

**The Nation's  
NEWS**

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## **Japan Donates US\$2M ...To Facilitate Collection, Destruction Of Arms**

*By Alloycious David*

The Government of Japan has donated two hundred and thirty-two million Japanese Yen (JPY232,000,000), approximately US\$2 million to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The donation is intended for the expansion of UNDP's program on arms for development (AfD).

**UNDP launched its Arms for Development project on January 13, 2006 in Ganta, Nimba**

County. The project is intended to collect and destroy small arms that were not surrendered during the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, DDRR exercises.

The AfD project is part of the United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms (UNPA), which has three other activities including the formation of the National Commission on Small Arms, revision of the 1956 Firearms Traffic Act and Public Awareness and Education.

Signing the grant Monday on behalf of his government at the UNDP's offices in Mamba Point, Japan Ambassador to Liberia, Mr. Masamichi Ishikawa said that his government has provided the grant for the effective collection and destruction of small arms in Liberia.

He noted that his government is aware that the program would be used as tool to sensitize communities on the need to voluntarily turn in small arms in exchange for development projects and capacitate the Liberia National Police (LNP) to control

Ambassador Ishikawa cautioned that his people and government would be pleased if the targeted groups benefit from the program, which he stressed aims to achieve total peace and stability in the country.

"I am pleased to note that the activities are aimed toward supporting the economic development of the communities through the implementation of development projects and the provision of alternative means of livelihood, social rehabilitation by strengthening community cohesion and improvement human security by removing illicit weapons", the Japanese Envoy added.

He stressed that the only way "to achieve the ultimate goal which is to bring about total peace and stability, rehabilitation and integration and development of the social economic situation of Liberia, it will take the dedication, determination and cooperation of Liberians.

Also speaking at the program, Foreign Minister, George Wallace said that riding Liberia of weapons constitutes a top priority of the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf-lead Government.

Mr. Wallace added that replacing the weapons with useful implements in the hands of those who have got accustomed to using them as means of livelihood is a task which this government is clearly aware of and which it is prepared to execute.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, Ambassador

Wallace commended the Government and people of Japan for the timely contribution which will achieve the twin role of sweeping the country of weapons which could fall in wrong hands for mischievous purposes.

For his part UNDP Country Director, Steven A. Ursino, lauded the Japanese Government for the initiative and assured that the funds will be used to facilitate the expansion of the Arms for Development (AfD), adding "we will continue to provide quality service to make Liberia a gun-free society."