

**REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BARAKA LUVANDA  
AT THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF  
FIVE YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL AGRI-  
NUTRITION LEADERS PROGRAM AT THE TOKYO  
UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE (TOKYO NODAI),  
JANUARY 8, 2025**

*Prof. Machito MIHARA,*

*Director, Center for Global Initiatives of the Tokyo University of  
Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) and Our host.*

*Your Excellency Ambassador (Pst.) Arthur Andambi,  
Deputy Head of Mission at Kenya Embassy in Tokyo,*

*Invited Guests,*

*Dear Faculty Members and Students,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

*A very good afternoon to you all.*

*Minasan Kon'chiwa.*

Let me, at the outset, express my gratitude for the invitation to this ceremony. It is both an honour and privilege for me to once again be here and, especially to join you in celebrating the five years of great achievements of the of the *Global Agri-Nutrition Leaders Program*.

It has now become part of my tradition to accept an invitation from NODAI by simple logic. One of the reasons is that I live in the neighborhood, so it does not cost me a dime to come here. But another important factor is the strong and beneficial partnership that NODAI has built with Tanzania over so many years.

The strong partnership between the higher learning institutions depicts the strong commitment of Japan and Tanzania to fostering mutual development through education, technology transfer and capacity building. Broadly, Japan's expertise in agricultural innovation and Tanzania's rich agricultural potential create a very strong synergy that can drive lasting progress.

Thus far, this groundbreaking initiative we are celebrating today has brought together the Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) and the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and other global prestigious agriculture and nutrition institutions.

This special event is a time of celebration and a time of reflection on the five years' achievements. It is also time to celebrate together the five years of hard work of collaboration and shared commitment in addressing global challenges in agriculture and nutrition.

For the College, it is the time when you celebrate and salute the fine alumni you have produced, and the knowledge you have imparted to them over the past five years.

You will agree with me that, since its inception in December 2020, this project-based collaborative education program has

proved how academic institutions from different continents may work together to have a significant impact.

With a focus on improving nutrition in Africa, the program has empowered a new generation of leaders with the knowledge, skills, and passion needed to tackle pressing issues such as food security, malnutrition, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Just like many other African countries, agriculture is the backbone of our economy, employing roughly 65% of the population and making substantial contributions to food security and livelihoods.

However, overarching concerns such as climate change, restricted access to contemporary technologies, and nutrition-related health issues necessitate innovative and integrated solutions. This program has clearly demonstrated its ability to serve as a catalyst for such solutions by fostering the exchange of ideas, technologies, and cultural exchanges between Tanzania and Japan.

The collaboration between Tokyo NODAI and SUA has strengthened academic partnerships, enhanced capacity building, and has contributed to impactful research.

I am particularly happy and proud to note that this program has generated over 185 young Tanzanian scholars, equipping them to become leaders in Agri-nutrition and enabling them to drive transformative change in their communities. This is a great contribution worthy of a celebration.

*Dear Participants,*

As the world works together to eradicate hunger and promote excellent health and well-being, increasing nutrition is critical to attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 2 on zero hunger and SDG 3 on health and well-being. Programs like this are critical for developing leaders capable of addressing our shared global concerns of *food insecurity* and *malnutrition*, both of which persist worldwide, including in many parts of Africa.

Given its relevance, I strongly commend the interdisciplinary approach of the program which combines agricultural sciences, nutrition, and community engagement.

The program has ensured culturally suitable and long-term dietary solutions by merging traditional knowledge with modern research. The outcomes have largely been impressive and worthy scaling up.

That is why, as we are nearing the end of the program in March this year (2025), we should be reflecting on the results thus far and maybe ponder over how best we can preserve and expand this kind of collaboration.

By and large, the program has laid a solid foundation and served as the framework for more ambitious projects that address the evolving needs of our societies.

To the young leaders who have been part of this initiative, you are all the future of agriculture and nutrition. Please allow your knowledge, talent, and dedication to play a critical part in

developing resilient food systems and guaranteeing a healthier and more affluent Africa.

I am quite confident that you will translate the great success of this program into concrete actions and deeds.

I also invite you to take continued interest in your soon to be *alma mater* as I am quite sure that it will have some other opening for those interested in pursuing further academic ambitions.

Always remember that “*the mind is like a garden, if it is not watered, and cultivated, weeds will take over.*” at SUA for their dedication to advancing education and research in agriculture and nutrition in Tanzania.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It would be remiss on my part if I concluded my remarks without extending further my heartfelt congratulations to everyone who has contributed to the success of the *Global Agri-Nutrition Leaders Program*.

My humble appeal for *NODAI* is that the partnerships and the achievements forged over the past five years must or rather should inspire continued collaboration and innovation in the coming years, including through introduction of many other programs like this.

I urge all of us to remain committed to our purpose of improving people's lives via agriculture and nutrition, as well as strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Tanzania and Japan.

*Lastly*, since you have been polite and have listened to me attentively, I will leave you with a joke:

*"Two friends were talking about another guy. "I will never invite him to my parties again," one said. "Last time he did something I did not like." "What was that?" "He came."*



You invited us. We hope you meant it. And we hope we will not do anything to deny us an invitation to the next ceremony like this.

*Thank you very much for your kind attention,*

*Asante Sana.*

*Domo Arigato Gozaimashita.*