

## Handover Ceremony of Japan-funded Grassroots Project “The Project for Mine Clearance in Mashonaland Central Province”

On 12 November 2021, Ambassador Tanaka, attended a ceremony to hand over to the community 6.95 square kilometres of land cleared of landmines by an international NGO, The HALO Trust, in Mount Darwin District, Mashonaland Central Province. This handover also coincided with the whole of Mount Darwin District now being officially declared “mine-impact free”, after having been contaminated with landmines for over 40 years. Japan along with other countries has been supporting landmine clearance in the province.

Communities in Mount Darwin along the border with Mozambique live in a harsh environment, with scarce water and fertile soil. The minefields used to make life even harder, as people lived with the fear of themselves or their loved ones being injured or killed by landmines, and it was not safe to conduct everyday activities such as prepare fields or let their children play freely. With the land safe now being safe, communities can grow their crops, herd their livestock, fetch water, go to school and engage in cross-border trade. Most importantly, they are free of the fear of landmines.

In March this year, the Government of Japan extended US\$ 644,651 in funding for its seventh demining project with The HALO Trust, which is currently ongoing in Rushinga District. It is supporting the equipment and operational costs of five demining teams. This project takes to over USD 4.8 million the total amount of funding that Japan has provided for demining in Zimbabwe. The previous six Japan-funded projects have cleared a total of 1,180,000 square metres of land, and removed a total of 26,000 landmines in Mashonaland Central Province.



Cerebrating Mount Darwin being landmine-free.



Japanese funded deminers.



Sign board showing the Japanese support



Children proclaiming the dangers of landmines.



Ambassador Tanaka visiting the minefield.



Current project site in Rushinga district.