



## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

**Embassy of Japan  
Juba, South Sudan**

**United Nations Mine Action Service  
Juba, South Sudan**

### **Japan donates over US \$1,468,000 to Mine Action in South Sudan**

**Juba, 29 March 2019** – The Government of Japan has contributed US \$1,468,374 to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), for the mine action project “Enabling Humanitarian Operations and Enhancing National Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Mine Action in South Sudan.” Since 2011, Japan has contributed more than US \$15 million to mine action operations in South Sudan, enabling the clearance of over 3.2 million sqm of land (equivalent to approximately 458 football pitches with the potential to produce an estimated 350 tonnes of maize annually), the removal of 20,626 items of explosive ordnance, 341,608 bullets, and the delivery of Mine Risk Education to 213,148 people, including 136,349 children.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution on the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), signals a new era in South Sudan, however, the humanitarian crisis remains dire as an estimated 7.1 million people are reportedly in need of emergency and life-saving assistance. Currently 361 separate and distinct sites across the country are thought to be contaminated by landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive hazards, threatening the safety and security of civilians, including nearly 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. Explosive hazards pose a direct threat to the physical safety of the South Sudanese and erode people’s coping mechanisms by restricting access to basic infrastructure, social services, and livelihood activities, as well as hindering socioeconomic development. However, with the enhanced capacity of national mine action institutions, it is now realistic to envisage a transfer of responsibility from UNMAS to the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) in the next three to five years.

Continued funding from the people of Japan will support two Mine Action Teams (MATs) to mitigate the impact of explosive hazards, through survey and clearance as well as the provision of Mine Risk Education for conflict-affected populations, while simultaneously enhancing national institutional capacity for sustainable mine action through the provision of a series of capacity building trainings and support for the NMAA in generating advocacy opportunities.

The Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, H.E. Mr. Seiji Okada stated, “The Government of Japan has been supporting UNMAS as one of the largest donors, because of the importance of its work. In South Sudan, assuming the successful implementation of the Peace Process and with the expectation that many refugees and IDPs will go back to their own villages, the UNMAS project is very timely. UNMAS ensures safety for returnees from refugee camps, POCs and collective centers to their own villages, and also clears land nearby the villages for agriculture sites. This is one of the important preconditions for returns to happen.”

Mr. Richard Boulter, the Programme Manager of UNMAS in South Sudan, stressed the importance of the support from the Government of Japan, saying, “UNMAS appreciates Japan’s strong initiative as a steady, reliable, and encouraging partner for humanitarian mine action in South Sudan. Japan has continued to support risk mitigation of explosive hazards through survey, clearance, and risk education, and enabling UNMAS to work with the Government of South Sudan, through the NMAA. This year’s increased support will maintain mine action as a critical enabler of humanitarian aid and a strong promoter of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

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The US \$8.298 million contribution from the people of Japan to UNMAS for this year will benefit mine action programmes in six countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria as well as South Sudan.



*With generous funding from the Government of Japan in 2018-2019, the Japanese-funded UNMAS team conducted a risk education session for villagers, including women and children, in Kwajok, South Sudan.*



*The Japanese-funded team inspected fragmentations of an air-dropped weapon in a crater in Kara, South Sudan.*

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*The Japanese-funded team located and destroyed an anti-tank (AT) mine along the Raja-Bor Medina road to enable humanitarian partners access in South Sudan.*

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