



Republic of Botswana

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **JAPAN TO GIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO BOTSWANA FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF KAZUNGULA BRIDGE OVER ZAMBEZI RIVER**

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hon. Phandu T.C. Skelemani (representing the Government of Botswana) and the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Hiroyasu Kobayashi (representing the Government of Japan) signed an Exchange of Notes regarding the grant of an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan of 8 billion 735 million Yen <sup>1</sup> (about P 885,902,637) to the Government of Botswana. This Loan from the Government of Japan is to be used for the construction of a Bridge over the Zambezi at Kazungula between the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Zambia. The loan will be combined with a similar ODA loan from the Government of Japan to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, as well as with financing from the Governments of the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Zambia, in order to implement the project.

The Bridge will drastically reduce time, distance and transportation costs between Botswana and Zambia. The Project is also expected to promote regional economic development and integration in the SADC region.

The construction of the bridge is expected to begin in 2014 after due processes have been undertaken. The expected date of completion of the Project is 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Calculated as 1 Botswana Pula = 9.86 Japanese Yen. Source: Bank of Botswana (as of 9 October 2012)

Speech by Ambassador Kobayashi - Kazungula Bridge Project

It is my great pleasure today to sign this Exchange of Notes of the Kazungula Bridge Project. First of all I would like to thank Honourable Minister Phandu Skelemani of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as well as many other officials of the Botswana Government, for the enormous time and effort they have exerted in making this day happen.

The Kazungula Bridge Project is the first Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan project in Botswana since the North-South Carrier Water Project in 1995.

This project is to build a bridge across Zambezi River at the border of Botswana and Zambia. It will also include the construction of access roads and border posts. Kazungula Bridge will be located right in the middle of the North-South Corridor from Durban in South Africa Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, the bridge will greatly lower costs of transport, boost regional economic development, facilitate the exploitation of inland mineral resources, and contribute to the economic integration of southern Africa.

In March this year, I myself visited the proposed site for the bridge, and witnessed the long queues of trucks waiting for the ferry to cross Zambezi River. When the Kazungula Bridge is completed, the average traffic volume is to be doubled, and the average time required to cross the border is to be decreased to one fifth of the current time.

Regarding the current situation of the project, I understand that it is in the selection process of a consulting agency to design and manage the project. After that the selection process of a construction company will follow. Since it is a big project, the construction itself will take about 4 years.

The benefits of the Kazungula Bridge Project is not just promoting the transport of goods and people along the North-South Corridor. It is instrumental in the economic development of the region, as well as the diversification of industry in Botswana.

In closing, allow me to express my sincerest hopes that Kazungula Bridge will contribute to the economic development of southern Africa and become a bridge to further strengthen the relations between Botswana and Japan.

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