

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY H.E. MR YONEZO FUKUDA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO ZIMBABWE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF A CLASSROOM BLOCK AT SIMUKAI REHABILITATION CENTRE**

**MARCH 20, 2013**

It is with great pleasure to visit Mutare and more particularly Sakubva to officiate at this official Hand-Over Ceremony of Simukai Rehabilitation Centre, which marks the completion of the construction of this beautiful classroom block. Its construction was made possible by a grant of USD58 thousand dollars, including follow-up expenses from the Japanese Government.

This Centre aims to alleviate the plight of former street children and other Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) living in difficult circumstances. The basic human needs of these children were not being met and their rights to education, health care, family and psychosocial support were threatened. With the completion of the new classroom blocks, we hope that there will be a reduction in the number of street children not attending school and an improved academic performance leading to the improved standards of living.

As a result of your efforts here, the number of street children in Mutare has been significantly reduced. Your programme has been growing from strength to strength and with the new facility fully operational, you will be able to offer your services to an ever greater number of children and offer additional programmes. Graduates of the Centre have turned out to be responsible citizens, with many being trained in various disciplines such as carpentry, joinery, horticulture and motor mechanics. A greater number will be able to pursue academic studies. We highly appreciate your efforts.

You have managed these achievements with the participation of other local partners, which is highly commendable. There is hardly any need to overemphasise the importance of youth empowerment in today's context. Every effort must be made to further support your efforts.

Finally, it is our expectation that this facility be fully utilised for the maximum benefit of the children. I wish you, your staff and most importantly the children all the best for the future.

**THANK YOU. TATENDA**