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Press Release: Unveiling of the Rozaria Education and Counselling Centre

Murewa - Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT) celebrated the official opening and handover ceremony of the Rozaria Education and Counselling Centre.

The Rozaria Counselling and Education Centre was unveiled by the Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, H.E Ambassador Toshiyuki Iwado. He commended RMT for contributing massively to women's empowerment in marginalised communities and urged communities in Zimbabwe to commit to advancing gender equality and ending gender-based violence.

"We all need to unite and commit to put a stop to gender-based violence practices in the communities we live in. My hope is that the Education and Counselling Centre will continue to benefit girls and young women in Zimbabwe over generations to come," said Ambassador Iwado.

The Guest of Honour, Minister of State for Mashonaland East, Hon Minister Appolonia Munzverengi said, "Education plays a vital role and this centre will address the issue of gender equality by raising awareness in communities. We appreciate the work RMT is doing; the government of Zimbabwe respects organisations that are dedicated to improving the livelihood of the people of Zimbabwe."

Representing the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises was the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises, Ambassador Rudo Chitiga. Ambassador Chitiga commended RMT for an exemplary approach to implementing women centred community development thus enabling the

government of Zimbabwe to achieve the Agenda 2030. She applauded the Embassy of Japan's approach to working with communities in addressing violence against women.

In her speech at the handover ceremony, youth advocate Mary Maponga urged girls and young women to stay in school and not let boys deviate them from the vision to attain an education.

"I lost my parents at a tender age, the loss of my parents brought about feelings of self-doubt and I found myself in a marriage that I did not want at a young age. I want to urge all girls and young women who experienced child marriage to utilise the Rozaria Centre and keep the vision of attaining an education alive. The Centre is for us girls and we have to maximise the opportunity that has been given to us," said Maponga.

Mrs Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, the Founder and Chief Executive of the Trust appreciated the government for approval of land for the construction of the centre, the government of Japan for its financial assistance and the community for its in-kind contributions. She observed that this occasion is a milestone as it provided integrated service that creates opportunities and unleashes the potential of young women and girls especially those who experienced violence.

A number of 1 000 people attended the event, including senior government officials, partners and members of Civil Society Organisations, Traditional Leaders from around Zimbabwe, Members of Murewa Rural District Council and RMT beneficiaries. The day was characterised by the popular Murewa traditional dance, Jerusarema.

Rozaria Education and Counselling Centre is aimed at creating opportunities and empowering girls and young women living in rural communities with lifelong skills. The Centre comprises of 3 iconic buildings which consist of, Nhangwa, Dura and Dendere.

Nhangwa is a cultural innovation for social empowerment; it provides a safe space for intergenerational dialogue, mentorship and learning.

The Dura is a reservoir of knowledge; it provides services on Technical Vocational Training (TVET), a library facility, ICT hub and a space for community education on health and gender.

The Dendere is a referral point and an emergency shelter for women experiencing gender-based violence. It is designed to help survivors of gender-based violence receive psychosocial support, and reclaim their voice.

The Rozaria Education and Counselling Centre was constructed with the generous financial support of the Japanese Government.

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