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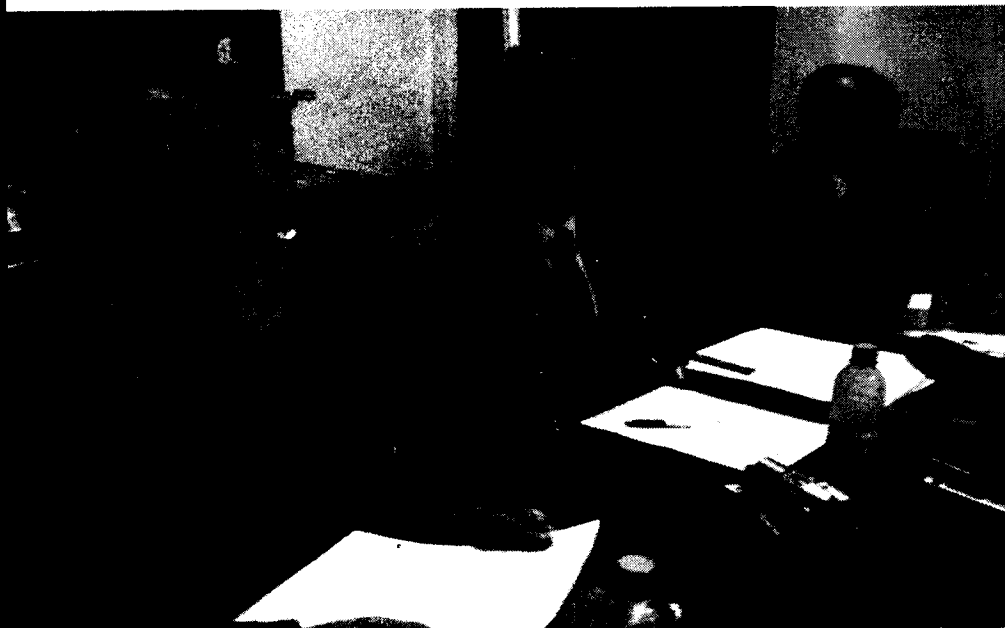
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# FORUM



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## Japan Donates US\$2M for Arms Collection



(L-R) *Amb. Ishikawa, Mr. Ryan & Min. Wallace*

By: *Lewis K. Glay*

The Japanese Government has donated two hundred and thirty two million Japanese Yen to the United Nations Development Programme to enhance its(UNDP) Arms for Development (AFD) Project in Liberia.

The amount which is approximately 2M United States dollars was yesterday announced by Japanese Ambassador Masamichi Ishikawa at the UNDP conference room at Mamba Point.

Ambassador Ishikawa said the Japanese Government would be pleased to see five groups of beneficiaries: grass root communities, community based organizations, civil society/ National Commission, Liberia National Police and the Government of Liberia make better use of the opportunity to achieve total peace and stability in the nation.

He noted that the ultimate goal is to bring about total peace and stability, rehabilitation and

integration, and the development of the socio economic situation of Liberia, adding, "I would like to commend the government of Liberia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their vision and wish you all the best in the implementation of the programme."

Liberian Foreign Minister George W. Wallace who participated in the signing ceremony of the grant between the Japanese Government and UNDP, said Liberian Government is truly heartened by the contribution of US\$2M in support of UNDP National Small Arms Control Project."

Ambassador Wallace said replacing weapons with useful implements in the hands of those who have been accustomed to using them as a means of livelihood is a task which the government is clearly aware of and is prepared to execute, adding, "a weapon free Liberia provides the best guarantee against crimes and other vices in society."

He urged other partners in progress to fully support the program aimed at completely sweeping Liberia

of weapons and warlike materials.

The Foreign Minister recalled the Japanese Government's significant contributions to vital sectors of Liberia's development, recounting the Asian Country's contribution to the welfare of child soldiers during the DDDR exercise as well as the contribution of US\$2.25M by Japan to UNICEF in Liberia for the protection of the nation's young population against malaria and acute respiratory infections.

Planning Minister, Toga McIntosh also lauded the Japanese government for the donation, noting that his government was impressed with the Arms For Development initiatives launched in the country and that increased education and public awareness would be made to inform citizens on the danger small arms poses while their exposure is associated with benefits. "When Liberia is gun free we have development," he assured.

For their part, UNDP Country Director and Resident Representative, Steven Ursino and Jordan Ryan reiterated their organization's commitment to ensuring a gun free Liberia after years of bitter civil war.

They disclosed that the 1956 Firearms Traffic Act drafted by a local NGO with their support is being revised, a draft of which is expected to be presented to the Liberian Parliament next month.

Already, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Grand Cape Mount Counties are the first four counties to cooperate with the UNDP sponsored Arms for Development (AFD) Project.