

Speech by Mr. NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at the Handing over of Japan's Food Aid through WFP (18th June)

- ❖ Dr. Hyoung-Joon Lim, WFP Country Director and Representative,
- ❖ Mr. Charles Matabwa, Director of Disaster Preparedness and Response, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA),
- ❖ Distinguished guests,
- ❖ Members of the Press,
- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mwaswera bwanji nonse/Good afternoon.

It is a great honour to join you today to mark the arrival of rice under Japan's Grant Aid Food Assistance Programme, implemented in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). I am especially glad it is delivered timely in the context of enhancing resilience and preparedness against global El Nino that could affect this region.

Distinguished Guests,

Malawi has been experiencing recurring food insecurity for recent years. According to WFP, approximately 4.4 million people are experiencing food insecurity this year. In addition, severe flooding in the northern and part of central region in late February caused significant damage to crops and farmland. As a result, further deterioration of the food situation is anticipated in the months ahead.

Furthermore, this effort is aligned with the directive of His Excellency President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika to strengthen preparedness and resilience against climate change,

particularly in anticipation of the impacts of a potential super El Niño that could affect the region later this year or early next year. The rice procured from Thailand this time will be distributed by WFP, in collaboration with the Government of Malawi, at a critical time to communities experiencing severe food insecurity. We trust that this assistance will provide timely and effective relief to those most in need.

Human dignity and human security remain the foundation of Japan's development cooperation. In line with these principles, the Government of Japan has extended a grant of 1.9 million US dollars (300 million yen) through WFP for the procurement and distribution of rice to the most vulnerable communities across Malawi.

I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing fiscal challenges faced by the Government of Malawi, including persistent foreign currency shortages and in that context, the food aid from Japan will make a meaningful contribution.

WFP, with its well-established logistics and distribution network, will ensure that this assistance is delivered efficiently and reaches those most in need. Japan is proud to collaborate with WFP in providing this support.

In March this year, I had the opportunity to visit a food distribution point here in Blantyre together with WFP and DoDMA. I listened to the voices of community members receiving our assistance and witnessed firsthand the severity of the food shortages they faced as a result of recent natural disasters. I also saw how effectively this food aid is helping to improve their livelihoods and enhance the nutrition of their children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Hyoung-Joon Lim and the entire WFP Malawi team for their excellent work in

managing the logistics of this programme, ensuring that even the most remote and vulnerable communities have access to food. I also extend my gratitude to DoDMA for its strong cooperation and commitment in handling the receipt and distribution of this assistance.

In conclusion, it is my sincere hope that all partners present here today will continue to play their vital roles in strengthening food security and improving nutrition for those most in need. The Government of Japan remains committed to supporting the Government of Malawi to enhance its resilience and preparedness against food insecurity.

Zikomo Kwambiri.

Thank you for your attention.

End