

PRESS RELEASE

25th May 2022

**AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO BOTSWANA OFFICIALLY HANDS OVER COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICE CENTRE TO BONELA**

The Embassy of Japan and Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA), on the 24th May 2022, celebrated the successful completion and handover of the Community Legal Service Centre in Metsimotlhabe, constructed through Japan's grant assistance for grassroots human security projects. The project was constructed following a grant contract signing agreement between the two organizations in 2019, when BONELA received an amount of **USD 72,546** from the Government of Japan through its Embassy in Botswana.

BONELA was providing services to the community from a residential office which was not easily accessible and did not provide a conducive environment to those in need of assistance. It was in recognition of the sensitivity of some of the cases, handled by BONELA, that the Embassy of Japan saw it fit to make a contribution of the Centre. Through this project, 12 surrounding areas will be assisted in the hope of improving the quality of life of vulnerable members of the society.

H.E. Mr. HOSHIYAMA Takashi, officially handed over the centre in the presence of Hon. Sethomo Lelatisitswe, Assistant Minister of Health, Hon. Nnaniki Makwinja, Area MP, Kgosi Mmipi, of Metsimotlhabe village and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Zia Choudhury, amongst other guests.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador HOSHIYAMA explained that the Japan's assistance, places high value on human security. In Japan, human security concept is one pillar of Japan's aid policies which aims to advance the nation and community building through empowerment and protection of individuals to live happily and in dignity, free from fear and want. He added that human security is also one of the main themes of TICAD, Tokyo International conference on African Development and The Summit meeting will be held in August in Tunisia. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Dr. Lemogang Kwappe attended the preparatory meeting in March this year. He also expressed hope that the facility will contribute to the reduction of various social, legal and health problems that BONELA deals with.

On behalf of the Government of Botswana, Hon. Lelatisitswe, expressed his sincere gratitude to the people of Japan for graciously funding the Legal Services Centre. He added that Botswana and Japan have enjoyed a bilateral partnership which has resulted in many community development projects, adding that as government, they value such partnerships and pledge to nurture their partnership going forward.

BONELA Executive Director Ms. Cindy Kelemi thanked the people of Japan for the Centre, saying that it is pleasing that the Embassy of Japan built such a facility that will contribute to their dream of achieving their national goal of ending HIV/AIDS by 2030.

In closing Honourable Makwinja said that initiatives like this one brings joy and pleasure as it is an indication that civil societies like BONELA can make a great difference. She extended her gratitude to the Ambassador, saying that a Centre like this was needed to tackle GBV and COVID-19. She added that this is not the first time she has met with her Japanese counterparts, when dating back to early 2000 they opened a Childline Hall and recently a Counselling Centre at a school in Molepolole.

For further enquiries please contact Mr. Sakamoto (Tel: 391-4456) at the Embassy of Japan in Botswana.

