



World Food Programme
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برنامج الأغذية العالمي



From
the People of Japan

WFP News Release

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JAPAN TO PROVIDE FOOD ASSISTANCE TO 154,000 SCHOOL CHILDREN IN LESOTHO

MASERU- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes the Japanese Government contribution of JPY 250 Million (equivalent to about US\$ 2.3 Million) that will enable WFP to strengthen food assistance to some 94,000 primary school and 60,000 pre-primary school learners, through the Government of Lesotho's national school feeding programme.

An online ceremony was held today at the United Nations House to mark the contribution which will be used to buy canned fish, maize meal and highly fortified foods to further diversify nutritious meals offered in primary schools and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres across the country. The ceremony was officiated by the Lesotho Minister of Education and Training, Honourable Ntlhoi Motsamai.

Lesotho is in the third consecutive year of poor crop production due to drought. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity in the country as restriction on movement has affected informal traders and smallholder farmers access to markets. It is estimated that some 582,000 Basotho will face acute food insecurity and require urgent humanitarian assistance, between October 2020 and March 2021.

"This support came at a critical time when WFP is appealing for more resources to respond to increasing needs. It will help the most vulnerable, Basotho children, some of whom, the only nutritious meals they receive are provided through the national school feeding programme," said WFP Lesotho Acting Country Representative, Hsunhee Marian Yun.

Japan has been one of the most consistent donors to WFP Lesotho having donated over JPY 1 billion (some USD \$10 million) since 2014. The online ceremony was attended virtually by the Ambassador of the Embassy of Japan in Pretoria, His Excellency Mr. Norio Maruyama and WFP Southern Africa Regional Director, Ms. Lola Castro.

"We hope this donation will contribute to the reduction of food insecurity in Lesotho countries. Together we can work towards reducing the Lesotho's development challenges, and strengthening our bilateral relations through humanitarian assistance " said His Excellency Ambassador Norio Maruyama.



Honourable Minister of Education and Training, Ntlhoi Motsamai, reiterated the significance of Japan's support explaining that "like many countries across the world, Lesotho has been negatively affected by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened the woes of many Basotho. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Japan for this direct investment in the future of our country through the national school feeding programme. As we reopen schools this contribution will go a long way in supporting the most vulnerable children."

The support comes at a crucial time, as food insecurity levels in the country remain high and particularly affect the most vulnerable, including children. Results from the latest Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Food Insecurity Analysis of August 2020 predict that some 40 percent of the population will need immediate food assistance, with the figure expected to grow towards the end of 2020.

The Government of Japan has been funding food assistance for developing countries since 1968 and is a long-standing partner of WFP in Lesotho.

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The United Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies, building prosperity and supporting a sustainable future for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

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