

STATEMENT OF JAPAN
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 76th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS -
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Mr. Chair,

A number of violent events that took place around the globe in the past year have reiterated the pressing importance of the control and disarmament of conventional weapons. The world has witnessed many lives deprived of, populations displaced, and families torn apart due to various types of tragedies caused by illicit arms, remaining mines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and irresponsible transfers of weapons to unauthorized recipients. With the need for “Disarmament that Saves Lives” becoming more imminent than ever, Japan believes it imperative for all Member States to stand united to address the challenges we all face.

Japan recognizes the important role that the CCW plays to that end, and supports the ongoing discussions towards the Sixth Review Conference, scheduled to take place in December. In particular, Japan, as President-designate of the 23rd Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II of the CCW, wishes to highlight that APII continues to play its essential role in reducing human suffering and preventing civilian losses caused by landmines, booby traps, and other devices including IEDs. In this respect, Japan will take the lead to update the IEDs Declaration at APII, and looks forward to working towards the revision with other High Contracting Parties.

Another subject of significance within the CCW framework is the emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). While appreciating the progress made by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) so far, Japan believes it appropriate for the High Contracting Parties to extend the mandate of the Group and continue its discussions about LAWS, building on the past work and the outcomes of the Group, including the 11 Guiding Principles. We look forward to further advancement of international discourse and consolidation of potential solutions that uphold International Humanitarian Law and other relevant international instruments.

Japan will continue its active contribution to the exploration towards international rule-making effort within the CCW framework.

The Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which had been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic, was finally concluded in September this year. Japan welcomes the “Lausanne Declaration”, adopted at the Conference, and renews its commitments in order to realize “a world free of the casualties, suffering and socio-economic impacts caused by cluster munitions”.

Mines and other explosives continue to cause casualties around the world. Landmines threaten or deprive the lives, livelihoods and dignity of local populations and hinder the realization of human security. In 2020 alone, Japan provided assistance for projects in 21 countries and regions, amounting to approximately 39 million US dollars, in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), other international organizations, and NGOs. Japan will continue to play an active role on mine action.

Mr. Chair,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. While the PoA was indispensable to the progress made in the last two decades, the issues related to illicit transfer of SALW remain serious challenges that the international community must tackle urgently. In this regard, Japan welcomes the constructive discussions and successful outcomes of the Seventh Biennial Meeting (BMS7) of the PoA in July. To maintain and build on that momentum, Japan again joins Colombia and South Africa in proposing to this Committee the resolution on “The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.” We call on Members States to uphold the spirit of the PoA and support this important resolution.

It is indeed out of that sense of urgency that Japan supported the activities of Amnesty Month of the African Union’s Silencing the Guns Initiative, through capacity building and weapon collections in four countries in Africa. With the same aspiration, we also contributed 2 million US dollars to the Saving Lives Entity, or SALIENT, launched here in New York two years ago, to support fellow States in advancing their conventional

arms control. Given the urgent nature of the SALW issue, we hope to see concrete activities and results of SALIENT on the ground as soon as possible.

The need for better SALW control was also highlighted at the Seventh Conference of States Parties (CSP7) of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), where measures to prevent diversion through better management of arms transfer were actively discussed. As the Vice-President of the Eighth Conference of States Parties (CSP8) and a long-time member of the Voluntary Trust Fund Selection Committee of the Treaty, Japan will surely continue to play an active role in promoting treaty implementation, universalization and transparency in arms trade.

Mr. Chair,

Ensuring human security and materializing a safer world require effective and constructive work across the international community in multiple areas and existing frameworks of conventional arms control and disarmament. Please be assured that Japan remains committed to continuing its contribution and stands ready to work with other Member States, international organizations and civil society to move things forward.

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