Speech by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi at the Exchange of Note Signing Ceremony of Japanese Grant Assistance to provide Road Rehabilitation Equipment (30th October)

- Hon Joseph Mwanamvekha, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Decentralization,
- Dr. Cliff Chiunda, Secretary to the Treasury,
- Dr. Mary Kachale, PS Legal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
- Your Worship Deputy Mayor of the Lilongwe City, Cr Triza Silo,
- Mr. Clement Stambuli, Chief Executive Officer Lilongwe City Council,
- Government officials present,
- Members of Press,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure and honor to be here with you together with Mr Tanaka, Resident Representative of JICA Malawi today as we sign the Exchange of Notes for the Japanese Grant Aid under the "Economic and Social Development Programme," for the provision of road rehabilitation equipment to the Lilongwe City Council. The signing marks another significant milestone in our shared efforts to improve Malawi's transport infrastructure and strengthen its economic connectivity.

Malawi depends on its road network for more than 90 percent of its passenger and freight movement. Roads are truly the lifeline of this nation. Therefore, an efficient road network is vital not only for domestic mobility but also for driving sustainable economic growth, regional integration, and international trade. Maintenance of road infrastructure is one of the highest priority of the policy of the government of Malawi and I respect

government's efforts of road construction being implemented actively.

Early this year in February, we handed over the Lilongwe bridge, and we are now considering further support for the M1 south bound, as we are implementing preparatory survey in this budgetary year. All these efforts including this grant, contributes to the advancement of the Nacala Corridor connecting Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia.

While major trunk roads like the M1 are the backbone of this corridor, their ultimate efficiency depends heavily on the condition of the urban and secondary roads that feed them. If these connecting roads are damaged, congested, or poorly maintained, the full benefits of our investments on major highways cannot be realized.

As the capital city and a rapidly growing commercial center, Lilongwe plays a pivotal role in supporting the Nacala Corridor. A well-maintained road network is essential to ensure the smooth flow of goods and people between residential areas, industrial zones, markets, government institutions, and primary transport routes.

However, we are fully aware of the serious challenges the Lilongwe City Council has faced in timely road maintenance due to a shortage of necessary equipment. The deterioration of urban roads not only hinders transportation efficiency and increases vehicle operating costs, but above all, it poses a direct and serious threat to the daily traffic and safety of Lilongwe citizens.

To address these challenges, the Government of Japan is pleased to support this project through the provision of road maintenance equipment worth Four Hundred Million Japanese Yen (¥400,000,000), approximately US$2.7 million.

I am particularly happy that Japan is able to support Lilongwe City Council through the provision of a fleet of heavy machinery including Stabilizer, Motor Grader, Asphalt emulsion tank lolly, Asphalt finisher, Tire roller, Vibratory tandem roller, Hand-guided rollers and dump truck.

These fleet of machinery will enable the Council to apply "stabilizing method" namely to crash existing asphalt and other granular material of old dilapidated road, mixing the rubble and recycling it with additive asphalt emulsion and cement as the fleet advance following drum rollers and motor grader complete seal coating. Japanese government provided these machinery to other parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America and they were highly appreciated by recipient countries as the time needed for of rehabilitation is halved, cost effective, emit less CO2 and life cycle cost of the road also improved (improved road last at least 15 year).

One recipient country sent a letter of appreciation to Japanese Government after completing rehabilitation of more than 2,000 kilometers of roads.

This Japanese technology is widely recognized for its quality, reliability, and efficiency. We hope that this equipment will help improve the efficiency of road maintenance operations, strengthen the Council's capacity to manage its road network, and promote more sustainable infrastructure management. Through this grant, Japan will also organize training sessions to transfer skills.

We are confident that this support will contribute to better road conditions across Lilongwe City and, most importantly, enable citizens to travel more safely and comfortably.

Japan remains committed to supporting Malawi's sustainable economic and social development through cooperation in quality infrastructure and capacity building.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
The Exchange of Notes signed today is not just about donating machinery. It is a vital investment in Malawi's connectivity, economic opportunity, public safety, and resilience.

Today's ceremony also reflects the enduring bond and trust between the Government of Japan and the Government of Malawi. We share a common vision of promoting sustainable infrastructure, strengthening regional connectivity, and fostering inclusive economic growth. In this connection, I wish to commend and support current persistent efforts by Government of Malawi on reforms to stabilize macro economic situation.

We hope that the benefits of this support will extend far beyond Lilongwe, enhancing efficiency along the entire Nacala Corridor, boosting regional trade, and ultimately uplifting the lives of many Malawian citizens.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.
Zikomo kwambiri.

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