

Speech by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for the Project for the Construction of Community Based Child Care and Health Check-up Centre at Masuku area in Chiradzulu District. (29th September 2026)

- Ms. Elestina Mmame, District Commissioner, Chiradzulu District Council
- Mr. Williams Banda, Director Policy and Executive Advisor to Minister, Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Decentralization
- Mr. Steve Kanyerere, Director of Finance, Chiradzulu District Council
- Ms. Elizabeth Mlato, Director of Social Welfare, Chiradzulu District Council
- All Government Officials
- Members of the Press
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Muli Bwanji nonse...!

I am pleased to welcome you all here at the Embassy of Japan, for this Grant Contract Signing Ceremony. I would like to thank you all for sparing your time to witness this signing ceremony. I am especially pleased and honoured to welcome the distinguished delegation from Chiradzulu District Council all the way from Chiradzulu District; 750km's away from Lilongwe. And this is an important day for the people of Masuku, in which we have just signed this Grant Contract. Congratulations!

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Japan is proud to announce its decision to support Chiradzulu District Council to improve Early Childhood Development (ECD). This project is funded by the government of Japan under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP) amounting to USD 132,881 (approximately 233million Kwacha). Through this project, Chiradzulu District Council will construct a Community Based Child Care Centre (CBCC) and a Health Post in Masuku area in Chiradzulu District.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For years, the Masuku area has faced a serious double burden: limited education and distant healthcare without proper ECD facilities. Children rarely had access to early learning and health facilities as these were located far away. So timely medical attention and treatment was a struggle. This project has taken a holistic approach to addressing the two challenges faced by the community at Masuku, not just building classroom blocks but also constructing a health post. By

placing a health post on the same site as the childcare centre, it will nurture children's education and protect their health together. This mirrors the vision of Malawi 2063, where human capital development is recognized as the ultimate foundation of national growth. When children start life with sound health and early education, they stay in school, complete primary education, and even advance to higher education.

Distinguished Guests,

This project is also a culmination of a long relation between the Embassy and the Chiradzulu District Council. In 2016, the Chiradzulu District Education Office constructed Chikangulu Community Day Secondary School under a same grant, Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project. In April this year, I was invited by Hon. Joseph Mwanamvekha, Minister of Finance Economic Planning and Decentralization to witness the achievement of the project in Chikangulu. I was pleased to learn that many learners who were educated at Chikangulu Community Day Secondary School have now become young leaders and responsible citizens contributing to the economic development of the country. I was also pleased to see the ownership of the community was very strong and I congratulated the leaders on these achievements.

Distinguished Guests,

I believe the construction of the CBCC will complete the chain of community education. Investing in early childhood is investing in the foundation of this nation. The seeds we plant here today will produce many more responsible young leaders and drive Malawi toward a stronger and brighter future. I believe that having studied in schools built through our joint efforts, from the CBCC at Masuku and completing secondary education at Chikangulu, the children will stand as proud bridges of the relationship between Japan and Malawi.

I wish to add here that, when I visited in April, I was moved by the presence of the Minister of Finance himself. A leader, who tackles pressing issues of macro-economic reforms, does not forget but has boundless passion and strong care on improving the well-being of the people on the ground.

It is my heartfelt hope that the children who grow up here will go on to lead Malawi into a thriving future, further strengthening the lasting bond of friendship between Malawi and Japan. We look forward to working closely with Chiradzulu District Council and the local community to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of this project.

Zikomo Kwambiri!

Thank you for your attention!

End