

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

June 21, 2011

JAPANESE AMBASSADOR HANDS OVER AGRO-PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

At a ceremony held at Magondo Nutrition Garden in Makoni District today, the Japanese Ambassador to Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Koichi Morita, officially handed over agro-processing equipment to the local community. Also present at the occasion was (Makoni District administrator, the Honourable Mr Mashaba and other provincial, district and council officials).

The donation was made possible by a grant of eighty four thousand US dollars (USD 84,000) that Japan extended to its cooperating partner, GOAL International, in February, 2009, for the implementation of the “Project for Community Livelihoods Enhancement”. Concentrating in the Manicaland Province and the Mashonaland West Province, it was implemented in Makoni District and Hurungwe District.

The grant was used for the purchase of agro-processing equipment such as oil press machines and solar vegetable driers and the fencing materials which increase the size of land each farmer can cultivate. Training was also provided on the use and maintenance of the machines.

The fundamental objective of the project is to improve household food security. It is expected to substantially improve the incomes of targeted beneficiaries through the sale of processed oil seeds such as soyabean, sunflower and groundnuts. These were distributed to 4,860 beneficiaries that were grouped into cooperatives. A significant number of non-beneficiaries would also benefit as they could also have their oil seeds processed at a fee and have ready access to garden produce.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr Morita emphasized the issue of ownership, stating that the equipment belongs to the beneficiaries and that they should make every effort to ensure that it is always well maintained, operational and fully utilised.