

Remarks by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi
at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Construction of
School Kitchens in Mzimba District (12 May 2026)

- ❖ Mr. Emmanuel Bulukutu, District Commissioner for Mzimba South,
- ❖ Mrs. Bridget Ndau Nungu, Director of Education and Sport, M'mbelwa District Council,
- ❖ Mr. Limbani Njewa, Member of Seibo Maria Board of Trustees,
- ❖ Mr Thomas Lungu, Ward Councillor for Mabiri, representing Minister of Education, Science and Technology,
- ❖ Mr Patrick Tchuma, representing Honorable Fikani Nyirenda, Member of Parliament for Mzimba Perekezi Constituency,
- ❖ Mr. Victor Mthulo, Program Manager, Seibo Maria,
- ❖ Mr. Absalom Chumachaazungu, Counsellor for Boma Ward,
- ❖ Mr. Shadreck Bulukutu, Muwelu1 Group Village Headman,
- ❖ Reverend Nyasulu and all clergy present here today,
- ❖ Mr. Julius Ng'ambi, Headteacher Machelecheta Primary School and all other headteachers present here today,
- ❖ All government officials,
- ❖ Members of the Press and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon!

Monire, mose!

(ChiTumbuka) Pakwamba, ninaviongo kwa ise tose,

Kwa ine nintchindi zikulu kuwa namwe pamoza pachilinganizyo ichi chapachanya nkhanila.

(English: Firstly, I would like to say congratulation to all of you. I am so pleased to celebrate this new step together.)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Earlier this year, on 10th February 2026, the Embassy of Japan and Seibo Maria signed a grant contract for this project under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects. Through this project, Seibo Maria will build school kitchens at three primary schools: Machelecheta Primary School, Chabere Primary School, and Kanyerere Primary School. These kitchens will help prepare warm meals for the children every day, helping them remain in school and learn with energy.

Mzimba District has had a close relationship with Japan for more than 20 years. For a long time, Japanese volunteers and Japanese NGOs have worked with people of Mzimba in farming, in schools, and in the community. Seibo Maria is one of such Japan-related NGOs that has been working here in Mzimba. This year, marks ten years since Seibo Maria started the school feeding program here in Mzimba. I am very pleased that we are able to carry out this project together at this 10-year milestone. I was impressed today that my previous speaker remembers clearly the

name of JICA volunteers he learned from in his school days which shows deep interaction of JICA volunteers and people in Mzimba. I hope that through Seibo Maria, the friendship between these three schools and Japan will stay strong for many years to come. Let me add that I have met Mr. Makoto Yamada of Seibo Japan last night in Lilongwe, who has been raising fund in Japan for Seibo Maria through his business. I was impressed with his passion, business approach and his love for Malawi.

To conclude, I would like to appeal to Seibo Maria, all relevant stakeholders, and community at large, to ensure that construction works at all three schools progress smoothly and remain on schedule. Each one of you plays an important role in building this nation. In Malawi, there is a local proverb that says “**M’mera Mpoyamba**”, which emphasizes the importance of nurturing the growth and development of children.

Let us join hands and work together to support the future of Malawi's children. I sincerely look forward to coming back the next few months for the handover ceremony of the kitchens. This partnership stands as a testament to our lasting friendship and shared commitment to building a brighter future for Malawi.

Zikomo Kwambiri!

Tawonga Chomene!

Thank you for your attention!

End