

**Statement made by Mr. Hirotaka Ishihara, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
June 26th, 2014**

H.E. Enrique Banze, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
and President of the Third Review Conference,
Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belguim,
His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the warm hospitality of the government and people of Mozambique, as well as His Excellency, Mr. Enrique Banze for his outstanding leadership at this Review Conference.

It has been 15 years since the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In 1999, Mozambique was considered to be one of the most seriously affected countries in the world by anti-personnel mines. I believe it is extremely significant that we have once again gathered in Mozambique, where the First Meeting of States Parties was held, to discuss the Convention's progress and challenges. Mozambique, the host of this Conference, has demonstrated exemplary ownership in working on mine clearance, and now they are just about to achieve the target of finishing clearance by the end of 2014. As a long-term partner, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Mozambique.

As a symbol of our bilateral ties, we have decided to offer financial support worth 150,000 US Dollars for the organization of this Conference. It is a great pleasure for us to be able to contribute to the success of this Conference.

Mr. President,

The Convention has led to great accomplishments, though on the

other hand, there are some challenges that remain for the future. The number of States Parties to this Convention has reached 161. However, there are some states that stockpile and/or produce large amounts of anti-personnel mines not yet bound by the Convention. In particular, universalization in the Asia-Pacific region has been delayed, and there is a need to call for a wider adherence to this Convention.

On mine clearance, around 30 States Parties have completed demining. On the other hand, around the same number of States Parties continue to work on mine clearance by extending their Convention deadlines.

With respect to mine victims, the number of recorded casualties has been declining. However, disabilities that survivors suffer as a consequence will continue for a lifetime. We need to make further efforts so that the survivors can participate in a full, equal and effective manner in society.

How will States Parties overcome these remaining challenges? Our resolve is being tested now.

Mr. President,

Anti-Personnel Mines pose a threat to people's lives, livelihood and dignity. It causes indiscriminate suffering to civilians and obstructs economic development and reconstruction. As a result of flooding and other natural disasters, mines shift to unexpected areas and put residents at risk of danger. In areas where the security situation is volatile, there are concerns about the misuse of mines by non-state actors.

Acting upon the various issues caused by anti-personnel mines and from the perspective of defending human security, Japan has been actively providing support to mine action. Since 1998, Japan has provided approximately 582 million US Dollars to mine action in 50 countries and regions. My country continues to face a severe financial situation, but the reason why we have been able to offer assistance surpassing 200 million dollars over the past 5 years is because we attach high importance to responding to landmine issues.

Mr. President,

At the Second Review Conference in 2009, as a future guide for our own international assistance, Japan announced the following approaches: First, strong partnership with affected countries as well as mine victims. Second, participation of a wide range of actors, including civil society, academia, and the private sector. Third, a comprehensive approach that envelops mine action and the development of the impacted community.

I will provide you with an example. In Mozambique we have built a strong partnership with the Government of Mozambique, the IND, the UNDP and NGOs. Also, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, Japanese private companies assist NGOs to conduct mine clearance in their own capacity. Moreover, two mine clearance machines developed in Japan are contributing to the acceleration of demining activities. The land released as a result has been utilized effectively for development, for instance, of vegetable farming and raising livestock. In addition, to help Mozambique reach its demining completion target and to walk the last mile together, we are currently considering an offer of an additional 390,000 US dollars of assistance.

From now on, based on the aforementioned three approaches and to further develop those, we will continue our support to mine action by putting an emphasis on the following approaches.

Firstly, we will continue to support those countries that are most heavily affected by anti-personnel mines and UXOs. Currently, around 30 countries are carrying out mine clearance, and amongst them there are countries that have enormous areas of contamination. The draft Maputo +15 Declaration expresses the States Parties' aspiration to complete time-bound obligations by 2025, which includes mine clearance. Based upon these considerations, we intend to offer support to those who face a serious challenge removing anti-personnel mines.

Secondly, we will promote regional and South-South cooperation. Since 2010, Japan has been carting out south-south cooperation projects with our long-term partner and capacity-building beneficiary CMAC and

other national mine action institutions in Colombia, Lao PDR and Angola. Through these projects, countries that have the same problem and have the same goal of eradicating mines in their country work together to share information and experience. I have received reports that these projects are valuable in giving inspiration and increasing motivation among its participants. Regarding regional cooperation, we wish that the CPADD demining training center in Benin and the newly establishing ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) will promote mine action in their respective regions. During the week, Japan has introduced our efforts in south-south cooperation and regional cooperation in the form of side-events.

Third, Japan aims to provide comprehensive support to victim assistance. Victim assistance requires the provision of care during a wide range of phases from immediate first aid after getting injured, the eventual rehabilitation, and to the final stages of participation in society in the form of vocational training, just to name a few. Together with Colombia, Japan has conducted a 5 year victim assistance project that covers these phases from first aid to rehabilitation. Over the next few years, we plan to carry out a “Social Inclusion Project” that aims to achieve the social inclusion of peoples with disabilities as a result of conflict, including mine victims. Once again, we believe that it is essential to provide comprehensive support for victims from the initial first-aid to the full inclusion in society.

Mr. President,

In order to implement the obligations of the Convention, I would like to add that the ownership of States Parties is indispensably important. Aiming to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, as in the past and in the future, Japan will continue to cooperate with impacted countries and the international community.

Finally, I would like to express Japan’s strong support to the draft outcome documents, including the Maputo +15 Declaration, which reflects the Convention’s unique spirit of cooperation and the strong aspiration by the States Parties.

I thank you for your kind attention.