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the people of Japan**

News Release

Japanese aid totalling more than US\$6 million for Bangladesh

Dhaka, 06 December 2004: At a ceremony in Dhaka, the Japanese Ambassador, H.E.Mr. Matsushiro Horiguchi handed over 5,665 MT of Bulk wheat worth \$1.6 million to the Secretary, Food and Disaster Management, Mr. Sidduqur Rahman Chowdhury. The donated wheat will be distributed among the poor people through World Food Programme-supported Vulnerable Group Development activity across the country including the flood and the *Monga* affected areas. Food and Disaster Management Minister H.E. Mr. Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf and WFP Representative Mr. Douglas Casson Coutts were also present on the occasion.

Another consignment of 13, 000 MT of rice worth US \$ 5 million will be arriving later this month as assistance to the flood victims.

At the handing over ceremony, the Japanese Ambassador Mr. Horiguchi observed, *“This reconfirms our continued support to the government and people of Bangladesh. We pledged to continue our support to help the poor people, especially women, attain better food security and a more sustainable livelihood.”*

“We are also proud to contribute to the WFP’s EMOP operations which cover more than 5 million flood affected poor people of the country and hope our contribution will help poor people to recover” added the Ambassador. The Japanese contribution is regularly utilised to undertake various WFP activities including Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Integrated Food Security (IFS) aimed at improving the food security and nutritional well being of the ultra poor.

The Government of Japan earlier provided about 6,000 MT of wheat to the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) of WFP’s current Country Programme. In addition to the Country Programme activities, it also contributes multilaterally to fund the refugee operations in Cox’s Bazar and provided 2,000 MT of rice in 2004..

Describing Japan as a very sincere partner for WFP and Bangladesh, WFP Representative Douglas Casson Coutts said, “*WFP always tries to minimise the vulnerability of the poor people, especially women and children, through ensuring that they occupy and remain at the centre of our development and relief activities. Japanese assistance is definitely a great help for us in this process of improving the overall food security of the ultra-poor.*”

Notes to the Editor:

1. WFP supported Vulnerable Group Development programme promotes sustainable development and food security of over 2 million ultra poor across the country.
2. The devastating floods of the July affected some 30 million people, making about 2 million homeless.
3. In response to the recent flood WFP responded with an EMOP that targets some 5 million over a period of twelve months. The resourcing situation, however, remains severely inadequate, with current pledges amounting to just about 36 percent of the estimated needs.
4. WFP has been working in Bangladesh for the past thirty years to help its people attain food security. Its current Country Programme aims to cover more than 4 million people annually.

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