

**Speech by Mr. NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at the Launch of IFRC project of Empowering Local Health Systems (19th June)**

- ❖ Mr Holystone Kafanikhale, Director of Public Health, Ministry of Health,
- ❖ Councillor Alex Mambo, Vice Council Chair,
- ❖ Dr Sam Sibakwe, representing District Commissioner,
- ❖ Mr. Kopano Masilo, International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) Head of Cluster for Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe,
- ❖ Mr. Innocent Majiya, President of the Malawi Red Cross Society,
- ❖ Traditional Authority Nkhulambe and all chiefs present,
- ❖ Members of the press,
- ❖ Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Moseliwa** – 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 to Malawi

**Choyamba, ndithokoze nonse pofika pa mwambo wathu umenewu. Ine ndasangalala kukuwonani** – firstly, I would like to thank you all for coming to this event. I am very pleased to see you all.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** today we are proud to officially launch the project entitled 'Empowering Local Health Systems and Human Capital for Climate Resilience in Malawi: A Japan-Malawi Collaborative Model.' In partnership with the IFRC and the Malawi Red Cross Society, Japan has provided USD 300,000 under the Japanese Supplementary Budget (JSB) through the TICAD framework.

Over the next 12 months, this initiative will support the rehabilitation of health posts, the capacity building of community health volunteers, the installation of solar-powered cold chain units to strengthen vaccine storage, and the provision of essential equipment and supplies. Through these efforts, we aim to reach

approximately 75,000 flood-affected people in Phalombe and Mangochi districts, with special focus on women, children, and youth."

Since arriving in Malawi, I have heard many stories of how storms have devastated communities, especially in Phalombe district—causing loss of life, displacement, and damage to essential services. While we cannot replace what has been lost, we can stand together with determination to recover and rebuild.

Today, we gather to reaffirm our shared commitment to the people of Phalombe and Mangochi districts. Floods and storms leave behind not just damaged homes, but broken routines and deep emotional pain. In times of disaster, people need immediate support: shelter, food, clean water, and medical care. But recovery goes beyond meeting basic needs. Survivors also need compassion, emotional support, and renewed hope for the future.

The impacts of Cyclones Idai, Ana, Gombe, Freddy, Jude, and Chido have significantly affected health services and communities in this district. As we respond to these challenges, we must also acknowledge that climate change is real. Therefore, we must ask ourselves: what more can we do to lessen this burden? Together, let us continue to plan, prepare and act, because resilience is built by all of us working in partnership. I hope this project we launch today is effective in enhancing your resilience and preparedness against global El Niño that could also affect this region later this year and next year.

I had an honour of officiating a renovation of a public health post in this remote Degadega village that serves 24 villages, more than 12,000 people. Japan is a disaster prone country and we know, community ownership and mutual support is to key to mitigating disasters. We commend community leadership and close collaboration with Redcross for implementing this project.

Japan has consistently stood with Malawi at times of disaster—providing emergency assistance, and supporting long-term recovery and resilience building. Through partners such as JICA, we have contributed to both immediate relief and sustainable development efforts across affected communities.

Another clear example of this commitment is the construction of Chitokolo Primary School here in Phalombe through Grassroots Grant Scheme, which

represents not just infrastructure, but hope, safety, and a brighter future for children even in the face of adversity.

Japan remains committed to supporting global efforts to address climate change through strategic investments and partnerships. In this spirit, I encourage each one of us to focus on preparedness, environmental management, strengthening infrastructure, and community action. Your participation in initiatives such as tree planting is essentially critical.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our partners, the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and the Malawi Red Cross Society, for their dedication and commitment. As we have seen here in Degadega, the Red Cross is devoted to reaching all those in need, including the most remote communities. Whenever people are suffering, they respond without hesitation or compromise.

We hope this support will help restore confidence and strengthen resilience as you recover from the impacts of successive storms.

Together, let us rebuild stronger, safer, and more prepared communities.

**Zikomo Kwambiri.**

Thank you for your attention.

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