Remarks by NAITO Yasushi, Ambassador of Japan to Malawi
At the 2026 Japan Alumni networking reception (on 13th Nov)

- Our Guest of Honor, Honourable Bright Msaka, SC, Minister of Education, Science and Technology,
- Dr. Max Wengawenga, Executive Assistant to the President,
- Mr. Donbell Mandala, CEO of NICO General Insurance,
- Dr. Henrie Njoloma, Principle Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources,
- All Government Officials present here,
- Mr. Yukinari TANAKA, Chief Representative of JICA Malawi,
- Mr. Yugo Koshima, Resident Representative of IMF Malawi,
- Alumni members who studied in Japan through different schemes,
- Friends from the business sector,
- Friends from the media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

**1. Introduction**

Mulibwanji nonse?

I wish to welcome everyone for joining us this evening at Japan alumni networking reception. Tonight, we celebrate our alumni, who have studies in Japan. It uniquely symbolize the success of our cooperation for skills and knowledge exchange.

Through our 62 years of diplomatic relations, more than 4,000 Malawians have visited Japan through various scholarship and training programmes. Some participated in JICA training programmes, while others studied under the Ministry of Education ( MEXT) Scholarships. Some obtained PhDs or master's degrees, while others enrolled in short-term training programmes. 4000 is an incredible number, and today we find Japan alumni across Malawi in different ministries, businesses and academic institutions, making use of the expertise and knowledge they acquired in Japan.

On Wednesday, we celebrated the 55th anniversary of the JICA Volunteer Programme in Malawi. To date, a total of 1,983 volunteers have been dispatched to Malawi, and this number will soon reach 2,000. Malawi has received the highest number of JICA

volunteers in the world. Even after completing their two-year assignments, some volunteers return to Malawi to continue engaging in development activities.
We are thus blessed with motivated both Malawian and Japanese, who are bridging our two countries. They are not only big in number but also passionate about forging human bonds, and they have been the driving force behind our bilateral relations.

Tonight, I look forward to interacting with our alumni, whose educational journeys and contributions have helped shape Malawi and beyond. This is an opportunity to reflect on the value of international partnerships, and the opportunities advancing knowledge and importing and applying expertise to Malawi.

**2. Importance of Scholarships and Trainings**

The Government of Japan recognises that the development of skilled human resources is one of the most important foundations of sustainable development. This is particularly important in an era when innovation and technology, including Artificial Intelligence, are strategic and increasingly becoming key drivers of progress.

The scholarships and training programmes offered play a vital role in capacity development by providing talented and motivated individuals with opportunities to pursue higher education and acquire knowledge and skills that can contribute to their countries' development.

I am privileged to meet all MEXT Scholarship awardees before their departure, and I have been impressed by their high motivation and willingness to learn medicine, materials science, geology and public finance, with the aim of returning to Malawi and contribute to improving the lives of fellow citizens.

**3. Private Sector Engagement**

Tonight, in recognition of the importance of the private sector as a catalyst for industrial development, we have invited representatives of several Japanese-affiliated companies to facilitate networking and explore potential partnerships.

I wish to take this opportunity to highlight that one of these companies, JTI Malawi, has graciously provided postgraduate scholarships through our Embassy since 2021. We commend JTI for its commitment to Malawi's capacity development and look forward to seeing more such partnerships emerge from the private sector.

**4. Japan's Charm and Role in Development**

**Distinguished guests,**

Japan is a country that combines a rich cultural heritage with modern technology and innovation. From the beauty of its traditional arts, cuisine and festivals to its advanced industries, efficient transport systems and commitment to quality, Japan offers many things to discover and appreciate.

In September, some of us here enjoyed experiencing Japanese traditions, including dance and the tea ceremony, during Japan Day 2026, which took place at Woodlands Farmers Market. It was an event to share elements of Japanese culture with the people of Malawi.

Beyond its rich culture and traditions, Japan is committed to working with African countries, as announced at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), to broaden access to inclusive and equitable quality education, training and skills development.

Japan is home to nearly 800 universities and is increasingly becoming a popular study destination for students around the world. According to our surveys, Japan attracts students because of its high-quality education; unique culture and cuisine; convenient study environment, including an efficient transport system; technological advancements; modern infrastructure; historical monuments; beautiful landscapes with distinctive seasons; and its reputation as a safe and secure country. Tokyo and other major cities are increasingly becoming international hubs where people from across the world come to study.

I sincerely hope that more Malawians will have the opportunity to experience it firsthand.

**5. Conclusion**

Tonight, we are privileged to have alumni who have agreed to share how their learning experiences in Japan are making a difference in their work. We are all very much excited to hear their insights.

To our alumni, the Embassy and JICA will continue to support the activities of the Japan Alumni Association in Malawi and ensure that you have opportunities to stay connected with Japan, even years after your study in Japan.

I hope that this evening will inspire you to strengthen your networks, share your experiences and explore new opportunities for cooperation. With a network of more than 4,000 Malawians who have benefited from various scholarship and training programmes in Japan, we have a great opportunity to capitalise on this network, and create further opportunities for collaboration. After all, human bonds are the most important asset between Japan and Malawi, and we wish to deepen and expand these bonds further

I wish you all a pleasant and productive evening as you network and build new connections.

Thank you, and enjoy your evening.

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