we have just signed and exchanged Grand Contract and MOU. Congratulations.

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today marks a concrete step forward in our commitment to human security. The Government of Japan is proud to announce its decision to support Seibo Maria to improve students' nutritional status, and to contribute to better attendance and enhanced learning outcomes. This project is funded by the government of Japan under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects, amounting to USD 96,619 (about 166 million Kwacha). Through this project, Seibo Maria will construct three school kitchens at three schools in Mzimba District.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the biggest challenges Malawi faces in education is the growing number of learners dropping out of school. Poverty remains at the heart of this problem. Many families struggle to provide and support nutrition their children need. As a result, countless learners go to class hungry

and unable to concentrate and often end up dropping out of school. To respond to this, Seibo Maria has been implementing school feeding programs in Mzimba District. These programs improve nutrition, boost attendance, and reduce dropout rates. These efforts aligns with the Malawi 2063 goals which identifies nutrition and education as key priorities for building strong human capital.

However, at the three primary schools designated as our project sites— Machelecheta, Chabere, and Kanyerere —the provision of school meals has not been easy. The absence of proper kitchen facilities and the structural weaknesses of existing kitchens make it extremely challenging to hygienically, and safely prepare meals for learner on a continuous basis. With the new kitchens in place, this project will provide convenient and hygienic environment to prepare food for the learners. This will ensure that learners receive food every day, helping them stay in school and focus on their lessons. I hope this effort will also serve as a strong foundation for the activities of Seibo Maria.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education is, indeed, a fundamental right, a powerful enabler for individual to fully develop their talents and live with dignity. It also serves as a crucial pillar for the nation's economic growth. During the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD9) hosted in Yokohama last year, leaders from member countries underlined the need for increased capacity through collaborating with key partners, like Seibo Maria, to broaden access to inclusive and equitable quality education in Africa. I therefore have high expectations for this project and the positive contribution it will make to the learning outcomes as well as the well-being of children, their families, and their communities, while advancing Malawi's long-term vision in close partnership with TICAD 9 guiding pillars.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I sincerely hope that this project will build resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies and serve as a significant step toward the Government of Malawi's goal of ensuring that every child can complete twelve years of formal education. This partnership stands as a testament to our enduring friendship and shared vision for a brighter future for Malawi.

Zikomo Kwambiri!

Thank you for your attention!

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