

Anuj Shah's Speech
08/02/08

**OPENING OF THE A TO Z SUMITOMO JOINT VENTURE FACTORY
SPEECH BY MR. ANUJ SHAH, CEO OF A TO Z TEXTILE MILLS LTD**

Your Excellency, Dr Ali Mohamed Shein
Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania,

Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Ambassadors,

Yonekura-san, President of Sumitomo Chemical Tokyo, Japan.
All Protocols Observed,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of this groundbreaking joint venture between A to Z Textiles and Sumitomo Chemical, I am honoured to welcome you to the official opening of our OLYSET Long Lasting Insecticidal Net (LLINs) factory.

The technology behind the Olyset net is unique and revolutionary. It is the only long lasting net which remains effective in controlling Malaria transmitting mosquitoes for at least 5 years. Indeed, studies have demonstrated Olyset's usability for up to 7 years.

Olyset's unrivalled efficacy and durability have been proven through rigorous trials in a range of sub-Saharan environments. It is currently the only long-lasting insecticide-treated net to be recommended by The World Health Organisation's Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES).

The first African-made Olyset net was manufactured in Tanzania during September 2003. In less than five years, production has increased from 300,000 to over 10 million per annum. A to Z is the only long lasting net manufacturer in Africa. We are one of Tanzania's largest private sector employers with 3,200 employees whose wages are supporting approximately 20,000 people. In short this story is all about **manufacturing in Africa, by Africans, for Africans.**

Three years ago where we are standing was just an open field with no water, no electricity and no road! Sumitomo and A to Z combined their skills to create this project, but it could not have happened without support from the Government of Tanzania through its provision of the necessary infrastructure. This has been a genuine Public-Private Partnership from the very beginning and I would like to thank our Government for its vital contribution towards the completion of this project

Why was Olyset created? Why is Olyset being manufactured in Africa? Because Yonekura-san, the President of Sumitomo Chemical Japan, has a fundamental objective – to help the people of Africa to win the fight against malaria: Africa's number one killer disease. This vision prompted the decision to transfer the technology – on a

royalty-free license – to African industry. African manufacturing not only speeds up Olyset net distribution to rural communities but it also stimulates economic growth and the welfare of local people through job creation and increased opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) which also helps to reduce poverty.

We would not be here today without the vision of Yonekura-san and we are highly honoured to be in partnership with Sumitomo Chemical, one of the largest Japanese multinational organisations.

This is a true joint venture – the coming together of two organizations, with complementary expertise and one goal. Sumitomo has provided the Olyset technology, and A to Z has contributed its manufacturing know how and social marketing skills in promoting net usage.

I know that my father, Nathalal Hirji Shah, who founded A to Z in 1966, would be deeply gratified if he could be here with us today. He too had a vision of leading our business, driven by the delivery of quality products and services, through continuous innovation and excellence, without compromising our core values of trust, passion and excellence.

The Donor Community and Development Partners are doing a great job by providing Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets to Africans. However, we feel that even more could be achieved with the same level of expenditure by addressing other issues:

- widening the distribution of nets to entire communities rather than just to select groups
- procuring nets made within Africa and thus creating jobs and reducing poverty
- making greater effort to understand the different real life costs of the various nets available – Olyset may appear to be more expensive than other insecticide treated nets, but Olyset is more efficacious and is far more durable than other LLINs

Donors and Development Partners tend to compare the *ex-works* prices of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) made in Asia to those made in Africa. African-made nets will always have a higher *ex-works* price because the raw materials have to be containerized, shipped and imported. They are, therefore, more expensive when quoted 'from the factory door'. But once we have made the nets in Africa the transport and delivery costs are obviously much cheaper than for those imported from Asia.

The interest of the Donor community should be the cost of the net *to the point of destination*. You should be demanding that Long Lasting Net manufacturers deliver the product to where it is finally required. By so doing you will find that the nets produced in Africa will be more competitive and this will definitely put African manufacturers on a level playing field with those in Asia.

Let me share with you a recent example. The Crown Agents in Uganda asked us to quote the *delivered* price of the nets to various districts and they found they were

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cheaper than nets imported from overseas. Had Crown Agents asked us to quote the prices on an *ex factory* basis, we would not have received this order.

When 90% of Malaria deaths are here in Africa, why should we have to import bed nets? Thee jobs we have created here are transforming our communities. We see that children of our employees are staying in school longer as one immediate result. I highly recommend all the donor communities and leaders of African Countries, to adopt the strategy, "**BUY FROM AFRICA FOR AFRICA.**" Let us all ensure, that we buy long lasting mosquito nets manufactured within Africa. This will create more employment in our continent, thus generating more revenue which is highly needed for our economic development. This in turn will bring greater prosperity for the future advancement in Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of A to Z / Sumitomo to express my profound appreciation and sincere thanks to you, Your Excellency – our Vice-President Dr Ali Mohamed Shein, the entire Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Donor Community and Development Partners for all their help and support in making this event happen.

Once again, we thank you all and say "**KARIBU**" to Tanzania.