

## **A Commitment to Growth: Japan's Support for Zimbabwe's Small-Scale Farmers**

On 14 August 2024, His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Shinichi Yamanaka was honoured to represent the people of Japan in handing over crucial aid of fertilizer to the people of Zimbabwe at the Grain Marketing Board in Aspidale, Harare. The fertilizer includes 3,860 metric tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate and 1,940 metric tonnes of Compound D worth 4.7 million USD.

The 2023/2024 production season has been challenging, with maize production plummeting by approximately 70% compared to the previous year. This dramatic decrease in output has exacerbated food insecurity, leaving over 7 million Zimbabweans in need of stable food sources. In response, Japan's donation is set to benefit around 100,000 small-scale farmers, who play a crucial role in the nation's food security by contributing over 60% of the country's food supply.

The ceremony was attended by around 150 guests, including distinguished figures such as Deputy Ministers Hon. Vangelis Peter Haritatos and Hon. Davis Marapira from the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development. Their presence underscored the importance of this aid, aimed at alleviating the impact of an El Niño-induced drought that has severely affected Zimbabwe's agriculture.

The fertilizer will be distributed through Zimbabwe's Climate Proofed Input Programme, or Pfumvudza, which supports small-scale farmers in adopting conservation agriculture techniques. This initiative not only aims to improve food production for local consumption but also to enhance farmers' livelihoods through market-oriented practices.

Ambassador Yamanaka expressed hope that the fertilizer will be distributed effectively, reaching even the most remote farmers, thereby contributing to national food security, and improving local livelihoods. He emphasized that this aid not only supports Zimbabwe's agricultural sector but also strengthens the bilateral ties between Japan and Zimbabwe.

Japan's commitment to Zimbabwe extends beyond immediate aid. The Japanese development cooperation policy includes significant support for the agricultural sector. Japan has dispatched three experts from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to assist in the development of market-oriented agriculture through the Zimbabwe Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (ZIM-SHEP) program. Furthermore, starting in September 2024, two additional JICA experts will promote the production of New Rice for Africa (NERICA), a drought-resistant, high-yield rice variety, as requested by the First Lady of Zimbabwe, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa following her visit to Japan in November 2022.

## Fertilizer Handover Ceremony in Pictures



