

CASSIOPEIA NKANI

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CASSIOPEIA-BRINGING 5 STAR QUALITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO THE 5 TARGET HOSPITALS FOR UHC

JICA - THE PROJECT FOR STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT CAPACITY OF GENERAL HOSPITALS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT



Left: Ms. Doreen Chibwe Bwalya - acting Matron and (right) Ms. Jacqueline Mulako - Infection Prevention and Control Nurse at Chawama First Level Hospital.

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COORDINATION
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FOCUSES ON
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**KNOWLEDGE
CO-CREATION
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PRE-JOINT COORDINATION COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS' SUSTAINABILITY



Group photo of the Pre-Joint Coordination Committee (Pre-JCC) participants that was held at Intercontinental Hotel on 29th and 30th January, 2026

The 3rd and last Pre-Joint Coordination Committee was held on January 29th and 30th 2026 at Intercontinental Hotel in Lusaka.

The two-day event brought together Lusaka Provincial Health Office (LPHO), Lusaka District Health Office (LDHO) and the five First Level Hospitals (FLHs) in Lusaka District (Chawama, Chilenje, Chipata, Kanayama and Matero) to reflect on lessons learned during the tenure of the project, as well as the ways in which the gains achieved could be sustained and the challenges still being faced could be worked on.

The JICA Cassiopeia Project aimed to strengthen hospital management as a foundation for improving infection prevention and control, stock management of essential medicines and medical supplies, and medical equipment

management. In addition, the Project has promoted sharing of experiences and good practices across the five FLHs and has worked to strengthen collaboration among the FLHs, LDHO, LPHO and the Ministry of Health, with a view to contributing to policy dialogue and supporting standardization and scale-up of service delivery.

In preparation for the meeting, each FLH and the LDHO discussed lessons learned and sustainability plans for the four target service areas, and presented their points during the session. Participants then held group discussions, joined by LPHO officers, under four thematic areas: hospital management, infection prevention and control (IPC), pharmacy (stock management of essential medicines and medical supplies) and medical equipment management. The outcomes

of these discussions were presented and, through a question-and-answer session, were consolidated as shared agreements among the stakeholders. Before the close of the event, LPHO Public Health Specialist, Dr. Maxine Kayawe, speaking on behalf of the Provincial Health Director, commended the participants for taking the time to meet as facilities to reflect on the gains made during the project. She also noted that although many achievements had been made, many operational challenges remained. However, she emphasized that, with the experience gained from the project, the facilities were well positioned to address the challenges still being faced, and she assured them of continued support from the project. Based on these agreed points, the Project is proceeding with the drafting of the final report.

KNOWLEDGE CO-CREATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SHARES THOUGHT ON TRAINING AND IMPORTANCE OF AMR

From 11th November to 4th December 2025, the JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) “Infection Prevention and Control: Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections” was held at the Japan Institute of Health Security (JIHS). From Zambia, Dr. Abel Kapembwa, Surgeon and Head of Clinical Care at Chilenje First Level Hospital in Lusaka District, participated in the program.

Reflecting on his experience in Japan, Dr. Kapembwa shared that by observing clinical practice in Japanese hospitals, he learned practical approaches to preventing infections, including how incidence of hospital acquired infections (HAIs) are recorded, and everyday preventive practices such as washing

hands, proper way of laundry procedures. The training covered not only how infections that become resistant to drugs are documented, but also the countermeasures put in place at the national, local government, and facility levels.

The program also emphasized the importance of microbiological culturing in order to identify the microbe’s causing infections. Dr. Kapembwa noted that culturing helps to understand patterns of occurrence, detect emerging infections, and monitor trends in existing diseases. This is one aspect of the training that Dr. Kapembwa stated he would like to see adopted in Zambian hospitals.

In particular, he learned the need for health facilities to develop an antibiogram, a summary table

of antibiogram susceptibility of organisms isolated within the facility. Using an antibiogram, it enables facilities to monitor trends in antimicrobial resistance and to guide empirical antimicrobial therapy. Dr. Kapembwa remarked that “even in Zambian hospitals, there can be cases where the medicines being used is not working”. He stressed the importance of understanding resistance patterns not only among patients but also in the wider community.

To accomplish this, Dr. Kapembwa formulated action points to implement at Chilenje First Level Hospital. To begin with, he intends to formulate a sub-committee under infection prevention and control (IPC) to promote anti-microbial resistance stewardship (AMRS).



Dr. Abel Kapembwa making a presentation on the current IPC practices at Chilenje FLH



Dr. Abel Kapembwa during group discussions with the AMR team at Tsuyama General Hospital in Okayama prefecture



Dr. Kapembwa during the closing ceremony picture with the Directors from Japan Institute for Health Security (JIHS) and JICA Tokyo

CONT'D

The team would be small and comprise of a doctor, laboratory personnel, pharmacy staff, environmental health technologist (EHT) responsible for Surgical Site Infection (SSI) surveillance, and a ward nurse. This would help the facility “take the first step toward understanding our current situation, including how many cultures are being conducted on the wards”.

His next priority is to build capacity among laboratory personnel and clinicians. For the laboratories, he noted there has been some resistance to culturing because it is seen as labor-intensive. However, he emphasized the need to “look at what the lab is doing, whether they are doing the right thing, and whether they are recording what they do”. He added that this would require some techni-

cal assistance from partners such as the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPFI). For clinicians, he observed that some were resistant on getting help from the laboratory.

He also noted that even when some clinicians may be aware that certain medicines have stopped working for certain patients, those clinicians may continue prescribing them. He therefore urged clinicians to develop a practice with culture of sending samples (blood, urine, pus, sputum) to the laboratory after three days of prescription, so that decisions to change or continue antibiotics can be guided by laboratory evidence.

Furthermore, Dr. Kapembwa noted that in Japan, patients are also involved in their care. Health facilities shared information with patients and families using dif-

ferent approaches, including video (cartoons or characters) and other educational messages that explain antibiotics and how they do not always work.

Dr. Kapembwa’s participation marks the 61st time that a healthcare personnel member from the Lusaka Provincial Health Office, Lusaka District Health Offices, and the five target First Level Hospitals in Lusaka District has participated in either the KCCP – Country Focus Training or the Group and Region Focus Training under the Cassiopeia project. Past participants have included medical superintendents, matrons, planners, pharmacists, medical equipment technologists, and doctors, nurses and environmental health technologists who form the infection prevention and control teams at the hospitals.

Photo Focus:



Dr. Mataa Mataa, MS at Chipata FLH with Ms. Agnes Chanda, Planner; Ms. Mercy Ndimbwa, HA and Mr. Clyde Ushibantu EHT from Chilenje FLH at the Pre-JCC meeting



Ms. Jacqueline Mulako, IPC Nurse with IPC Champion from the lab at Chawama FLH during an IPC round on January 15th, 2026



Dr. Abel Kapembwa during the KCCP training in Japan at a Japanese Temple



Dr. Clive Gosa, Senior M&E Officer at LPHO officiating during the Pre-JCC meeting held 29th and 30th of January, 2026



Ms. Marjorie Ndemena Senior Planner at LPHO facilitating during the Pre-JCC meeting held 29th and 30th of January, 2026



Mr. Ackson Munyama - Zonal Environmental Health Technologist at Kanyama FLH explaining the water treatment process to staff from the SPLASH Project on January 14th, 2026



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Dr. Shinsuke Murai, JICA Cassiopeia Project Chief Adviser giving opening remarks and project overview during the Pre-JCC meeting held on 29th and 30th January, 2026

Japan International Cooperation Agency