



**From
the People of Japan**

Japan-Botswana Partnership Enhances Child Protection with Handover of Child Helpline Call Centre at Childline Botswana

Gaborone, 24th July 2026 - The Government of Japan, through its Embassy in Botswana, officially handed over a newly constructed Child Helpline Call Centre to Childline Botswana Trust Fund. This project was implemented through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (GGP), following a grant contract signed in December 2024, under which the Government of Japan provided USD 85,113 to for the construction and equipping of the facility with an advanced call centre system.

In his welcome address, Mr Olebile Machete, the Executive Secretary of Childline Botswana, reflected on the organization's history and its long-standing partnership with Japan. This partnership began with the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the first GGP funding for a counselling centre in 2010. He expressed his deep gratitude to the Japanese government for the dedicated Child Helpline Centre. Emphasizing the facility's immediate utility, he announced that the new call centre would serve as a vital platform for public participation in Botswana's ongoing review of the Children's Act of 2009, thereby reaffirming Childline's commitment to the protection of Botswana's children.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Dr Morena Rankopo, the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, commended Childline Botswana for its vision, and expressed appreciation to the Embassy of Japan. He emphasized that the newly established Call Centre would provide immediate support to children experiencing abuse, connect families to essential services, and strengthen the national child protection system by ensuring that cases are tracked and addressed without delay. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating a safe and protective environment where no child is left behind.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Japan, Mr. OGAWA Shin, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Japan to Botswana, emphasized that the opening of the facility marks a significant step towards protecting and promoting children's rights. He noted that, although Childline Botswana has been fighting child abuse for almost 30 years as the country's sole child helpline service, it had previously operated without a dedicated call centre. Mr Ogawa underscored that the project aligns with Pillar 3 (Human and Social Development) of Botswana's Vision 2036, as well as with the high-level diplomatic commitments made at TICAD 9 to advance human security. He added the call centre is coming at a critical time, as Botswana is reviewing its Children's Act. It will serve as a platform for children, and

the public have their voices heard in the legislative process. Citing the Japanese concept of “Yui” (結), and the Setswana proverb “Ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa”, he emphasized the shared community responsibility of raising and protecting children.

*GGP is a grant scheme which supports projects addressing social challenges and/or aiming at community development at grass-roots level and supports people-centred development projects which have a direct and immediate impact on the well-being of disadvantaged communities. In Botswana, from 1997 to date, over 67 GGP projects in total have been approved, some of which are currently on-going. These projects include rural developments such as the construction of pre-schools, classrooms for students with disabilities and vocational training institutions.

*What is JOCV? (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) JOCV is a grassroots program where Japanese skilled volunteers live and work side-by-side with local communities. Since 1993, over 450 volunteers have shared practical skills in fields like education, community development, and sports, etc. across Botswana—focusing not just on financial aid, but on growing together from the ground up. <https://www.jica.go.jp/english/activities/schemes/volunteer/index.html>

*What is JICA? (Japan International Cooperation Agency) JICA is the official agency executing Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA). Since opening its Botswana office in 2009, JICA has partnered on quite a few major projects in key sectors like infrastructure, environment, and digital technology—driving sustainable economic growth and human resource development across the nation. <https://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/>



Executive Secretary, Childline Botswana Trust Fund, Mr. Olebile Machete delivering the Welcome Remarks



Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Japan in Botswana, Mr. OGAWA Shin delivering the Keynote Speech



Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Child Welfare and Basic Education, Dr. Morena Rankopo delivering appreciation remarks.



Honourable Councillor, Mr. Sebereko delivering the Closing Remarks.



Official opening of the Call Centre.



Demonstration of the Call Management System.