

“Strengthening National Ownership and National Capacity for Mine Action”

Submitted by Japan

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I. Introduction

1. Although countries affected by landmines are making efforts to clear and dispose of all anti-personnel mines in accordance with their obligations under Article 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which entered into force in 1999, mine clearance takes considerable time and requires sustained efforts over the medium to long term, even after conflicts have ended.

2. Therefore, it is essential to integrate humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. In this context, applying the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus approach to mine action can help ensure that clearance activities address both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reconstruction. Strengthening national ownership and national capacity of mine-affected states is key to effectively implementing this Nexus, while donor countries can enhance the sustainability of mine action by supporting these national efforts.

3. As the Presidency of the Twenty-second Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), Japan, led by H.E. Ms. ICHIKAWA Tomiko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, has designated "strengthening national ownership" and "development of national capacity" as its priority themes. Under Japan's Comprehensive Package of Assistance to Humanitarian Mine Action, which was announced in 2024, Japan supports programs ranging from short-term demining activities that protect citizens' lives to initiatives that contribute to medium- and long-term reconstruction and development.

4. This paper aims to promote international cooperation in mine action and accelerate global efforts toward a "mine-free world" by sharing Japan's experiences and achievements, particularly through JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), in strengthening national ownership and developing national capacity. Cooperation toward a "mine-free world" also contributes to the realization of human security, which is actively promoted by the Government of Japan and JICA.

II. Strengthening "National Ownership" and "National Capacity" in Mine Action

5. Japan has consistently emphasized the importance of national ownership and capacity development in mine-affected countries through its assistance for mine action. It has

implemented various programs and projects based on the recognition that strengthening national ownership and national capacity is essential for promoting effective mine action. Several tangible outcomes have been observed. The following are examples of good practices and lessons learned from programs and projects supported by Japan.

A. Comprehensive Capacity Development of the Affected Countries, South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

6. Cambodia is one of the countries that is most heavily contaminated by landmines. In 1993, mine action began to be carried out by a Cambodian governmental organization. Japan, particularly through JICA, has supported the capacity development of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) by combining financial contributions, the provision of equipment, and technical cooperation. This holistic support has strengthened the organization's capacity by improving operational efficiency in the field as well as management at headquarters and branch offices. As a result, by 2023, the speed of releasing contaminated areas had increased 28-fold compared to the beginning of the mine action.

7. In Cambodia, in addition to technical improvements, increased national ownership and national capacity in the mine sector have strengthened coordination with relevant ministries, local government, donors, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private companies. This has enabled Cambodia to plan and implement mine action in a way that supports its reconstruction and development. It has also promoted the establishment of a legal framework for mine action programs.

8. With support from JICA, CMAC has been sharing its knowledge and expertise with countries engaged in mine action since 2010. By November 2025, more than 600 officials and staff members from government organizations responsible for mine action in Angola, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zambia had participated in the knowledge-sharing program jointly implemented by JICA and CMAC.

9. Heavily contaminated countries such as Colombia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Ukraine may require a longer period to clear landmines and explosives remnants of war (ERW), as seen in Cambodia. Knowledge sharing between these countries and Cambodia has taken place multiple times, contributing not only to technical improvements but also to increased national ownership and capacity in each country.

10. Colombia improved its demining methods through knowledge sharing with CMAC under a JICA-supported project. Pilot activities conducted based on technical inputs from CMAC led to a 65 percent reduction in the number of days required for non-technical survey (NTS) and a 25 percent reduction in the number of days required for clearance.

11. CMAC has provided training sessions for the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) on how to effectively operate and maintain swing-type demining machines and mine detectors, ALIS, both manufactured by Japanese companies, to enhance the safety and efficiency of demining operations on the ground.

12. Through exchanges of knowledge and experience with CMAC, UXO Lao has gained a deeper understanding that medium- and long-term strategic planning is essential for sustainable and efficient ERW clearance. In light of this, in June 2025 UXO Lao began formulating a new strategic plan– the first update since the organization's establishment in 1996. UXO Lao is using CMAC's strategic planning process as a reference for its own strategic planning process.

13. Practical lessons can be learned from the field testing of innovative technologies, equipment and methods. Applying these at the demining sites of affected countries and sharing the findings with a broader audience can help improve the efficiency of mine action programs, especially compared to applying these innovative technologies and equipment without the involvement of affected countries.

14. Under Japan's Comprehensive Package of Assistance to Humanitarian Mine Action, Japan, particularly through JICA, strengthens CMAC's capacity to engage in international cooperation, supports the development of mine action technologies, expands networks among affected countries, and promotes national ownership and national capacity development in other affected countries through partnerships with CMAC.

B. Establishment of the Africa Mine Action Platform

15. The capacity of national mine action organizations in Africa is often limited due to their relatively short history and limited experiences since their establishment, as well as the impact of ongoing conflicts. Since 2023, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) – implementing mine action activities including in conflict situations –, CMAC, which has been conducting mine action in Cambodia for over 30 years, and JICA, which supports capacity development across various sectors, have jointly conducted workshops and site visits in African countries. These activities confirmed that in order to strengthen fragile national systems, it is important to first enhance the national ownership of affected countries. Doing so increases the likelihood of attracting international support and strengthens their capacity to implement mine action programs, ultimately contributing to reconstruction and development.

16. With the aim of realizing a "mine-free Africa" by strengthening national ownership and capacity for mine action in African countries, JICA, CMAC, UNMAS and national mine action organizations from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Zambia jointly launched the "Africa Mine Action Platform" at the 9th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) in August 2025.

17. The Africa Mine Action Platform aims to enhance national ownership and national capacity in mine-affected countries through: (1) sharing practical knowledge and information among African countries, expert organizations, and donor countries; (2) strengthening two key nexuses: (a) the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, including the link between mine action and socio-economic recovery and development; and (b) the operational-management nexus; and (3) mobilizing resources such as equipment, facilities, and technical cooperation through bilateral and international funding.

18. Since its establishment, the Africa Mine Action Platform has received several requests from international organizations and mine-affected African countries to participate in its activities. The Platform is expected to expand opportunities for knowledge and information sharing, collaboration, and resource mobilization, and to work with partner organizations to strengthen national ownership and support capacity development for mine action in African countries.

C. Dissemination and Awareness Raising

19. To improve national ownership and national capacity for mine action, it is important for landmine-affected countries to learn from success stories, specific approaches, and lessons based on hands-on experiences.

20. Japan, particularly through JICA, has disseminated good practices and lessons learned, and raised awareness of knowledge sharing through South-South and Triangular Cooperation. These efforts have been presented at APMBC Meetings of States Parties, Intersessional Meetings, and Review Conferences as well as at recent National Directors Meetings to promote national ownership and national capacity development.

21. As a result of these disseminations and awareness-raising activities, national mine action organizations from several mine-affected countries have requested support from JICA and CMAC to strengthen national ownership and national capacity, and to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation.

22. In response to these requests, Japan continues to promote the Africa Mine Action Platform and South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly through JICA, and further disseminates and raises awareness of the lessons learned from these activities.

III. Conclusion

23. Through the initiatives and activities described in II. A, B and C, Japan has confirmed the effectiveness of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, which enables affected countries to share knowledge and participate in platforms alongside donors and international organizations. To realize effective mine action programs and to move toward a “mine-free world,” it is essential to recognize the importance of substantial partnership through strengthening national ownership and the capacity of mine action organizations in affected countries.

24. With the aim of realizing human security – free from the threat of landmines and enabling people to safely engage in socio-economic activities – Japan promotes sustainable and efficient mine action, focusing on strengthening national ownership and national capacity in partnership with national organizations of mine-affected countries, donors, international organizations, civil society and the private sector.