

**SPEECH BY THE AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO NIGERIA,
H.E. MR. YUTAKA KIKUTA,
AT THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY
OF THE DELIVERY OF THE LAST BATCH (12 AMBULANCES)
OF 43 AMBULANCES TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

27 July, 2018
Abuja

Honourable Minister of Health, Prof. Isaac Adewole
Members of the Press Corps
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is a great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Government of Japan at this handing-over ceremony of the delivery of the last batch (12 ambulances) of 43 ambulances to the Ministry of Health under Japan's *Non-Project Grant Aid for Provision of Japanese SME's Products*.

First, I would like to express my appreciation to our partners who made it possible for this ceremony to take place today, especially H.E. Professor Isaac Adewole, the Honourable Minister of Health and his team at the Ministry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan is a country which keeps her words. Around this time last year (30 June 2017), the Government of Japan handed over to the Ministry of Health 31 ambulances in the first batch of delivery out of the total 43 ambulances. These ambulances were meant to be distributed to every state of Nigeria and the FCT. At that occasion, my predecessor, Ambassador Kusaoke promised that the remaining 12 ambulances would be delivered in due course. Thus, we are gathered here today to mark the delivery of the remaining 12 ambulances in fulfilment of the promise made a year ago.

Health, being part of the foundation of the economic and social development of a country, has always been one of the main focuses of the Government of Japan in its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Nigeria. For example, the Government of Japan, through its community-based Grant Assistance, is providing primary health care facilities as well as boreholes for the provision of potable water, to rural communities. We have also supplied advanced medical equipment to secondary health care facilities. Another example is Japan's scholarship programme for Nigerian undergraduate medical students to learn medical institutes in Japan.

However, this project is particularly unique because ambulances mostly serve those in a very critical condition when the availability of an ambulance and rapid response could mean the difference between life and death. I must state that this is just one of the many products of the collaboration and cooperation of the Government of Japan with Nigeria in its health sector.

Lastly, I am very happy to note that all the states and the F.C.T. now have the ambulances from Japan. I hope this joint-work of Japan and Nigeria will help realize the final goal of extensive coverage of ambulance services and will support the development of an inclusive and robust medical health system in Nigeria.

Thank you.