



PRESS RELEASE

Japan partners with Red Cross to boost humanitarian assistance in Zimbabwe

HARARE, 18 May 2021 – Amid concerns that the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate food insecurity, Japan has partnered with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) to provide assistance to over 6,000 of the most-affected families in two rural districts, Gokwe South and Gokwe North, in Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

The Government of Japan has contributed US\$ 500,000 to provide services such as healthcare, hygiene, water, sanitation, including food security in selected communities in Gokwe North and Gokwe South districts in order to enhance their resilience to COVID-19 induced shocks for 12 months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated a humanitarian crisis in the country caused by successive droughts and a dire economic situation. The capacity of families to access and afford food for themselves has diminished, thus increasing their food insecurity and lack of basic needs. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment estimates that 3.4 million people, or more than a third of the rural population, are facing “crisis” or “emergency” levels of hunger.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered the great challenges in our time. During this period thousands of people have lost their livelihoods. Notably so marginalised and vulnerable communities are bearing the brunt of the devastation caused by the pandemic. As the IFRC, we are immensely grateful to the Japanese Government for this generous contribution. Through this partnership we will be able to support communities to restore their livelihoods”, said Dr Michael Charles, IFRC Head of Cluster Delegation Southern Africa.

The support from Japan will target some of the most vulnerable households in Gokwe North and Gokwe South, which are among the most food-insecure districts. It will include the provision of solar-powered boreholes, establishment of nutrition gardens, and provision of seeds and agricultural inputs in order to improve the food security of the communities as well as provide access to safe water. It is expected to benefit 6,000 families.

Elias Hwenga, the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) Secretary-General, said that, “A combination of adverse factors including COVID-19 and the 2019/2020 drought has led to most communities in Zimbabwe experiencing food shortages, as well as having a greater risk of being exposed to water shortages. The target group for the interventions are the most vulnerable and food-insecure community members in Zimbabwe. The project aims to enhance the community’s ability to reduce



the spread and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 through improving access to basic healthcare and strengthening food security and water provision for the most vulnerable communities in Zimbabwe. Since the beginning of the pandemic over a year ago, our teams have been on the frontline—supplying ambulance services, conducting contact tracing and point of entry screening, tackling the stigma and the spread of misinformation, and providing emotional and psychological support to people in need.”

The Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, H.E. Mr Satoshi Tanaka said, “I hope that this support will reach the target communities as soon as possible, ensuring that they are able to meet their immediate basic needs during this humanitarian crisis, and making them more resilient in the future. Japan continues to extend its support to the people of Zimbabwe during this crisis”.

The partnership is a boost to the Red Cross’ ongoing efforts aimed at containing COVID-19 in Africa.

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About IFRC

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