

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

November 1, 2011

JAPANESE-FUNDED WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS COMMISSIONED IN GOKWE DISTRICTS

At a ceremony held at Sawi Primary School in Gokwe South on October 31, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Japan, Mr Hideaki Harada, officially commissioned 32 boreholes strategically situated at primary schools in Gokwe North and South Districts.

The work on the rehabilitated boreholes was made possible by a grant of almost USD48,500 (forty-eight thousand, five hundred dollars) that Japan extended to an NGO, Practical Action, for the implementation of the “Project for the rehabilitation of School Water points in Gokwe South and North Districts” in March last year.

An important aspect of the project has been the training of pump minders and pump mechanics who are to be responsible for the day to day maintenance of the boreholes. Spare parts and tools have been made available. Gokwe Districts have been experiencing a perennial problem of water shortages which has often resulted in the outbreak of water borne diseases.

The project was funded under a scheme known as “Japan’s Grant Assistance for Human Security Grassroots Projects” whereby the Embassy extends grants, usually to local and international NGOs, for the implementation of development projects. These grants have made a very positive impact on the standards of living of marginalised rural communities.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr Harada urged the school authorities and School Development Committees to work in close collaboration with pump minders and pump mechanics to ensure sustainability of the rehabilitated facilities.

The following day, November 1, Mr Harada commissioned another Japanese-funded project at Masemo Primary School in Gokwe North. The total amount of the project was USD 508, 640 (five hundred and eight thousand, six hundred and forty dollars) and was implemented by the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) Japan and its local counterpart, ADRA Zimbabwe.

This is a more comprehensive water supply project focusing on:- (1) the provision and rehabilitation of both community and school boreholes; (2) the improvement of sanitation facilities such as toilets and hand-washing facilities and (3) health and hygiene education. Workshops were held for the maintenance of boreholes and for health and hygiene awareness campaigns.

The implementation of these projects comes in the wake of the devastating 2007/2008 cholera outbreak which claimed a huge death toll in the two Gokwe Districts.