

Speech by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi

At the All-New Toyota HILUX Launch (27th August)

- ❖ Dr. Justin Saidi, Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet,
- ❖ Mr. Richard Luhanga, Inspector General of Malawi Police Service,
- ❖ Your Excellencies, fellow Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Head of Missions, and all diplomats present here,
- ❖ Representatives of International Organizations,
- ❖ Mr. Tsutomu Akutsu, Managing Director, Africa Mobility Solutions visiting from Johannesburg,
- ❖ Mr. Kennedy Kabaghe, Managing Director, CFAO Mobility Malawi,
- ❖ Distinguished business leaders,
- ❖ All Government Officials,
- ❖ Members of the press,
- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

Thank you very much for inviting me to be part of this important and fascinating event. It is an honor for me to join CFAO Mobility Malawi for the Launch of the 9th Generation New Toyota Hilux today. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I extend my sincere congratulations to team CFAO Mobility Malawi for this exciting launch of New Hilux.

This launch today is more than the unveiling of a new Toyota Hilux, it is a testament of the enduring commitment by Toyota to advancing and transferring reliable technology and services to the rest of the world, including Malawi. The New Hilux combines strength and reliability, for which it is known, with latest technology and infotainment to meet the evolving needs of its users.

As we celebrate this milestone, I would also like to commend CFAO Mobility Malawi for its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Last year, CFAO Malawi donated a vehicle to a Japanese NGO in Malawi, The International Support and Partnership for Health (ISAPH) in Mzimba District.

This support has enabled ISAPH to deliver its community nutrition programs more effectively to remote communities.

It all started with a letter written by Ms Hagiwara a program officer of ISAPH to thank Toyota for the contribution of a previous Hilux they had bought by themselves, and the letter was sent to Mr. Akio TOYODA, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Toyota Motors Cooperation. On instruction- from Chairman Akio TOYODA, CFAO Mobility Malawi embarked on a project, which saw Mr Akutsu and Kennedy going to Mzimba to hand over a brand-new Hilux to ISAPH to support its nutrition programs. This CSR project was signed at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) last year in Yokohama, Japan. In May, I visited Mzimba and saw the Hilux actively supporting the communities, going strong through the hilly slopes of Mzimba and producing a lot of smiles on the faces of mothers.

Such initiatives demonstrate that businesses can also play a vital role in uplifting the well-being of the people they serve, beyond their business goals.

Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to see so many Japanese vehicles here in Malawi, contributing to employment creation, skills transfer, technology, economic and social development of the country. Toyota, as one of the most recognized and trusted global brands, has supported national development efforts in the agriculture sector and rural development in addition to facilitating trade and business, and contributing to public service delivery. Toyota Hilux has remained a consistent reliable and trusted partner in public and economic activities across the country. The popularity of the Toyota Hilux and Toyota brand in Malawi reflects the trust that Malawians continue to place on quality and reliability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year marks 62 years of Toyota's existence in Malawi. Similarly, Japan and Malawi have enjoyed 62 years of a cordial and mutually beneficial diplomatic relationship founded on trust, friendship and a shared commitment to sustainable and inclusive development. Over the years, Japan has supported Malawi's progress in infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, disaster resilience and private sector development. While the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has been and remains important for Malawi, private sector activity should be actively encouraged and strengthened so that it becomes the engine for economic growth and job creation.

Distinguished Guests,

Since I arrived in Malawi I have seen the potential of the private sector in the country. I believe the future of our cooperation will increasingly be driven by trade and investment. At TICAD 9 last year, commitments centered, among others, on private sector-led growth. The Embassy of Japan is therefore committed to being the bridge between Japanese and Malawi businesses.

Earlier this year, the Embassy of Japan organized a business networking session that brought together Japanese and Malawian companies and about 17 Japanese companies participated. Following the success of the earlier session, the Embassy of Japan also organized another business networking session on Monday, this week. Six companies from Japan took part in this session.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude, let me reaffirm the shared commitment to exploring and expanding business linkages between the two nations. This launch today is a clear manifestation of the existence of investment opportunities in Malawi. I therefore wish to encourage the Government of Malawi to continue creating the enabling business environment to facilitate investment and the growth of the private sector in the country.

Once again, let me congratulate CFAO Mobility Malawi for the launch of the New Toyota Hilux. As many Malawians proudly say TOYOTA HILUX NDI MWALAMWALA (Toyota Hilux is Tough like a Rock) because of its toughness, while its maintenance remains YOSABOOLA MTHUMBA (it is easy on your pockets – meaning it is less expensive maintenance). I am confident that the New Toyota Hilux will continue to serve the people of Malawi as the generations before it have done.

ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI

Thank you very much for your attention.

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