

# Japan

DELEGATION OF JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. KUNIKO INOUCHI  
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN  
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset allow me to express my sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for chairing this plenary meeting today. I congratulate you on the very skillful manner in which you are conducting proceedings. I look forward to your able guidance when you formally assume the Presidency.

Let me also congratulate Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia on her assumption of the Presidency. I trust the Conference will, in her hands, further promote the positive atmosphere that was created by the active and practical engagement of her predecessor, Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya. I assure Ambassador Hussain of the full support of my delegation for her efforts to take the Conference closer to its resumption of substantive work.

Today I have asked for the floor to underline the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which is marking its fifth anniversary since entry into force in March 1999. I appreciate Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria, the President-designate of the Review Conference of this Convention to be held this November in Nairobi, and other delegations, for having taken the floor and effectively brought this Convention to the attention of the Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to assure Ambassador Petritsch of the full support of my country which is also undertaking the role of co-chair of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies. At this point allow me to present the view of my country on the status of the Convention and to reaffirm our firm commitment to its implementation.

Presently, the Convention enjoys a membership of more than 140 countries. It is remarkable that most of the mine-affected countries throughout the world are already party to the Convention. We believe that the Convention holds opportunities for such mine-affected countries to alleviate and resolve their mine problems. Most importantly, the Convention has established the overall norm of the eradication of anti-personnel mines, which is demonstrated by the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, including the destruction of stockpiles within the five-year deadline. It is significant that States non-party to the Convention are also taking meaningful actions in line with this norm, such as the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines.

The Convention also provides a legal architecture to promote partnership among mine-affected countries, donor countries, international organizations and civil society for carrying out various mine actions. Resource mobilization is essential, in particular, for mine-affected countries to translate the norm into reality by making a difference on the ground, through mine action projects such as de-mining, victim assistance and mine risk education.

Mr. President,

Certainly, major challenges are confronting us. First and foremost, the norm established by the Convention should be further universalized. Joining the Convention involves a difficult judgment on the compatibility between humanitarian objectives and legitimate security requirements. Japan decided to renounce anti-personnel mines in 1997, despite its large stockpiles. We made such a historical decision because we believed that by so doing, Japan could make a contribution to the reduction of humanitarian problems caused by mines.

Last September, the Fifth Meeting of States Parties was held in Bangkok, Thailand, as the first meeting of this kind in Asia where there still remain a substantial number of States non-party to the Convention. As sited in the Declaration adopted at this Meeting, it is important to generate additional public awareness of the problems of anti-personnel mines and the benefits the Convention could offer to States parties.

Another challenge is to mobilize resources necessary for mine actions. It is said that over US\$ 1.6 billion has been mobilized since the Convention was negotiated. However, the vast mine fields remaining throughout the world and the continued humanitarian suffering caused by mines warrant sustained financial commitment to mine actions by the international community.

The recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies, which was held on 11 February in Geneva, revealed the magnitude of challenge we are facing in order to clear all mine fields. At the same time it was encouraging to hear from many mine-affected countries their initiatives in setting up a focal point for mine actions, developing national plans, allocating resources and identifying priorities for assistance. It is important for donor countries as well to continue to support the efforts made by these affected-countries in the spirit of partnership, which is also provided by the Convention.

Mr. President,

Japan is firmly committed to the implementation of the Convention. It completed the destruction of its anti-personnel mines last February. It has been doing its utmost to enhance its partnerships in dealing with mine problems and will continue to do so. The development of effective technologies for mine actions is also an area in which Japan has been making substantial efforts. For example, my government took the initiative of applying high technologies to the detection and clearance of mines in cooperation with companies and researchers, taking into account advice and opinions from de-miners in the field.

In conclusion, consideration should be given to those who are friends, relatives and children of war-torn villagers and whose dignity is at stake where armed conflict has recently ended, but real peace is yet to come. Regardless of whether a party to the Convention or not, it is imperative for all of us to behave responsibly and act with a view to achieving our common goal, that is, to eliminate human suffering from anti-personnel mines.

Thank you.