

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY H.E. MR YONEZO FUKUDA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO ZIMBABWE, ON THE OCCASION OF A HANDOVER CEREMONY OF JAPANESE CONTRIBUTION TO WFP FOOD IN MASVINGO PROVINCE**

**JANUARY 31, 2014**

**SALUTATIONS,**

It is my great pleasure to attend this Handover Ceremony of Japan's Contribution to the WFP. It also affords us the opportunity to later witness a food distribution exercise to see the impact that this contribution is making to the lives of those worst affected by last year's unusually poor harvest.

Japan has been a major donor to WFP for over a decade and I am glad to note that this partnership has developed from strength to strength as WFP is adopting an increasingly wide range of initiatives to alleviate the plight of people most severely affected.

Erratic rainfall patterns over the last few years have resulted in persistently poor harvests leading to food insecurity at the household level as many families are failing to meet their most basic food needs.

Given the severity of current household food insecurity, WFP is carrying out this Seasonal Targeted Assistance programme. For its part, Japan is very pleased to have made a contribution of over USD 4.2 million to support this initiative. We hope this assistance will help meet minimum food requirements of targeted beneficiaries, including malnourished HIV and TB patients, pregnant and lactating women and children under 5.

This assistance is meant to sustain such vulnerable sectors of society and make them better able to cope during these harsh times. These are crucial interventions not only for ensuring human security, which we greatly emphasise, but also for meeting basic human needs such as adequate nutrition, which will lead to a more fulfilling life for locals and contribute towards sustainable socio-economic development.

We very much commend WFP and its cooperating NGO partner, Care International, for their efficient, timely and smooth interventions in

Ward 11. Hopefully, this assistance will no longer be required after the next harvest in March. MAKOROKOTO for a job well done. Thank you to the local authorities for rendering your utmost assistance. This is not possible without your support and guidance. MAKOROKOTO KWATIRI TESE.

By all accounts, this appears to be a promising agricultural season and we are optimistic of a good harvest this year. Given sufficient rains and adequate inputs, Zimbabweans have proven that they are more than capable of producing not only enough grain to meet domestic needs, but to once again reclaim their status of the “breadbasket of the region”.

**THANK YOU**