

**SPEECH TO BE PRESENTED BY H.E. MR YONEZO FUKUDA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO ZIMBABWE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF GRANT CONTRACTS WITH MS MILLER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDLINE ZIMBABWE, FOR “THE PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN EMERGENCY CALL CENTRE AND CHILDREN’S DROP-IN CENTRES”**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2013**

**DIRECTOR OF CHILDLINE ZIMBABWE, MS MILLER,**

**AND YOUR OFFICIALS,**

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS,**

**COLLEAGUES,**

A very warm welcome to you at the Embassy on a very special occasion whereby the Embassy of Japan is today extending a grant of over \$86 thousand to Childline Zimbabwe for “The Project for Construction of an Emergency Call Centre and Children’s Drop-in Centres”.

The grant being provided today is for the development of infrastructure for Childline to enable you to meet the increasing demand for child protection services in the country. It will be used for the construction of a Call Centre in Harare, and Drop-in Centres in Chiredzi, Mutasa and Mutare, where child abuse is reported more rampant than in other areas. Whilst we wish that there would be no need for your counseling services in the first place, it is an unfortunate fact that child abuse is on the increase, and more and more children in distress urgently need protection.

On a related matter, some four years ago, we provided a grant through UNICEF to implementing partners for the repair and/or procurement of equipment for 17 victim friendly courts for abused children in 16 districts. As part of this project, court officials, health, education and social services staff were trained in the management of such cases. Through collaboration with such courts as well as other agencies, including the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, we sincerely hope that more children will be able to enjoy their fundamental rights .

May I take this opportunity to call upon other donors, civic organisations and well-wishers to support your tireless efforts to assist this very vulnerable group in society. We are aware that you have been deservedly receiving assistance from other donors and international and local agencies, but due to increased demand, your operations needs to be constantly scaled up.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and look forward to visiting your new facilities once completed.

**THANK YOU**