

Statement by H.E. OMI Asako,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Fourth Review Conference
of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines,
Oslo, Norway, 26 November 2019

His Excellency Mr. Hans Brattskar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations and President of the Fourth Review Conference,
Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium,
His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the government and people of Norway for their warm hospitality, as well as to His Excellency Mr. Hans Brattskar for his outstanding leadership at this Review Conference.

It has been 20 years since the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, and it is indeed significant that this important Review Conference is convened here in Oslo, where the Convention was formally adopted in September 1997. Japan, together with other States Parties, civil society and academia, would like to congratulate on the accomplishments achieved through the implementation of the Convention in the past two decades.

Mr. President,

Despite the remarkable progress, however, challenges still remain in front of us, and we also face emerging problems. It is clear that many countries will have to continue their efforts of mine clearance for years. Besides the tireless work, however, anti-personnel mines are reported to be used. It is also our grave concern that improvised explosive devices, often detonated by non-state actors, are adding numbers to civilian casualties.

Challenges lie in universalization as well. Although we now have 164 States Parties, some non-state parties reportedly stockpile or produce large numbers of anti-personnel mines. The situation tells us that we have to accelerate our current efforts and multiply their effects if we are to achieve a world free from mines. The question is, how can we reach our goal?

Mr. President,

In an effort to ensure human security, Japan has been continuously providing assistance to tackle various issues caused by anti-personnel mines around the globe. Since 1998, we have contributed more than 800 million US dollars to mine action in 51 countries and regions. In the 12 months starting from April last year, we have implemented 43 projects in 24 countries and regions.

Our support focuses not only in mine clearance, but also in risk education, construction and reconstruction of schools and revitalization of economic activities to promote local stability and development. Our support is comprehensive in a sense that it includes assistance to survivors for their full integration as well as their equal and effective participation in the society.

Mr. President,

In order to accelerate our efforts, we need to work in innovative ways. Japan's advanced technology promote innovation to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the world's efforts to further achieve the objectives of the Convention. As an example, some Japanese private companies assist NGOs to conduct mine clearance, and even contribute to reconstruction of local facilities on cleared lands, in their own capacity. Mine clearance machines and devices developed by Japanese private sector and academia largely contribute to acceleration of demining, releasing more land for development and better livelihood of local communities. Part of that technology will be presented in details in a side event that we will organize after this morning session, and everyone is welcome to learn more about innovative way of mine clearance.

Mr. President,

In the implementation of the Convention, the ownership of States Parties is indispensable. Aiming to put an end to casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, Japan remains committed to working together with impacted countries, civil society and the international community.

Finally, I would like to express Japan's support to the draft outcome documents, which reflect the Convention's spirit of cooperation and the strong aspiration by the States Parties.

I thank you for your kind attention.