

Statement by Mr. Tetsuro Yano,  
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JAPAN

At the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,  
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on  
Their Destruction

15 September, 2003

Bangkok

Mr President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention. I am confident that, under your leadership, this meeting will realize the goals it has set forth to achieve.

It is a great honour for me to participate in the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention in Bangkok, and to be given this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government of Japan. It is very meaningful to Japan, as a member country of the Asia Pacific Region, that this meeting is being held in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, in this important year before the First Review Conference. I would like to express my deep admiration and appreciation to the Government of Thailand for hosting this meeting and for its kind hospitality. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all who have been involved in organizing this meeting.

Japan has been playing an active role to make a peace sustainable in post

conflict countries. Addressing the problems of anti-personnel mines and small arms and light weapons is essential as a precondition to reconstruction and peace consolidation. Ambassador of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament Kuniko Inoguchi served as chairperson of the UN First Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons held in this July in New York. Japan intends to play an even more active role in addressing landmine problems as well. During the past year Japan served as a Co-Rapporteur with Cambodia for the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies.

Mr President,

The number of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention has been increasing, and has now reached over 130. However, efforts to universalize the Convention must be continued, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region. Japan has been calling upon non-ratifiers, especially Asian countries, to accede to the Mine Ban Convention and, this March, Japan was co-sponsor to the regional seminar on mine action in Phnom Penh. Japan hopes to continue to work together with countries and NGOs who have the common aim to create a regional environment enabling as many countries as possible to accede to the Convention.

Japan intends to continue to call particularly upon those countries who still possess a large amount of mines to accede to the Convention.

Mr President,

The First Review Conference will be held next year. In order to realize a universal and effective ban on anti-personnel mines, it is essential that every State Party promote the universalization of the Convention, putting the spirit of the Convention into practice.

The Japanese Government is working together with civil society to achieve the objectives of the Zero Victims initiative. Japan pledged around 10 billion Yen in financial assistance for mine action activities in the five years following 1998 to a total of 25 affected countries and areas. This target of 10 billion Yen was reached at the end of last October. Moreover, I am pleased to note that Japan's total contribution to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action as of July 2003 was almost 23.3 million US dollars, which was the biggest among donors.

Japan has provided assistance for various mine action activities, including mine clearance, victim assistance, and mine awareness.

In addition to traditional types of assistance in mine-clearance activities, the Japanese Government took the initiative of applying its high technology to the detection and clearance of mines in cooperation with companies and researchers, taking into account of advice and opinions from deminers in the field. The safe and speedy clearance of mines is our ultimate goal in order to reduce the daily risk faced by deminers. I hope our technology will serve in the field as soon as possible. Japan is fully prepared to play the role as the Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance.

Victim assistance and mine awareness are also important. I have had the opportunity to visit landmine survivors in affected countries, such as Mozambique and Angola and I was deeply moved by the suffering they must endure. Japan will make even greater efforts to prevent the increase of, and provide assistance to, landmine victims.

NGOs have made a great contribution to a range of mine action activities. Japan will continue to provide effective assistance in cooperation with affected countries and international organizations and continue to attach great importance to cooperation with NGOs.

Mr President,

Japan completed the destruction of its stockpile of anti-personnel mines, as required by the Convention, on February 8<sup>th</sup> of this year. Prime Minister Koizumi attended the commemorative ceremony and directly ordered the destruction of the last stockpile of anti-personnel mines. I would like to emphasize that Japan intends to implement all obligations of the Convention and encourages each State Party to do the same on its own initiative and political will.

Mr President,

Following the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in Managua, the movement among Latin American countries to overcome landmine problems has become much more active. As for the Asia Pacific Region, this Fifth Meeting of the States Parties in Bangkok will provide an excellent opportunity to work towards overcoming landmine problems on a global scale. Let us all make greater efforts so that people suffering from landmines are able to live in safety.

Thank you.