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UNHCR's second largest donor visits the refugee operation in Upper Nile

JUBA, South Sudan – 30 August (UNHCR) – Japan's Ambassador to South Sudan, Kiya Masahiko, wrapped up a one-day visit to Upper Nile's Maban County on Thursday to show solidarity with the refugees and appreciate the impact of Japan's aid contribution on refugees' living conditions. He was accompanied by UNHCR Country Representative, Ahmed Warsame, and a delegation of local authorities and partner organizations.

During his field trip, Ambassador Kiya visited some of the projects funded by the government and people of Japan in Doro camp, including classrooms at the Nur primary school, a solar-power borehole and the mud-plastered transitional shelters for vulnerable refugees. "With a zinc roof over my head, I don't have to worry anymore about the rain", says 28-year-old Susan from Sudan. She is one of 5,000 refugees who were relocated from low-lying water-prone areas to higher ground within Doro and given a transitional shelter. "There is more space here for my children and I feel I have now a proper home", says Susan.

The Ambassador paid a visit to Maban County Hospital, which UNHCR has equipped with a X-ray room, two operating theatres, three paediatric wards and a pharmacy over the last two years thanks to multi-donor funding, including Japan. This hospital serves more than 200,000 people from the refugee and host communities and remains the only functioning hospital in the entirety of Upper Nile State since the start of the conflict in December 2013.

UNHCR's second largest donor globally, Japan has contributed more than \$16 million since 2014 to support UNHCR's efforts to protect and assist refugees and extend a helping hand to host communities in South Sudan.

"Japan's support has been key in improving the living conditions of tens of thousands of Sudanese refugees who have found shelter in camps in Upper Nile and Unity states as well as many South Sudanese living within and around Maban camps," says Warsame. "We were able to build better shelters for families and ensure higher standards in health, water, sanitation and education."

Before returning to Juba, Japan's Ambassador had also the opportunity to meet with the refugee leaders to hear the concerns of their community. Access to higher education, health care, food and shelters remain top priorities for the refugees as do Internet connectivity for education and access to labor-saving modern farm technologies like tractors to increase agricultural production.

"Resources are limited, but we are committed to continue our support for refugees and host communities in South Sudan," says Ambassador Kiya. "It is important that the contribution of the people of Japan reaches the most needy refugees and makes substantive improvements in their livelihoods." By assisting refugees and their South Sudanese hosts, he says, "my country wants to promote peaceful coexistence among communities and help South Sudan better cope with large numbers of refugees."

In South Sudan, there are currently some 265,000 refugees. Nearly 90 per cent are from Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Niles states and live in six camps across the northern states of Unity and Upper Nile. The remaining 10 per cent are refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia who live mostly in Central and Western Equatoria. In coordination with the Government of South Sudan and partners, UNHCR assists and protects refugees and is also part of the multi-agency response to internally displaced South Sudanese, as lead of the Protection Cluster.

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