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**Embassy of Japan
Juba, South Sudan**

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

Japan donates over US \$209,000 to Mine Action in South Sudan

Juba, 06 May 2020 – The Government of Japan has contributed US \$209,090 to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), for the mine action project “Enabling Safe Return, Humanitarian Operations, and Strengthening Institutional Capacity of the National Mine Action Authority in South Sudan”. Since 2011, Japan has contributed over US \$17 million to humanitarian mine action in South Sudan, preventing physical harm to civilians, improving access to basic services, and helping people rebuild their lives in the wake of conflict.

The formation of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) signals a new era in South Sudan, however, the humanitarian crisis remains dire with 7.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, compounded by COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic challenges South Sudan irrespectively. UNMAS, together with the Government of Japan, is committed to comply with and support national-led efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, while ensuring our vital work that includes protecting civilians and enabling humanitarian operations through this project will provide meaningful assistance to mine-affected communities and the people of South Sudan.

Currently 369 distinct sites with approximately 20.4 km² of land are thought to be contaminated by landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive hazards. South Sudan recently submitted its five-year extension request for the Ottawa Treaty in which it detailed its plan and ability to achieve its commitment to fulfil the treaty obligations -- clearance of all mined areas – before 2026. The requirement for a clearance capacity to react to spot tasks to dispose of unexploded ordnance is, however, likely to remain for decades. Hence there is a requirement to build the Government of South Sudan’s National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)’s capacity to respond appropriately to the threats posed by explosive ordnance and to manage the long-term issues.

Continued funding from the Government of Japan will support a field team to carry out survey and clearance of explosive ordnance along the Juba-Nimule road in Magwi, Eastern Equatoria, creating a safe passage for returnees from Uganda as well as safe access to markets, schools, water points, and clinics for the local communities, while simultaneously supporting efforts to build the capacity of the NMAA to plan, coordinate, and manage mine action operations.

His Excellency Mr. Seiji Okada, the Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of South Sudan stated, “After the establishment of R-TGoNU, many refugees, diasporas, as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) are expected to return home. The continuous commitment by the Government of Japan through UNMAS supports the Government of South Sudan’s efforts to clear harmful remnants from their homeland and to offer safe land for returnees, members of host communities, and IDPs, for them to enjoy a long-awaited peace and livelihood.”

In the last year alone, Japan’s assistance has enabled the clearance of over 840,900 m² of land (equivalent to approximately 120 football pitches), the destruction of over 630 items of explosive ordnance and 5,300 bullets in Eastern Equatoria. Nearly 30,000 South Sudanese IDPs, returnees, and members of host communities, including 8,000 women and 14,500 children, have received explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) to avoid and mitigate the threat of explosive hazards.

For further information:

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Mr. Richard Boulter, the Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in South Sudan said, “UNMAS appreciates the Government of Japan’s continued vital commitment to humanitarian mine action in South Sudan, and for its ongoing support to develop the capacity of the NMAA. This year’s support will maintain mine action as a critical enabler for safe return and humanitarian assistance, and a promoter of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”



In 2019, funded by the Government of Japan, UNMAS surveyed and cleared large agricultural areas in Eastern Equatoria. A deminer demonstrated the methodology for detection and clearance of a cluster munition during a high-level delegation site visit. The delegation comprised of (R-L): the Governor of Torit State, Hon. Tobiolo Alberio Oromo (second from right), the Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan H.E. Seiji Okada (third from right), the Chief Representative of JICA, Mr. Shinya Tomonari (center right), UNMISS SRSG, Mr. David Shearer (center left), the Chairperson of the NMAA, Mr. Jurkuch Barach Jurkuch (third from left), and the Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in South Sudan, Mr. Richard Boulter (second from left). Photo: UNMISS.

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