

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Toshio Sano, Ambassador of Japan
to the Conference on Disarmament
At the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
7-11 September 2015, Dubrovnik, Croatia**

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to appreciate the Government of Croatia for their warm hospitality and excellent work in hosting this important event. I would also like to highly commend all States Parties, observer States international organizations and civil society for their collective and unwavering efforts and engagement for the Convention.

Mr. President,

Japan attaches great importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions due to the difference it has made on the ground. Implementation of the treaty obligations has greatly protected people and communities from threats posed by unexploded cluster munitions. I am pleased to repeat, Mr. President, that Japan completed the destruction of its stockpiles of cluster munitions in February this year.

However, there still remains various challenges to the work of the convention as pointed out in the Croatia Progress Report. There is a lot that needs to be done to fulfill obligations in such areas as stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance. We encourage all States Parties concerned to fulfill their obligations with a sense of ownership and renewed commitment to the convention.

Another challenge is the fact that there are countries which produce and store large amounts of cluster munitions. The pace of ratifications to the convention has gradually decreased in recent years, in particular, universalization in the Asia-Pacific region has been delayed. We encourage all states not party to the convention to overcome their domestic and regional difficulties and accede to the convention. Pending their accession we call on them not to use cluster munitions.

Mr. President,

Threats posed by unexploded cluster munitions are multi-faceted in nature. They cause indiscriminate suffering to civilians and hinder economic development and reconstruction. There are concerns that non-state actors such as terrorists might misuse remnants of cluster munitions. These munitions would also move to unexpected areas due to flooding and other natural disasters, thus placing civilians at risk.

In order to address those problems and with a view to ensuring human security, Japan has provided funds for clearance, victim assistance and risk education effort. Since 1998, Japan has donated approximately 622 million US Dollars to mine action in 50 countries and regions, including Croatia, and about 1/3 of the assistance has been spent over the last 5 years since the entry into force of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Based on our past experiences in international assistance, Japan will continue, through the Mine Action Program, its support by putting an emphasis on the following approaches:

First, we will continue to concentrate on clearance of UXO (unexploded ordinance) in heavily affected countries. In providing our assistance, we will promote regional and South-South cooperation through which affected countries can build their capacities for clearance. We are very delighted to inform you that the so-called triangular cooperation projects that Japan implemented for Colombia, Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic) and Angola have turned out to be very successful. We believe that there are good lessons learned from these experiences.

Second, we will continue to attach importance to designing and providing comprehensive support to victim assistance efforts which cover these phases from first aid to the full inclusion of victims in society.

Third, Japan would like to highlight the importance of risk reduction education. It is essential to prevent civilians living in or around contaminated areas from becoming victims. Awareness raising among those civilians of the risks posed by such remnants is imminent. Japan believes the education of people, particularly mothers and children, should be focused.

Mr. President,

With our strong determination to move forward towards the future, we have to ensure that this first Review Conference will be an invaluable opportunity to again breathe life into the Convention. I believe that the Dubrovnik Action Plan to be adopted at this conference will guide us as the roadmap in how to overcome the challenges we have identified.

Finally, Mr. President, I wish this conference every success, and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I am confident that under your able guidance and leadership this conference will turn out to be most fruitful and productive, serving us closer to our ultimate goal of a world free of cluster munitions.

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I thank you, Mr. President.

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