

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT BY HON. OKELLO ORYEM**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN CHARGE OF**

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**ON THE**

**OCCASION TO RECEIVE THE JAPANESE OVERSEAS**

**VOLUNTEERS**

**KAMPALA, 17 FEBRUARY 2022**

***Your Excellency, Fukuzawa Hidemoto, Ambassador of Japan,***

***Your Excellencies Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Members of the Diplomatic Corps***

***JICA Chief Representative Mr. Uchiyama Takayuki***

***Members of the Japan Community in Uganda,***

***Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is my pleasure and honor, on behalf of the Government and the people of Uganda and on my own behalf, to extend our appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for their continued commitment in development across the global especially in Africa.

In 2001, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) began coming to Uganda. Since then, over 760 volunteers have worked together with local communities, building trust and friendships for the social-economic development of Uganda.

There is a sheer multitude of volunteer success stories that we have witnessed such as; the construction of schools and water boreholes to teaching baseball to young boys and girls. These activities carried out by individual volunteers are much smaller in scale than those implemented by large development cooperation programs. However, they have an undeniable long-term impact on the lives they touch.  These volunteers and their activities are therefore greatly commended.

The COVID -19 pandemic has illustrated that we are stronger if we work together and through the continuity of the JOCV Programme, more can be achieved.

**Your Excellency,**

The Republic of Uganda and Japan enjoy excellent relations and **both countries have been witnessing closer and excellent cooperation at the bilateral and international level.**

Uganda continues to pursue an ambitious Economic transformation agenda to transform the lives of all Ugandans as defined by the Uganda Vision 2040 and highlighted by the NDPIII and the NRM Manifesto.One of our core focuses will be implementation of Parish Development Model, (PDM) which is a strategy and a vehicle for organizing and delivering public and private sector interventions for wealth creation and employment generation at the parish level.

Given the experience and working method of the JOCV, I invite your government through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency to explore working with Uganda as we undertake this journey in the areas of agriculture whole value chain development; and tourism among others.

**Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**,

The circumstances surrounding us are increasingly becoming complex, as evidenced in the occurrence of natural disasters and outbreak of cross-border epidemics. I sincerely hope that we can continue to work together to extend effective measures to assure safety of the Ugandan people and their livelihood, including that of the volunteers.

I would like to express my great respect to all the volunteers and related institutions, for their noble spirit of volunteering.

**I thank you.**

**For God and my Country**