



**From
the People of Japan**

**The Government of Japan Hands Over New Shelter Units to BGBVC to Strengthen Support
for GBV Survivors**

Gaborone, 15th October 2026 - The Government of Japan, through its Embassy in Botswana, has officially handed over four newly constructed studio housing units to the Botswana Gender Based Violence Prevention and Support Centre (BGBVC), expanding safe accommodation for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

Funded through the Government of Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP), the units follow a grant contract amounting to 84,942 USD signed on the 23rd October 2025. The project aims to increase access to safe, secure and dignified accommodation for individuals and families seeking refuge from violence.

The handover ceremony brought together representatives of the governments of Japan and Botswana, the BGBVC, civil society, the private sector and the media, highlighting the importance of collaboration in preventing and responding to GBV.

Speaking at the ceremony, His Excellency Mr Shindo Yusuke, Ambassador of Japan to Botswana, noted that the new facilities represented more than infrastructure, offering survivors safety, dignity and hope. He highlighted the longstanding partnership between Japan and Botswana and their shared commitment to human security.

The Ambassador also recalled Japan's earlier support to the BGBVC, including the donation of the building housing its existing shelter in 2012 and continued collaboration through the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) programme. He expressed hope that the additional units would strengthen the Centre's capacity to protect survivors and support their long-term recovery.

Dr Khumoetsile Mapitse, Board Chairperson of the BGBVC, welcomed the handover as a vital investment in the well-being of survivors. "Today we are not simply receiving new buildings; we are expanding the safety, dignity and hope available to individuals and families rebuilding their lives after violence," he said.

BGBVC Chief Executive Officer, Mr Kabelo Poloko, described the handover as a significant milestone in the organization's 28-year history. The organization was established as Kagisano Women's Shelter and later evolved into the BGBVC in 2017, with shelter services remaining central to its work.

Mr Poloko noted that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical need for safe accommodation, prompting the organization to expand its shelter programme to Francistown and increase public awareness of its services. Continued demand since the pandemic has reinforced the ongoing need for additional shelter capacity.

He thanked the Embassy of Japan for selecting the BGBVC as a GGP beneficiary once again, building on its earlier support in 2012. He also acknowledged the contributions of the Government of Botswana, the private sector and other key partners.

Honourable Lesego Chombo, Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, commended Japan's contribution, noting that inadequate shelter infrastructure remains a recognized gap in Botswana's response to GBV.

She emphasized that the new units will provide critical refuge, helping survivors access protection without compromising their privacy, comfort or their children's well-being. The Minister also underscored the importance of a multisectoral approach involving government institutions, development partners, civil society, the private sector, the media and local communities. On behalf of the Government of Botswana, she expressed appreciation to the Ambassador and the Embassy of Japan for their unwavering support.

The handover comes as Botswana continues to strengthen its national response to GBV through improved coordination, survivor-centred services and expansion of protection measures. The additional units will directly address the urgent need for safe accommodation and reinforce the BGBVC's capacity to serve affected individuals and families.

This project also coincides with the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Botswana and Japan in 2026, reflecting the enduring partnership between the two countries and their shared commitment to development, human security and the well-being of vulnerable communities.

The ceremony concluded with a unified call for continued collective action to prevent violence, protect survivors and build communities where everyone can live with dignity and free from fear.

*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 programme 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/>



Ambassador of Japan to Botswana His Excellency Mr Shindo Yusuke delivering the keynote speech



Minister of Youth and Gender Affairs, Honourable Lesego Chombo delivering her remarks



Chief Executive Officer, BGBVC, Mr Kabelo Poloko delivering his remarks



Board Chairperson, BGBVC, Dr Khumoetsile Mapitse, delivering his remarks



Official Handover



Official Handover Ceremony Participants