

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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JAPANESE AMBASSADOR HANDS OVER BOREHOLE DRILLING RIG TO ZIMBABWE

At a hand-over ceremony held in Domboshawa today, the Japanese Ambassador to Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Yoshi *Tendai* Hiraishi, officially handed over a refurbished borehole drilling rig to the Government of Zimbabwe. The Minister of the Environment, Water and Climate, the Honourable Mr Saviour Kasukuwere, represented the Government of Zimbabwe.

The rig was overhauled at a cost of six hundred and thirteen thousand, four hundred and fifty- seven dollars (USD 613,547) under Follow-Up Cooperation on the “Rural Water Supply Project in Binga District” implemented by the Japan International Agency (JICA). As the name implies, this is a follow-up to Japanese Grant Aid that was extended to Zimbabwe in two phases in 1997 and 1998 for the original project, which saw the sinking of deep boreholes in Binga District.

The district is characterised by low and erratic rainfall patterns. Boreholes were sunk at strategic locations such as clinics and schools. The rig is to be deployed once again in Binga District where it is expected to sink a minimum of a further 124 boreholes. A Japanese engineer based in the country will oversee the operation and will train his local counterparts in the upkeep of the machine. The refurbished rig is capable of drilling to a depth more than 150 metres thus ensuring that the boreholes will not dry up even in the severest of droughts. A demonstration of the rig’s performance was later staged to highlight its capabilities.

Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Hiraishi noted that, “we have been actively supporting water supply projects throughout the country in areas such as Chivi, Chipinge and recently in Shurugwi under our small grants scheme”.