

Draft Speaking notes:

Regional Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines Within the Context of the Convention:

15 February 2024, Accra, Ghana

Distinguished delegates,

- It is my great pleasure to join this regional conference and a great honour to present during this session on “Cooperation and Assistance at Work”. I would like to thank the Government of Ghana, the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Ghana, the European Union, and the Implementation Support Unit for organising this timely discussion on the humanitarian impacts of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines. Japan has been a staunch supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and will continue its unwavering support to mine-affected countries.
- Over the past 25 years, significant progress has been made under the Convention. However, the growing global threat posed by the new use of improvised anti-personnel mines and funding shortfalls are also challenges for many mine-affected countries. While each State Party is responsible for implementing the Convention in areas under its jurisdiction or control, our shared goal of a mine-free world can be achieved through greater cooperation and assistance, a core commitment of the Convention.
- Japan has been a member of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance under the Convention since 2021 and is currently working closely with Denmark and Türkiye under the chairmanship of Algeria. On behalf of the members of the Committee, let me highlight our work as well as Japan’s contribution and approaches in mine action.
- First, to facilitate effective cooperation and assistance, it is essential to have a national ownership. In particular, the Committee encourages

States Parties to ensure regular dialogue with stakeholders in-country on progress, challenges and needs for implementation of their obligations through establishing national mine action platforms (NMAP). A national mine action platform is a nationally owned and led open forum to share information on the remaining challenges and plans for implementation, which can facilitate multi-stakeholder coordination and collective problem solving.

- Second, the Committee believes that detailed and accurate reporting is key for States Parties to facilitate cooperation and assistance. It is important to share their implementation challenges in achieving their commitments and the outstanding needs for assistance through the reporting mechanism under the Convention.
- Third, the Committee also encourages States Parties to take advantage of the opportunities made available under the Convention, such as the Individualized Approach meetings and the Cooperation and Assistance Fund (CAF).
- The Individualized Approach meeting is a country-focused platform to hold a frank and open discussion on the status of implementation, challenges and requirements to fulfil the remaining obligations among the donors, partners, and mine action operators. It provides an opportunity for countries in need of assistance to share their specific requirements to donor states and relevant organizations through exchange of views in an informal setting.
- The Cooperation and Assistance Fund was established under the Convention to facilitate South-South cooperation and assist the sharing of best practices and lessons learnt through study visits or sponsoring of experts to third countries.
- Japan remains fully committed to implementing the Oslo Action Plan and to promoting cooperation and assistance as a member of the Committee towards the upcoming Fifth Review Conference in Siem

Reap, Cambodia this year and beyond. In FY 2022, Japan increased its funding for mine action to over 52 million USD in 22 countries including 12 countries in Africa. Japan's bilateral assistance is tailored to meet the specific needs of the countries concerned.

- Japan's assistance policy in mine action prioritizes the following three areas. First, continuous support for mine clearance activities in countries with serious landmine and unexploded ordnance impacts. Second, promotion of regional and South-South cooperation. Third, comprehensive and sustainable victim assistance. Japan attaches great importance, in particular, to facilitating South-South cooperation among affected countries in sharing experiences and building expertise.
- I would like to highlight one of the Japan's South-South cooperation initiatives in Africa. In October last year, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) organized a capacity building workshop in Nairobi, in cooperation with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), for Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Nigeria. The workshop aimed to enhance national ownership of mine action programs, capacity building, and regional cooperation, aligning with the nexus of humanitarian, developmental, and peace considerations. CMAC shared its expertise with African partners on baseline surveys and Non-Technical Surveys (NTS) and also knowledge on information management, the governance system of the mine action sector, prioritization, project development and planning after clearance and so on.
- In January this year, as a follow-up to the Nairobi workshop, JICA facilitated a study visit to Cambodia for national organization for mine action from the 4 African countries as a follow-up to the Nairobi workshop. The primary objective was to learn about various mine action governance and initiatives in Cambodia. During the study visit, CMAC and JICA co-hosted a workshop to provide information on sector-wide initiatives and collaborative partnerships between CMAC and relevant organizations namely, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim

Assistance Authority (CMAA), the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), UNDP and international operators. The workshop also gave an opportunity for the African government officials to engage in dialogue with these organisations to promote their understanding on the practical aspects of mine action and the importance of strong national ownership by the government. The feedback from African government officials has been very encouraging and Japan highly values the continuity of these initiatives and hopes that further partnerships will be established among JICA-CMAC-UNMAS and African countries.

- The Fifth Review Conference this year will be an excellent opportunity to identify new priorities for future mine action. Strengthening cooperation and assistance is an integral part of the effective implementation of the Convention and one of the priorities of Japan's presidency in 2025.
- Japan will actively engage in efforts to further enhance cooperation and assistance through dialogue, capacity building, sharing experiences as well as possible new technologies, and will work closely with the Cambodian Presidency, States Parties and all stakeholders in the international community to achieve our shared goal of a mine free world.