

**Statement by H.E. Mr. ODAWARA Kiyoshi,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Seventh International Pledging Conference
for the Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
1 March 2022, Geneva, Switzerland**

Her Excellency Madam Alicia Arango Olmos, Permanent Representative of
Colombia to the United Nations Office at Geneva,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, Japan would like to congratulate you, Madam President,
on your appointment to the Presidency of the 20th Meeting of States Parties
to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Japan would also like to express
its appreciation for the efforts that you and your team have made to organize
this important conference today despite the ongoing constraints.

Madam President,

It has been a quarter century since Japan and many other states signed

the Ottawa Treaty in 1997, and it was indeed 23 years ago TODAY that the Convention entered into force. Together with all the States Parties to the Convention, I would like to celebrate the progress we have made to date in mine action.

Yet, landmines remain serious problems in various parts of the world. In 2020, more than 7,000 casualties of mines and explosive remnants of war were recorded. Among the casualties where their status was known, 80% were civilians. Children accounted for half of all civilian casualties whose age was known.

Many of those tragic events occurred in the developing countries that have already been distressed by conflicts, insecurity or poverty. Landmine contamination remains in the post-conflict soil, and poses a long-term threat to the safety and livelihoods of the local residents, leaving the cause of suffering to future generations. Even after the land is cleared, landmine survivors continue to require comprehensive and sustainable support.

Recalling the Oslo Political Declaration, adopted in our Fourth Review Conference, we need to further implement the Oslo Action Plan in order to protect lives, livelihoods and human dignity, and to ensure human security.

That will, of course, contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

With that recognition of significance of the issue, Japan continues to help advancing mine action as the Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

Madam President,

Japan has three policy directions in its mine-action assistance: continuous support to countries that were severely affected by mines and UXOs, promotion of regional and South-South cooperation, and comprehensive support to survivors. In line with those directions, Japan, with its experience and technologies, has been providing assistance to projects in a wide range of activities, including mine clearance and risk reduction education, in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service, or UNMAS, other international organizations, and NGOs. In our fiscal year 2020, we provided assistance in 21 countries and regions, amounting to approximately 39 million US dollars.

Madam President,

The role of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention, or ISU, is of great importance to each and every aspect of treaty implementation. Thus, stable operation of the ISU leads to steady progress in implementation of the Convention. It is with that understanding that Japan has provided its voluntary contribution to the ISU since 2015. Today, I have the pleasure to announce that Japan will contribute another 2.8 million Japanese yen, or approximately 23,700 Swiss Francs, to the ISU in Fiscal Year 2022, which starts from April, subject to the completion of necessary domestic procedures. We hope our contribution will enhance the efforts to achieve our common goal, a mine-free world.

Madam President,

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

Thank you.

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