



## News Release

6 October 2022

### **Japan Provides Grant Aid for Design Component of New Phase of Road Improvement of North-South Corridor**

The Government of Japan will extend Grant Aid of approximately USD 700,000 (97 million Japanese yen) to the Government of Zimbabwe for the detailed design component of Phase 2 of the improvement of the steep section of the North-South Corridor between Makuti and Hell's Gate (Mana Pools turnoff). Phase 1 of the project, opened in May 2021, improved a 6.5km section between Marongora and Hell's Gate. Phase 2 will improve a further 7.8km section between Makuti and Marongora. Today, Exchange of Notes and Grant Agreements were signed to this effect by the Honourable Prof. Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance and Economic Development; the Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, H.E. Mr Satoshi Tanaka; and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Representative to Zimbabwe, Mr Kyosuke Kawazumi. The project will be implemented by JICA engineers in collaboration with engineers from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

With regional economic integration underway, through SADC and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), it has become even more imperative to facilitate trade with neighbouring countries. At the recent 8th Tokyo International Conference on Development (TICAD8), held in Tunisia in August 2022, African countries and Japan reaffirmed their commitment to ensure quality infrastructure along the important trade corridors. The North-South Corridor is a vital international trunk road for Zimbabwe and the region, with the African Union forecasting that it will become the busiest transport corridor in Africa by 2040. The section between Makuti and Hell's Gate, with many heavy trucks transporting goods through the Chirundu One-Stop Border Post, has been a major bottleneck due to its very steep gradients and sharp hairpin bends, resulting in slow-moving traffic and a high accident rate.

The aim of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects is to reduce traffic accidents, relieve traffic congestion and shorten travel time on this dangerous section. Phase 1, commissioned on 4 May 2021 by H.E. President Mnangagwa, has already improved a 6.5km section between Marongora and Hell's Gate. Phase 2 will improve a further 7.8km section between Makuti and Marongora. As with Phase 1, the Phase 2 project will involve widening of curves, improvement of the vertical and horizontal alignment, and construction of hill-climbing lanes. Other works include the construction of drainage and safety facilities such as crash barriers and road signs. The project will utilise the latest construction techniques to provide a high-quality, safe and resilient road, which is environmentally and economically sustainable. It will also strengthen the capacity of staff of the Department of Roads, through sharing of Japan's expertise in traffic safety measures, road improvement and maintenance. The detailed design component is expected to be completed in late 2023, with construction expected to commence in 2024.

It is envisaged that, through this project, on this section the transit time will be reduced by around 9 minutes, the number of accidents will be reduced from the current 61 per year to 10, and there will be safe and smooth passage and increased capacity of up to approximately 610,000 passengers and 5.18 million tonnes of cargo per year. By alleviating a major bottleneck on the North-South Corridor, the project will facilitate regional trade and integration as well as promote Zimbabwe's economic and social development.

To alleviate another bottleneck of the corridor, that of delays at Chirundu One-Stop Border Post, JICA is currently implementing a project to enable the smooth movement of people and goods through the border. It will strengthen the capacity of ZIMRA and customs officials in terms of efficiency of border procedures. Japan will continue to support Zimbabwe's sustainable economic and social development through this and various endeavors.



**Ambassador's remarks**



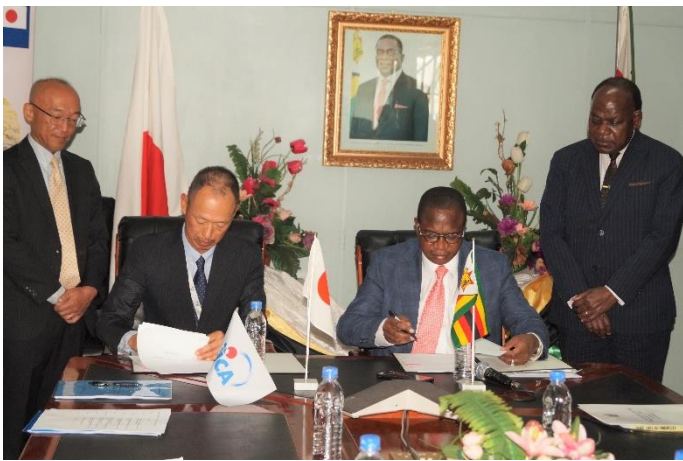
**Remarks by Hon. Prof. Ncube**



**Signing of Exchange of Notes documents**



**Exchange of Notes**



**Signing of Grant Agreements**



**Exchange of Grant Agreements**



**Group photo**



**Completed Phase 1 Section**