



World Food Programme
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برنامج الأغذية العالمي



From
the People of Japan

WFP News Release

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Japan renews commitment to food and nutrition assistance in Lesotho

MASERU- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today welcomed a JPY 200 million (US\$ 1.8 Million) contribution by the Government of Japan to strengthen food assistance support to 50,000 pre-primary school children through the Government of Lesotho's national school feeding programme.

An online ceremony was held today to mark the contribution which will be used to procure canned fish to further diversify nutritious meals offered in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres, reaching 26,000 girls and 24,000 boys across the country. The ceremony was officiated by the Lesotho Minister of Education and Training, Honourable Mamookho Phiri.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity in the country as sources of livelihoods (casual labour, remittances, crop sales, petty trade, livestock sales or sale of livestock products) remain slightly lower than normal. It is estimated that some 312,000 Basotho will face acute food insecurity and require urgent humanitarian assistance, between October 2020 and March 2021.

"The support from Japan has come at a critical time when WFP is appealing for more resources to respond to increasing humanitarian needs," said Ms. Aurore Rusiga, WFP Lesotho Representative and Country Director. "The timely contribution will reach the most vulnerable Basotho children in the form of a hot and nutritious meal, allowing them to remain in school and as such to reach their full potential."

Results from the latest Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Food Insecurity Analysis of August 2021 predict that currently (September 2021) about 179,000 people are facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) and require humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihood and prevent acute malnutrition.

Japan has been one of the most consistent donors to WFP Lesotho having donated over JPY 1 billion (US\$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, Mr. Menghestab Haile.



“The donation will help meet the heightened need for food assistance during this unprecedented time. Together we can work towards reducing the country’s development challenges, and strengthening our bilateral relations through humanitarian assistance,” said His Excellency Ambassador Norio Maruyama

“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,” said Mamookho Phiri, Honourable Minister of Education and Training. “This invaluable donation will complement the maize meal and highly fortified nutritious porridge that the children are currently enjoying and make a tangible difference to the lives of Basotho children across the nation.”

The contribution supports the National School Feeding Programme, which aims to ensure that vulnerable pre-primary school children in Lesotho have access to adequate, safe and nutritious food all year round.

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

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