

# FUNDS AIMED AT ADDING SUPPORT FOR MORE THAN 1.9 MILLION REFUGEES IN UGANDA

By John Masaba

Japan has announced a \$5.97m (about sh22.3b) contribution to support humanitarian operations and development programmes across the country.

The funding, unveiled yesterday, will be implemented through United Nations agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme, the International Organisation for Migration and UN Women. It is targeting refugee protection, education, livelihoods and food security.

The announcement was made by Japan's Ambassador to Uganda, Sasayama Takuya, during a joint briefing with UN and government officials.

## EASING FINANCIAL PRESSURE

The development comes at a time when Uganda's refugee response is under increasing strain, driven by rising arrivals and stretched humanitarian resources. The latest financial support is expected to help ease pressure on key services, including food assistance, which has, in some cases, been subject to rationing due to funding shortfalls.

Uganda currently hosts more than 1.9 million refugees, one of the largest refugee populations in the world, primarily from South Sudan (55%) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (31%),

# JAPAN INJECTS SH22.5B INTO UGANDA'S REFUGEE RESPONSE

PHOTO BY RICHARD SANAYA



Sasayama, Zulu, Sanusi Savage; Chief of Mission, IOM Uganda and Bernard Inkoom, deputy representative of UNHCR Uganda during the press conference, yesterday

according to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Ambassador Sasayama said the latest support reflects Japan's continued commitment to humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation with Uganda.

"Uganda is playing a very important role in hosting refugees. We highly appreciate Uganda's open-door policy

and continued efforts despite the many challenges," he said.

He described Uganda's refugee model as "amazing," noting that it continues to stand out globally for its inclusive approach despite mounting pressures on services and infrastructure. "We want to support both refugees and host communities so that they can become more self-reliant.

Education and livelihoods are very important in achieving long-term stability," he added.

## INCREASING REFUGEE LOAD

Douglas Asiimwe, the Assistant Commissioner for Refugees, noted: "The government of Japan has been consistently with us in the refugee sector through supplementary budget support every year

He called for stronger international burden-sharing to sustain protection services and humanitarian assistance.

## LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE

UN Resident Coordinator Leonard Zulu said Japan's contribution comes at a critical moment, noting that Uganda is under increasing pressure from new arrivals.

He said Japan has contributed about \$40m (sh150b) over the past decade to Uganda's refugee response, supporting health care, protection services, livelihoods and psychosocial support.

"Uganda continues to receive new arrivals fleeing conflict in the region, placing significant pressure on reception centres and essential services," Zulu said.

The latest funding, he explained, will help provide life-saving assistance to up to 160,000 newly arrived asylum seekers, including shelter, food, clean water, emergency health care and psychosocial support.

## WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Zulu also pointed to rising mental health needs, particularly among women and children who arrive after traumatic displacement journeys.

"Women and children who have experienced trauma as they flee will benefit from targeted psychosocial support," he said.

## UGANDA-JAPAN BILATERAL TIES

Beyond humanitarian aid, Japan used the engagement to reaffirm its broader co-operation with Uganda, particularly in infrastructure development.

Ambassador Sasayama said Japan is backing key projects, such as the planned new Karuma Bridge and the next phase of the Kampala Flyover, aimed at improving connectivity and easing urban congestion.

and we are grateful again that you are allocating \$5.97m this year."

Asiimwe said that Uganda's refugee caseload continues to grow, with over two million now registered since March.

"We continue to receive refugees every day," he said, adding that Uganda's open-door policy remains central to its humanitarian stance in a volatile region.