

**Statement by H.E. Mr. WASHIO Eiichiro,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Sixth Annual Pledging Conference for the
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
23 February 2021, Geneva, Switzerland**

His Excellency Mr. Robbert Jan Gabriëse, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, Japan would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on your appointment to the Presidency of the 19th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Japan would also like to express its appreciation for the precious efforts that you and your team made to organize this important meeting despite various constraints and obstacles due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

As rightly stated in the Oslo Political Declaration and the Oslo Action Plan adopted at the 4th Review Conference in 2019, effective mine action contributes directly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to honoring our commitment to leaving no one behind. Landmine contamination threatens lives, livelihoods and dignity of local population and hinders realization of human security. The international community must unite and mobilize its utmost effort to “realize a mine-free world to the fullest extent possible by 2025”, the shared goal of the States Parties as reconfirmed at the last Review Conference.

A mine-free world, however, does not automatically mean a world without mine victims and survivors. Comprehensive and sustainable assistance is indispensable for mine victims and survivors to overcome the damages they suffered and restore their livelihood.

Indeed, it is out of the sense of such importance of mine action that Japan started to serve as a Member of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance upon the 18th Meeting of States Parties.

Mr. President,

In providing its mine-action support, Japan puts emphasis on the following three areas; continuous support to countries that are seriously affected by anti-personnel mines and UXOs, promotion of regional and South-South cooperation, and comprehensive support to victims and

survivors.

True to this commitment, Japan has been providing assistance for a wide range of projects, including anti-personnel landmine clearance and risk reduction education. In 2019 alone, for example, we provided assistance in 23 countries and regions, amounting to approximately 37 million US dollars, in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), other related international organizations, and NGOs. Our overall contribution to mine action programs in the 5 years to 2019 amounts to more than 212 million US dollars. We strongly support the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan in accordance with the Oslo Declaration.

Mr. President,

Twenty years have passed since the entry into force of the Convention in 1999. Thanks to the efforts of the States Parties, relevant international organizations, NGOs and civil society, we have collectively made great achievements in various fields of mine action.

However, a lot of work still remains. Today, 32 States Parties have yet to fulfill their mine clearance obligations contained in Article 5 of the Convention, and every year, more than 5,000 people become landmine victims in the world. In tackling these challenges, Japan attaches great importance to the role of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention (ISU). In all aspects of implementation of the Convention, including Landmine Clearance, Victim Assistance, and Cooperation and Assistance, the ISU plays an indispensable role. Stable operation of the ISU is directly linked to steady implementation of the Convention. Therefore, Japan has consistently provided its annual voluntary contribution to the ISU since 2015, totaling more than 393,000 Swiss Francs, and today, I have the pleasure to announce that Japan will contribute 2.7 million Japanese yen, or approximately 24,000 Swiss Francs, to the ISU in Japanese Fiscal Year 2021 starting from April, subject to the completion of necessary domestic procedures. We hope that Japan could further contribute to achieving our common goal of realizing a mine-free world.

Mr. President,

Please be assured that Japan will further promote mine action through utilizing its knowledge in this domain while maintaining high awareness towards mine action in the world.

The deadline of the goal to realize a mine-free world by 2025 is fast approaching. In order to “end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines”, as stated in the Oslo Declaration, Japan reaffirms its commitment to enhancing mine action in cooperation with other States Parties, international partners and civil society.

Thank you.