

Speech by Mr. NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at the Project Launch of UNICEF's Integrated Emergency Health, Nutrition and WASH response in Malawi

- ❖ Mr. Beston Chisamile, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Health
- ❖ Dr. Penelope Campbell, UNICEF Malawi Representative,
- ❖ Distinguished guests from the Government of Malawi, esteemed colleagues from UNICEF,
- ❖ Members of the media,
- ❖ Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is my pleasure and honor to be here and to have an opportunity to say a few words at this Project Launch Ceremony hosted by UNICEF Malawi in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I express my sincere appreciation to you all for your presence at this launch.

Malawi is currently facing complex and interlinked challenges. We recognize a humanitarian situation caused by recurring disease outbreaks such as measles, rubella, and Mpox; increasing food and nutrition insecurity; and persistent gaps in water, sanitation, and hygiene services. These challenges are further intensified by the impacts of climate change, including floods, cyclones, and El Niño effects, which continue to place the most vulnerable—particularly women and children—at risk.

It is against this background that the Government of Japan had special partnership with UNICEF. We are therefore pleased to announce Japan's supplementary budget contribution of **US\$746,666** to support the project titled "*Integrated Emergency Health, Nutrition and WASH Response in Malawi.*" This 12-month initiative aims to reduce illness and death associated with vaccine-

preventable diseases, acute malnutrition, and WASH-related waterborne diseases.

The project will deliver an integrated package of services in two high-burden districts—Thyolo and Salima—both of which have experienced recurrent cholera outbreaks and severe impacts from extreme weather disasters.

This initiative adopts a holistic, multi-sectoral approach addressing critical needs across three sectors:

- **Health:** The project aims to reach 50,000 children under five through procurement of essential vaccines and supplies, and the deployment of integrated outreach services.
- **Nutrition:** The project will focus on early detection and treatment of severe acute malnutrition, targeting the screening of 145,000 children, alongside the provision of life-saving therapeutic nutrition such as RUTF and therapeutic milk.
- **WASH:** The project will upgrade healthcare facilities to ensure climate-resilient water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management systems. In addition, 1,600 vulnerable households will gain access to affordable sanitation solutions, improving hygiene practices and reducing disease transmission.

This initiative reflects Japan's commitment to Human Security and Universal Health Coverage. It is also closely aligned with the objectives of TICAD 9, including the strengthening of resilient health systems, promotion of innovation through public-private partnerships, and support for climate change adaptation.

Japan knows from its own experience that provision of safe water protects people from infectious diseases, dramatically uplifted health and enhanced productivity and economy. Japan is the world's largest provider of aid in the water and sanitation sector in terms of cumulative contribution since the 1990s. With its experience, knowledge, and technology in this sector, the Japanese

Government continues to provide safe water in developing countries through organizations such as JICA and UNICEF.

JICA in Malawi is currently working very closely with Ministry of Health and Sanitation in implementing a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project aimed at addressing waterborne diseases and flood-related risks, including hygiene education in public toilets at shelters and schools. These efforts strongly align with and complement UNICEF's programs.

We are particularly committed to advancing the well-being and empowerment of women and girls, recognizing their central role in building healthy and resilient communities. Through inclusive and community-based service delivery, this project will contribute to strengthening their capacity and participation.

A distinctive feature of this initiative is its emphasis on innovation. We are exploring collaboration between UNICEF Malawi and the LIXIL SATO Group, a Japanese award-winning social business group, to introduce affordable and effective sanitation solutions, such as improved toilet systems and handwashing facilities. This partnership reflects Japan's belief in leveraging technology, expertise, and global collaboration to achieve sustainable impact.

We appreciate UNICEF's integrated and holistic approach actions to effectively save lives of most vulnerable people against diseases and malnutrition.

The success of this initiative depends on strong partnerships. We are confident that through the collaboration between the Government of Malawi, UNICEF, and all stakeholders, we can collectively address these challenges and build a healthier, more resilient future for the children and people of Malawi.

Let us embark on this journey together with renewed determination and shared purpose.

Thank you for your attention.

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