

**Speech by Mr. NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at the monitoring of FAO's food production project in Chikwawa (18th June)**

- ❖ Mr. Ali Said Yesuf, FAO Representative in Malawi,
- ❖ Mr. Francis Mastala, Chief Agriculture Officer of the District,
- ❖ All Government Officials, Extension Officers present,
- ❖ Members of the press,
- ❖ Distinguished Guests, and Ladies and gentlemen,

**Mwadzuka bwanji nonse?** – Good morning, everyone.

**Ine dzina langa ndi Yasushi NAITO, Kazembe wa dziko la Japan muno m'Malawi.** – My name is Yasushi NAITO, Ambassador of Japan in Malawi

**Ndasangalala pondilandira kwanu kuno** – I am very pleased with your warm welcome.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** it gives me great pleasure to join you here in Chikwawa District today as we gather to witness the remarkable progress you have achieved under the project; *“Supporting El Niño-affected farming communities in the southern region of Malawi through emergency agriculture-based interventions to enhance food production and safeguard lives and livelihoods.”* .

This initiative began in 2025 as a joint initiative in partnership with FAO Malawi. It was a timely response to the severe impact of the 2024 El Niño, which disrupted the agricultural livelihoods of many smallholder farming communities across southern Malawi. The objective was clear—to restore the productive capacity of households that were hardest hit, and to help them rebuild their resilience.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** I am pleased to note that last year, my predecessor had the opportunity to witness the distribution of farm inputs. Today, I am honored to see the results of your hard work. I have visited your gardens and fields, and I am truly impressed by how effectively you have utilized the resources provided. Your dedication and commitment demonstrate a strong determination to secure your food systems and improve your livelihoods.

We traveled a long way over the mountains today and reached deep into Chikwawa and we are very happy to see the maize and beans you planted are thriving, expected to give a good harvest.

Japan has been providing food aid to Malawi in recent years to help alleviate food insecurity. However, beyond this support, initiatives like FAO's intervention to boost food production are crucial for strengthening self-sufficiency and building resilience against food shortages. This is particularly important in the context of improving preparedness for a potential global El Niño event that could affect the region in the near future.

Japan is also a disaster-prone country, and we know collaboration among community is key to enhancing resilience and preparedness. The achievement we see is proof of your strong ownership and your joint effort.

Your success in this project is a clear indication that when communities are empowered with the right support, they can recover, adapt, and thrive—even in the face of climate-related shocks.

**In closing,** I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to FAO, DoDMA, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, especially the extension services—for your tireless efforts in ensuring the success of this project.

I also wish to commend you, the farmers, for your commitment, hard work, and willingness to take responsibility for your own recovery.

I firmly believe that together, we can continue to strengthen our resilience, enhance food security, and build a more sustainable future for everyone.

**Zikomo Kwambiri.**

Thank you for your attention.

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