

## PRESS RELEASE

### Japan Supports UNMAS to Strengthen National Mine Action Capacity in South Sudan

**Juba, South Sudan, 18 August 2025** - The Government of Japan, via the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**, has contributed **JPY 335,000,000** (approximately USD 2.2 million) to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for the 18-month project *"Improvement of the Working Environment for Mine Action Agencies."*

The Government of Japan has been a longstanding and consistent supporter of mine action in South Sudan, particularly through its partnership with UNMAS. Since 2011, Japan has provided over USD 16 million in bilateral project funding for programmes in South Sudan. Support has enabled the deployment of explosive ordnance survey, clearance, and emergency response teams; the delivery of explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) to vulnerable communities; and the capacity strengthening of the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA). In March 2025, UNMAS received a contribution of USD 300,000 through Japan's Supplementary Budget supporting capacity-building of the NMAA, and advanced initiatives under the Mine Action Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy workplan.

South Sudan remains heavily contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war, with approximately **21 km<sup>2</sup>** of land affected, obstructing humanitarian access, endangering communities, and impeding safe returns and livelihoods. Children continue to bear the brunt of the threat, accounting for more than **80%** of explosive ordnance casualties in the last five years.

As South Sudan recently submitted a new extension request under the **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)** in August 2025 to extend its Article 5 deadline to **2030**, this project marks a vital step toward fulfilling national obligations and achieving the goal of a mine-free South Sudan within the new timeframe.

Continued funding through JICA will enable UNMAS to provide **technical mentoring, on-the-job training, and operational support to the NMAA**. It will also fund the **refurbishment of NMAA's offices** in **Juba** and **Wau**, improve field operations through the **provision of vehicles and explosive ordnance disposal equipment**, and support the deployment of **six survey and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) teams** composed of NMAA staff. These teams will focus on surveying high-priority contaminated areas and delivering targeted EORE, particularly for children.

The project further promotes **South-South cooperation**, with planned knowledge exchanges between NMAA and the Cambodia Mine Action Centre (CMAC), fostering peer learning and technical development.

His Excellency **Toshirō Odagiri**, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan to South Sudan, stated:

"Japan is pleased to contribute to South Sudan's vital mine action program. This project bolsters the National Mine Action Authority's capacity, leading to safer communities and sustainable development. As TICAD9 approaches, this initiative underscores Japan's commitment to

international cooperation and knowledge-sharing in mine action for broader peace and prosperity in the region."

Mr. **Maruo Shin**, Chief Representative, JICA stated:

"It is my pleasure and privilege to launch a new grant aid project in collaboration with UNMAS. Landmines in South Sudan not only cause direct harm to human lives but also hinders agricultural development, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and the delivery of essential social services - areas where JICA is actively engaged. Through this partnership, we aim to strengthen the capacity of the National Mine Action Authority and promote more effective mine action across the country. I do expect this project to contribute to creating the basis for socio-economic development and better life for the people of the Republic of South Sudan."

Hon. **Jurkuch Barach Jurkuch**, Chairperson of the National Mine Action Authority welcomed the support from JICA:

"On behalf of the National Mine Action Authority, I thank the Government and people of Japan for this generous support through JICA. This project will strengthen our capacity to lead and coordinate mine action, providing our teams with the tools, training, and resources needed to survey, clear, and educate communities about explosive hazards. It directly supports our goal of a South Sudan free from landmines by 2030."

Mr. **Zehrudin Sukanovic**, Chief of Mine Action for UNMAS in South Sudan, underlined the importance of the contribution:

"We are deeply grateful for Japan's continued leadership in mine action. Through this JICA-UNMAS partnership, the NMAA will gain the equipment and mobility it needs, while mobile survey and EORE teams are deployed to scale surveys of antipersonnel minefields - directly supporting the Government's APMBC Article 5 extension request. This is national ownership translated into practical results: safer land, stronger institutions, and communities able to rebuild with confidence."

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**For further information:**

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