

Remarks by Mr. Akamatsu
on the Occasion of the Ground-breaking ceremony for
The Project for Maintaining Juba Na Bari Community Road
at 10:00 on 31st January 2013, Juba, South Sudan

Honorable Deputy Minister Mr. Simon Majok Majak, Ministry of Road and Bridges

Honorable Minister Mr. Suba Samuel Manase, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure of Central Equatoria State

H.E. Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNMISS

Colonel Harutoshi Tsuchiya, Director of the Joint Coordination Office, Japanese Contingent to UN Mission in South Sudan

Mr. Tomoki Kobayashi, Acting Chief Representative, JICA South Sudan

Excellences,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Three months have passed since the signing of this project, “*The Project for Maintaining Juba Na Bari Community Road*”, a Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP) by the Government of Japan, and today we are finally

touching the ground to officially commence the roadwork, here at the very center of the community.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to thank all the people who have worked so hard to realize this project, especially those at the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure (MOPI) of Central Equatoria State, UNMISS, JICA, and last but not least, Japanese Engineering Company.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Japan's economic cooperation to South Sudan is highlighted by several infrastructure development projects such as Improvement of Water Supply System, the Construction of New Nile River Bridge and Improvement of Juba River Port. However, compared to these large scale projects, this Na Bari project, small as it is, is unique in two ways.

First, this project is the first attempt to gather joint efforts from the Government of Japan, JICA, UNMISS, and local government. While the Government of Japan is providing over *one million forty one thousand US dollars*, feasibility study was conducted by JICA, and designing and actual construction, ie. procurement, road maintenance and the drainage construction, is made through collaboration between MOPI and the Japanese Contingent dispatched to UNMISS. This joint endeavor was not an easy task, but I believe it has set a model approach for supporting the nation building of this country.

Second, the project is realized through strong support from the local Na Bari Community. Today, I see many people from the community observing this ceremony. It

was these people who raised their voice and addressed the needs of mitigating over-flooding and sanitation problems caused by rain in the community, without which, this project could not have materialized. Further, more than 300 people took part in clean-up campaigns by the Japanese Contingent, gathering bags of litters. As I observed community people working together with UNMISS Japanese Contingent, I felt that the project is earning more community ownership, and at the same time harnessing the friendship between Japan and South Sudan at grassroots level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As South Sudan continues to endeavor its second year of nation building, there would be many challenges to tackle and the journey ahead is still very long.

But the project we are celebrating today has already shown, I believe, a way forward how this new born country would tackle such challenges. That is, under the ownership of local community and the Government, bilateral partners, such as Japan, would come in hand-in-hand with the United Nations, maximizing the effectiveness of respective cooperation. In short, “Ownership and Partnership” will be the key concept for successful development.

Such concept has been an underlying basis for Japan’s overall cooperation to Africa for two decades, and this will be further enlighten in the coming *5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V)* which will be hosted by the Government of Japan in June. Under the theme of “Hand in hand with more dynamic Africa”, TICADV aims to further strengthen our partnership with African nations, and Japan welcomes H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit, to demonstrate and share the

experiences of this new born country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Paving 1.7km of the community road may be just a tiny little contribution to a country of 620,000 square kilometers with vast needs of extended road network. However, I believe that a journey of a thousand miles begin with a small step. I strongly hope that the road will be of a good quality so that it becomes a proud of Juba Na Bari Community, and will remain a center of the life of the people here.

As I close my remarks, I wish the successful completion of the road in the coming months, and look forward to the day we can walk down on the newly paved Juba Na Bari Road. Until that day, let us continue to work together hand in hand.

Thank you very much.

(End)