



Joint Press Release

Kigali, May 23, 2023

Japan supports UNHCR's 2023 refugee response in Rwanda

Kigali, Rwanda – The Government of Japan announced its support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the refugee response in Rwanda, amounting to USD 500,000 USD.

This contribution from Japan will boost the efforts of UNHCR in providing water, sanitation and hygiene related services to newly arrived asylum seekers from Eastern DRC as well as refugees and the Rwandan host community at Nkamira site and Mahama refugee camp.

In particular, the generous support from the people of Japan will help UNHCR to build latrines and shower blocks at Nkamira site which is currently hosting approximately 5,300 asylum seekers over the next six months. This will be essential to reduce the high number of people currently sharing a toilet and ensure that good sanitation conditions at Nkamira are maintained to prevent the outbreak of potential disease.

In addition, the funding will contribute to the operation and maintenance of communal sanitation facilities in Mahama refugee camp which have deteriorated with age and need urgent upgrade.

In Mahama refugee camp, UNHCR provides water and sanitation services for over 58,000 refugees mainly from Burundi and DRC. Water is supplied from the neighboring Akagera river through a water treatment plant near the camp which also benefits the local Rwandan community. New funding from Japan will, therefore, assist UNHCR to meet the water needs of these populations and maintain the peaceful coexistence of the two communities.

“The influx of asylum seekers from DRC is placing an additional strain on the refugee response in Rwanda and stretching resources. This new contribution from the Government of Japan, therefore, comes at a crucial time to meet the emergency needs of the new arrivals as well as maintain services for Congolese and Burundian refugees who have been in Rwanda for many years. At UNHCR, we are incredibly grateful for Japan’s continued support to refugees in Rwanda,” said UNHCR’s Representative in Rwanda, Mrs. Aissatou Ndiaye.

Mr. Isao FUKUSHIMA, Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda, said: “It is our pleasure that our support through UNHCR will contribute to the improvement of the living condition of newly arrived asylum seekers, refugees from DRC and the Rwandan host community by enhancing the access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services. Japan’s provision of grant assistance to the humanitarian crisis, often referred to as forgotten crisis, demonstrates our firm commitment to the Global South and exemplifies our contribution to the regional stability announced in TICAD 8 in close coordination with the countries in the region. Japan appreciates the efforts which have been made by the Rwandan Government and UNHCR, and we wish to continue working with them.

The Government of Japan has an excellent track record of supporting UNHCR’s humanitarian work globally. In Rwanda, Japan has supported UNHCR operations with funding amounting to over 10 million USD over the past 10 years.

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