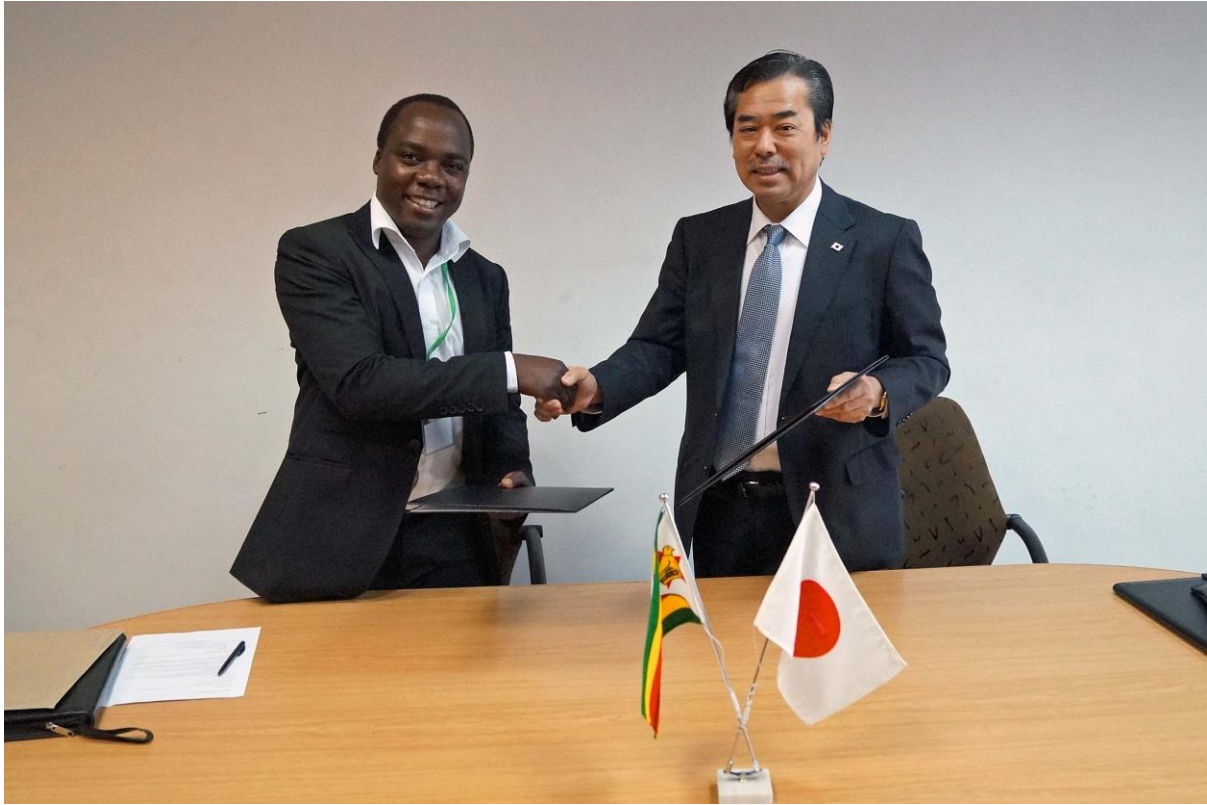


## JAPAN TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL CENTRE IN SHURUGWI DISTRICT



On 26<sup>th</sup> August, the Embassy of Japan has decided to extend a grant up to eighty-seven thousand, one hundred and thirty dollars (USD 87,130) to a local NGO, Shurugwi Partners, for the implementation of “The Project for Construction of Agricultural Training Centre in Shurugwi District”.

The Grant Contracts to this effect were signed by the Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, H.E. Mr Yoshi Tendai Hiraishi, and the Director of Shurugwi Partners, Mr Pascal Manyakaidze at a signing ceremony at the Embassy.

The grant is to be used for the construction and equipping of an agricultural training centre at a central point of the district. At the centre, local farmers will learn various agricultural skills including sustainable crop cultivation and value addition.

Over the years, local farmers have been facing challenges in harvesting enough maize due to low rainfall caused by climate change as well as in losing harvest, approximately 30% of annual crop, because of lack of knowledge and skills for proper storage and processing. In such a situation, it is critical for farmers to acquire agricultural skills for the production of horticultural produce as well as for proper storage and processing.

This project, therefore, will greatly contribute to easing the plight of local farmers who cannot currently access enough opportunities for agricultural training due to lack of a proper facility and equipment in the district. This project will benefit over 1,680 farmers in Shurugwi District.

It is also notable that this project will complement Shurugwi Partners' previous project about wetlands conservation and integrated livelihoods for biodiversity conservation supported by UNDP and the project of organic farming training supported by SNV Netherlands. This project will enable local farmers to upgrade their skills about organic farming with wetlands and biodiversity conservation.

Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Mr Hiraishi expressed his hope that the project would successfully be completed and would make a positive impact on the livelihoods of local people.