



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government of Japan, Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and UN Agencies unite to improve Child Health and Nutrition, Medical Waste Management, and Community Resilience through Innovation and Community Action**

**Harare, Zimbabwe** – The Government of Japan provides support, in partnership with UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, and UNOPS, to the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and have launched five transformative projects under Japan's 2024 Supplementary Budget and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). These initiatives aim to strengthen maternal and child health, prevent malnutrition, modernize medical waste management, enhance food security, and harness digital innovation to empower families and communities. Collectively, they will directly benefit over 86,000 people and reach hundreds of thousands more through digital platforms and life-saving messaging.

The Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Zimbabwe is pleased to support the valuable work of the United Nation (UN) agencies in their efforts to address critical development challenges in Zimbabwe. Japan has provided a total of approximately USD 6,950,000 in funding to the four UN agencies. UNICEF has received approximately USD 2,450,000 for two important projects, while UNDP has been allocated with roughly USD 1,500,000 to support its initiatives. WFP has received approximately USD 800,000, and UNOPS has been granted roughly USD 2,200,000 for its project. The funding underscores Japan's ongoing commitment to Zimbabwe's development, focusing on areas such as health and nutrition, poverty alleviation, food security, and infrastructure. Japan is confident that these efforts will contribute significantly to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improving the lives of Zimbabweans.

This support follows Zimbabwe's worst drought in decades in 2024, which resulted in 7.6 million people being projected to face food insecurity in 2025, along with high levels of wasting and stunting among children. Compounding the crisis, the country endured a cholera outbreak that affected thousands. The outbreak underscored the urgency of improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, especially in drought-affected and remote areas.

UNICEF is collaborating in two projects. First is the RISE initiative, featuring Bebbi 360—a mobile parenting app offering real-time, evidence-based guidance from pregnancy through early childhood. The app will be adapted for Zimbabwean users with local languages, offline access, and personalized content. The second project tackles child wasting in drought-hit Mbire District. Thousands of caregivers will benefit from community-based support groups, improved health and nutrition services, and access to clean water and vital information. These initiatives align with Japan's commitments under the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Compact.

UNOPS is spearheading a comprehensive response to Zimbabwe's medical waste management challenges. The project includes the procurement and installation of three high-temperature, smokeless medical waste incinerators in Harare and Bulawayo. Designed to meet WHO and ISO standards, these incinerators will serve approximately two million residents. They are expected to significantly improve



safe disposal practices, reduce environmental hazards, and build long-term technical capacity through training and technology transfer.

UNDP, in partnership with the Japan SDGs Innovation Challenge, is piloting AI and drone-based solutions to control Quelea birds, which are a major threat to Zimbabwe's small grain harvests. This environmentally friendly, tech-driven approach supports innovation, policy dialogue, and new livelihoods through collaboration with government, private sector, and research institutions.

The Government of Japan is also supporting WFP's Lean Season Assistance programme. Through this contribution, WFP will provide three months of critical in-kind food assistance to over 17,000 people in rural communities severely affected by the El Niño-induced drought. This initiative directly addresses food insecurity and malnutrition during a period when Zimbabwe is facing its worst drought in decades. These collaborative efforts reflect Japan's continued leadership in health, innovation, and climate resilience, as well as its longstanding partnership with the UN system to address both emergency needs and long-term development goals. Japan has consistently provided humanitarian and development assistance to Zimbabwe, including during the COVID-19 pandemic and for infrastructure development in the health and education sectors.

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