

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Rwanda and the Government of Japan have announced a new partnership to support communities affected by disasters and epidemics. Japan will contribute 2 billion Rwandan francs to the effort.

This funding will help improve health, sanitation, and disaster response in areas frequently hit by natural disasters and outbreaks.

The announcement was made on March 17, 2025, by Japanese Ambassador to Rwanda, Isao Fukushima, and UNICEF Rwanda's representative, Lieke Van de Wiel. The contribution is aimed at six border districts in Rwanda—Nyamasheke, Rutsiro, Rusizi, Rubavu, Nyabihu, and Ngororero—that are often impacted by epidemics and climate change-related disasters. The project will directly help 100,000 people and indirectly benefit 300,000 others in these regions.

Ambassador Fukushima stressed that Japan's support focuses on protecting people's safety and dignity. He emphasized that it is vital for people to live without fear of losing their lives due to disasters or disease.

Lieke Van de Wiel thanked the Government of Japan for its continued partnership. She said this initiative will help restore vital services and support communities affected by epidemics, malnutrition, and poor sanitation. She added that the focus will be on the health and well-being of children.

The project will improve access to healthcare, clean water, and sanitation. It will also upgrade water systems to be more resilient to climate change. In addition, the project will provide training for healthcare workers and raise awareness about safe health and hygiene practices.

Five health facilities will be upgraded to improve infection prevention, particularly in response to recent outbreaks of diseases like Marburg and monkeypox.

This collaboration between Japan, UNICEF, and the Government of Rwanda has been ongoing for over 10 years. Together, they have worked on various projects to help vulnerable communities access essential services.

Gemma Maniraruta from Rwanda's Ministry of Infrastructure also expressed her gratitude. She highlighted the importance of building sustainable water infrastructure that can withstand climate challenges.

The new project is part of Japan's Supplementary Budget for 2024 and will run for 12 months. It follows a similar initiative in 2023 that benefited 177,000 people across seven districts. The efforts will continue until February 2026.

This partnership aims to ensure that people in these vulnerable communities can rebuild their lives and live with dignity, even in the face of future challenges.