

Hand Over of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to Department of Social Development

23 July, 2012



On the 14th of July 2012, the celebration for the official handover of 10 customized Toyota Quantums from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Department of Social Development and each of the nine provinces of South Africa was held at the Embassy of Japan. The Embassy of Japan welcomed over 100 guests including H.E. Ms. Olive Bathabile Dlamini, Minister of Social Development, Members of Executive Council from 7 provinces, members of disabled people's

organizations, and Mr. Tomohiro Seki, Deputy Representative of the JICA office in Pretoria. The vehicles were converted to transport disabled people, with modifications including a non-slip floor and a lift for wheelchair accessibility.

In the speech, H.E. Ambassador Yoshizawa said that Japan would continue to play a role in supporting people with disabilities in South Africa, in partnership with DSD and help realize inclusive growth in South Africa and build a caring society together, supporting vulnerable people including handicapped people to promote disability mainstreaming.

[Text of the speech is attached.]



Over the next two years, JICA will provide training to 480 senior and middle managers at the Department on the integration and inclusion of disabled people. As a leading donor in cooperation for disabled people, Japan will continue to dispatch experts and receive people with disabilities for training.

[ANNEX]

Speech by H.E. Ambassador Designate of Japan Mr. Yoshizawa

Saturday 14 July 2012

Hand over of wheelchair accessible vehicles to DSD

Her Excellency, Ms Olive Bathabile Dlamini, Minister of Social Development,
Honorable Members of Executive Council,
Mr. Vusi Madonsela, Director General of the Department of Social Development,
Other Senior Officials of the Department of Social Development and DIRCO,
Mr. Masaru Shimada, Divisional Senior Executive Coordinator of Toyota South Africa
Mr. Tomohiro Seki JICA Pretoria,
Members of disabled people's organizations,
Members of the media,
Distinguished guests and
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning,

Welcome to the Embassy of Japan and thank you for joining us today to celebrate the official handover of 10 Quantums, which have been converted to wheelchair accessible vehicles with lifts and which are to be provided to each of nine provinces of South Africa and to the national office of Department of Social Development or DSD.

My embassy highly regards DSD's commitment to create an inclusive and caring South Africa and to promote capacity building for the vulnerable groups at community levels through a number of successful programmes. Therefore, I am very glad that the Japan International Cooperation Agency or JICA will be able to promote partnership with DSD this time by donating these vehicles for DSD's activities and enhance collaboration among DSD officials.

However, this is not the first time that Japan has engaged in activities in support of people with disabilities in South Africa. Here are some examples.

The Embassy recently funded a several projects through its Grant Assistance for Grass Roots and Human Security Program or GGP Program in support of people with disability in South Africa. For instance, it provided a braille embosser to the South Africa National Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted Persons in Seshego, Limpopo Province in 2009. It also provided a special classroom to the New Hope School in Pretoria in 2010.

Through JICA, total 11 South Africans with disabilities, including DSD officials, were invited to attend training courses in Japan in the last 10 years.

Peer-counseling skill training was organized by JICA as a side event to the Disabled People's

International World Assembly in October 2011.

JICA supported the National Disability Summit, hosted by the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities in March 2012.

Furthermore, in response to the proposal from DSD, a new DSD-JICA project will commence later this year to promote disability mainstreaming across DSD programs.

I sincerely hope that Japan will continue to play a role in supporting people with disabilities in South Africa, in partnership with DSD and help realize inclusive growth in South Africa and build a caring society together supporting vulnerable population including people with disabilities.

I wish to take this opportunity to highlight two more things.

First thing is related to a Quantum, make of cars to be officially handed over today. Toyota South Africa recently launched a new assembly line for Quantum Ses'fikiles in its Durban factory, thereby producing Quantums within South Africa. I was told that Toyota SA has been creating some 100,000 jobs in South Africa so far. With this new assembly line, additional jobs will be created not only within Toyota South Africa but also in upstream and downstream suppliers, and service providers.

Secondly, this year, 2012, marks the 10th anniversary of JICA Volunteers or JOCV activities in South Africa. Since July 2002, 74 JOCVs and 2 senior volunteers have served in South Africa in areas such as math and science technology. Information on JOCV activities is displayed within the Embassy's premises. Also, Mr. Fumitoshi Watahiki, a JOCV who teaches electricity and electronics at Maplanen Campus, Ehlanzeni Further Education and Training (FET) College in Mpumalanga is with us today and will be able to introduce JOCV activities to us later.

Once again, thank you for joining us today and thank you for your attention.

(End)