

The Japanese Ambassador to Zambia and Special Representative to COMESA, His Excellency Akio Egawa, has said that his government is committed to continually helping the COMESA region in infrastructure development to foster regional integration. “The Japanese Government is determined to work with COMESA in the three areas of: trade and investment; social development and the promotion of peace and security,” he said.

Ambassador Egawa said this when he paid a courtesy call on the COMESA secretary-General, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya, at his office on 21 February 2013.

He pointed out that Japan and COMESA will have to promote social development in the region in order to meet the millennium development goals.

“Some of the social developments earmarked are in economic development and infrastructural development as this will lead to the betterment of the lives of the people in the region,” he added.

“Mr Secretary-General, as you may be aware, there is no way we can achieve the millennium development goals if we do not put in place structures that will help the social welfare of the people. Therefore, we need to bridge the gap through development of infrastructure that will facilitate economic development,” Ambassador Egawa said.

Mr Sindiso Ngwenya said that COMESA is seeking partners to develop a regional infrastructure network that will help ease the movement of people and goods across borders.

“Once these regional infrastructure projects are implemented, COMESA will be linked to other regional blocs, which will in turn make doing business easier and cheaper under the tripartite framework,” Mr Ngwenya said.

He added that COMESA, the EAC and SADC have also established a programme that will drive the implementation of the regional infrastructure programmes.

“As a tripartite, we have established an office based here in Zambia, called the Project Planning Implementation Unit (PPIU), which is working on these projects,” he said.

The Secretary-General concluded that COMESA is, however, looking for a complete change in the manner projects are implemented as the REC wants to venture into projects that will be self sustaining even after the cooperating partners have helped in the implementation of any infrastructure project like roads, rail, and air traffic.