

**Remarks by His Excellency KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan
at the Launching Event for
the Food Security, Emergency Flood Response and Recovery Project in South Sudan
at Juba Landmark Hotel**

Honourable Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management,
Honourable Clement Taban Dominic, Undersecretary of Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management,
Honourable Lokulenge Lole Timayo, Chairperson of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission,
Honourable Deng Tong Kenjok, Commissioner of Awerial County, Lakes State,
Mr. Balázs Horváth, UNDP Country Director in South Sudan,
Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and privilege to celebrate today the launch of this Japan-funded UNDP project for Food Security, Emergency Flood Response and Recovery in South Sudan. The Government of Japan has disbursed USD 4.8 million in support of this project that makes 250,000 internally-displaced South Sudanese in 5 states better prepare for emergency floods during the rainy seasons and ensure food supply in these circumstances.

The innovation of this project is its scope of engagement: the project encompasses both the humanitarian relief efforts and the mid- to long-term development initiatives for communities affected by the annual floods. The water resource that South Sudan fortunately enjoys can turn into a menace to people's livelihoods when it gets out of control. This project engages grass-root communities which are most vulnerable to such shocks. This will mitigate the flood damages by determining, in advance, what actions must be taken by both the communities and government authorities. The actions to be taken are a) equipping necessary food reserves for future food security, b) taking the advantage of the excess water for future use in agriculture, livestock-keeping, and fisheries, and c) identifying communication lines among the community members and with public offices at the county, state, and national levels so that, upon future emergencies, different stakeholders can respond quickly and efficiently. In addition to participation of community members, we believe that such prior engagement with the government authorities is invaluable in saving the most vulnerable from massive humanitarian disasters.

Honourable Minister Awut, presiding over this event today, together with other South Sudanese senior representatives, attended in person the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Miyagi, Japan, earlier this year. During the conference, Honourable Minister played an instrumental role in adopting the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which crystallizes the governments' determination to strengthen disaster risk governance and invest in its reduction to gain resilience and disaster-preparedness.

One of the communities in Miyagi, Kesenuma, engulfed in tsunami waves upon the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, has now a slogan that reads, "Live with the Sea". Previous and current generations of that community which heavily engages in fisheries have come under attack by high waves, but continues to believe in the power of taming the natural menace and living with the natural endowment. With such inspiration in mind, we hope that, through this project implemented by UNDP, the people of South Sudan, from community to government levels, gain the ideas of disaster response, establish practice of governing the annual challenges, and gear themselves to building resilient communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The people and the Government of Japan are behind your self-help efforts on resilience building in South Sudan. This project is not only going to be about humanitarian relief but also about emerging from disasters even more strongly than before and generating livelihoods as fishermen, farmers, and cattle keepers. We are pleased to have this opportunity to share the lessons that we learnt the hard way, i.e. preparedness on the part of the community and the government will mitigate the impact of disasters and mobilize emergency response. Last but not least, we would like to commend the effort by UNDP for designing this project. We look forward to the implementation and the outcomes of this project.

We also hope that, when completed, this project will be emulated elsewhere in the country, just like how Japan tries to share its disaster-related lessons elsewhere in the world.

I thank you for your attention.