

Norway said Monday it would donate 58 million Norwegian kroner (6.5 million euros, 9 million dollars) to Zimbabwe, but would do so via third parties in order to bypass veteran President Robert Mugabe.



The money will be donated through the United Nations, non-governmental organisations and the World Bank for the "Zimbabwean people and to support the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and the new coalition government," the Norwegian ministry for development aid said in a statement.

"By bypassing state channels, we avoid Mugabe and his clan getting their hands on this money," ministry spokeswoman Ragnhild Simenstad told AFP.

Norway has not given direct aid to Zimbabwe since 2000.

"If the new government demonstrates it is able to function, Zimbabwe could become an example of a country that managed to avoid becoming a bankrupt state," said Environment and Development Aid Minister Erik Solheim in a statement.

The money will finance health and education projects in the troubled African country.

Tsvangirai, Mugabe's long-time rival, became prime minister in a national unity government earlier this year which has struggled to find funding.

Major donors have been reluctant to give new aid until the government makes more tangible reforms to break from Mugabe's past policies, which are blamed for wrecking the economy and trampling on human rights.