

Statement by H.E. Mr. TAKEI Shunsuke,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at Eighth Annual Pledging Conference
— Support to the Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Friday, 24 March 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

His Excellency Mr. Thomas GÖBEL, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, Japan would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Thomas GÖBEL, on your appointment to the Presidency of the 21st Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

I wish you every success towards the 21st MSP and assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Japan would also like to express its appreciation for the efforts of you and your team to hold the Eighth Annual Pledging Conference today.

Mr. President,

It has been over a quarter of a century since Japan ratified the Convention in 1998, and since then, Japan has continued to be strongly committed to the implementation of the Convention.

Work under this Convention has made remarkable progress in the areas of mine clearance and victim assistance through the efforts of States Parties and various stakeholders.

I would like to celebrate, with all States Parties, the progress we have made to date.

Nevertheless, landmines still remain a serious problem in various parts of the world.

According to the Landmine Monitor, 5,544 casualties of mines and unexploded ordnance were reported in 2021.

It is also highlighted that anti-personnel landmines are being used in the wake of Russia's aggression against Ukraine as well as in the aftermath of the coup in Myanmar.

The importance of a proper grasp of the actual situation regarding anti-personnel mines and the continued steady implementation of the Convention is becoming an increasingly pressing issue.

Mr. President,

Japan had the honor of chairing the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance last year, and co-chairing two panel discussions at the intersessional meeting last June.

Japan is continuing to play an active role as a member of the Committee this year.

In January of this year, Japan participated in a workshop on mine action in Zimbabwe and presented on collective efforts of the Committee on behalf of it.

The series of Russian actions, including the illegal “annexation” of parts of Ukraine and the killing of innocent civilians, are inexcusable violations of international law.

Looking ahead, Japan believes that the mine and UXO clearance is an important prerequisite for the future rehabilitation and reconstruction of Ukraine.

In this regard, Japan has begun cooperation on mine action for Ukraine together with Cambodia, drawing on our experience and expertise in mine action and reconstruction.

Specifically, in January of this year, JICA and the Cambodian Mine Action Center, which has experience in operating Japan's Advanced Landmine Imaging System (ALIS), conducted training on the use of ALIS for State Emergency Service of Ukraine in Cambodia, and also conducted training in Japan on mine countermeasures.

We believe that this will contribute to improving the safety and efficiency of mine action operations in Ukraine.

In addition, Japan has decided to provide approximately JPY 22.4 billion in grant aid to Ukraine including the field of anti-personnel mine and UXO clearance from the fiscal year 2022 supplementary budget, and will provide mine detection and demining equipment consecutively.

Japan will continue to actively support in this area from the perspective of contributing to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Ukraine, in hand in hand with the Ukrainian people.

Over the years, Japan has provided a wide range of international assistance, including anti-personnel mine clearance and risk reduction education, in collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs.

In the fiscal year of 2021, Japan provided bilateral assistance to 18 countries and regions, amounting more than USD 41.65 million.

Since Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan has also been providing equipment for emergency explosive ordnance disposal and debris removal through UNDP.

Mr. President,

The Implementation Support Unit, or ISU, plays an important and effective role in the implementation of the Convention, and stable operation of the ISU leads to steady progress in the implementation of the Convention.

It is with that understanding that Japan has provided voluntary contributions to the ISU since the fiscal year of 2015, and has so far contributed a total of approximately CHF 440,000.

I have the pleasure to announce that Japan will contribute approximately JPY 2.7 million, or approximately CHF 19,000, for the activities of the ISU in the fiscal year of 2023, subject to the completion of necessary domestic processes.

We hope our contribution will enhance the efforts to achieve our common goal of a mine-free world.

Mr. President,

The year 2024 will be an important year with the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention.

With a view towards this Review Conference, Japan will continue to utilize its expertise in the field of mine action and play more active role in cooperation with the President, as well as States Parties, international organizations and civil society to promote mine actions.