

## **JAPAN EXTENDS GRANTS FOR STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM, AND IMPROVING RICE PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

On 25 April 2024, Ambassador MATSUNAGA Kazuyoshi, together with H.E. Sen. Abubakar Atiku BAGUDU, the Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, signed the Exchange of Notes for the projects “Strengthening the Diagnostic Capacity of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control” and “The Enhancement of Rice Seeds Production System, for Economic and Social Development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.”

The Government of Japan extended an additional grant aid of JPY 170 million (approximately USD 1.223 million) to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to contribute to resilient health systems for quality of life in Nigeria and extended the aid of JPY 587 million (approximately USD 4.223 million) to enhance the system of rice seeds production in the country.

The public health project aims to strengthen infection prevention measures and surveillance systems through the installation of Biosafety Level (BSL) 3 laboratories and BSL2 laboratories within the National Reference Laboratory of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) situated in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, contributing to the establishment of an inclusive and resilient public health and medical system in the country. This is in line with Japan’s commitment to develop human resources for infectious disease care and research, and to expand and strengthen research centres.

The initial grant provided for this project, in April 2019, was JPY 1.58 billion (approximately USD 11.36 million). However, due to a shortage of funds caused by soaring prices in Nigeria and other factors, an additional grant of JPY 170 million has now been provided, bringing it to a total of JPY 1.75 billion (approximately USD 12.58 million).

Furthermore, the extension of the grant aid for the enhancement of rice seeds production will help in improving the quality of breeder seeds and foundation seeds of rice, through procuring equipment for rice cultivation/production, testing/inspection, and post-harvest processing for the National Cereals Research Institute and its outstations – in Niger and Oyo states. This is in line with Japan’s commitment, which the country announced at TICAD 8, to double rice production in Nigeria by 2030.

