

Greetings

Toshiko Ibe, President

ハバリ・ザ・アズブヒ！（スワヒリ語の挨拶）

It is an honor for me to represent St Luke's International University here today to convey our heartfelt congratulations to Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science on the official start of your new Midwifery Master's program.

In 2009, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science and St Luke's International University entered a joint Memorandum of Agreement committing ourselves to academic and research cooperation and exchanges.

In Tanzania, maternal mortality is relatively high, and the quality and accessibility of maternity healthcare is relatively low. Improvement of maternal and child healthcare is therefore an urgent matter, and we believe that it is essential to foster young researchers and scholars who are specialized to perform the necessary "maternal and child health" research and educational activities.

At the same time we have often seen how promising students from Asian and African countries who have studied at St Luke's don't return to their home countries to apply their knowledge, but move on to Western countries, and this is regrettable.

Therefore, this we started the "Sustainable development of novice researchers who will contribute evidence-based midwifery for the promotion of maternal and child health in Tanzania" program at our university to train Tanzanian midwives to have competence to take independent action about health problems in their own country, in the hope of eventually help establishing the first master's course in midwifery in Tanzania. This project is led by Dr. Shigeko Horiuchi and Dr. Yoko Shinpuku of St Luke's, who have exhibited excellent leadership.

This program was adopted by the Asia-Africa Science Platform Program of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science in 2011, and was granted a 3-year subsidy. It was the first time that a nursing program was elected. This support allowed us to set the program in action by establishing the Asia-Africa Midwifery Research Center, a joint research body with midwifery

bases at the respective departments of St Luke's International University in Japan and the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science in Africa.

These activities could fortunately proceed smoothly because the mission or aim of both the Japanese and Tanzanian midwifery education is to "promote evidence-based, safe natural birth."

During 2011, the first year of the program, a number of faculty from Muhimbili visited St Luke's for the first time and studied the academic levels and the approaches to practical training in the graduate courses, which provided material on which to base the development of Muhimbili's master's course.

In the summer of 2012, a seminar on Humanized Childbirth was held in Tanzania. It was attended by 123 local midwives who could discuss issues concerning maternal and child health as well as the future of midwifery education with the Japanese participants. The seminar was successful in establishing the foundation of the midwifery movement in Tanzania. Ever since, faculty and students have been involved in numerous exchanges, joint meetings on curriculum details taking the needs of local midwifery teachers and practicing midwives into consideration, and these activities finally led to the birth of the first master's degree course specializing in Midwifery in East Africa in October this year.

I believe that this master's degree in Midwifery will not only lead to improve maternal and child health in Tanzania, but also contribute to improve health and welfare in the entire sub-Saharan area.

To all the students studying for the master's degree in Midwifery: I encourage you to exercise midwifery leadership with an international perspective after graduation. I have great expectations that you can thus play a role in laying the foundation for a safe social living environment through your contribution to the health and welfare of mothers and children in your country.

I have some more good news!

St Luke's International University has now also entered into a cooperation agreement with JICA, and from April 2015 the "United Republic of Tanzania Maternal and Child Health Support Volunteer Initiative" will start its activities. Through this program, master's students at St Luke's

International University Graduate School can use experience in nursing/midwifery health education activities in Tanzania as JICA Overseas Youth Volunteers to obtain their degree. Students perform their duties at hospitals or provincial public health offices in Tanzania.

I wish to use this occasion to also thank the government of Tanzania as well as JICA for providing this opportunity to our students.

St Luke's International University was founded in 1920 by the American Christian missionary, Rudolf Teusler. It now prides itself in providing top-level nursing and midwifery education in Japan. Since the university was designated a WHO Collaborating Centre in 1990, it has simultaneously been cooperating with other universities across the world to contribute to the advancement of nursing, midwifery and the welfare of people. We will responsibly continue active exchanges of our faculty and students with Muhimbili to improve the public health in both of our countries through joint research and other projects, strengthening the bond between us by joining hands and hearts in the service of people around the world.

Congratulations, again.

アサンテ！（スワヒリ語で『ありがとう』）。