

Intervention by Japan (Amb. Inoguchi) in the informal consultations session on Mine Clearance, afternoon of September 19, 2002.

Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

Please allow me to make a quick intervention on mine clearance, resource mobilization, and risk education.

Japan is trying hard to develop de-mining technologies that are appropriate for the conditions in which they will be applied. We are trying to apply high-tech, if that is necessary, and also appropriate technology in the most effective and appropriate way, given the geological and environmental conditions. In Afghanistan, for example, as pointed out by the Standing Committee reports, detector dogs are very useful since it is a very dry area. Also, some types of stones in the region contain metals which react to detecting devices, making the operation very inefficient. In an alternative environment such as rain forest, dogs are less capable of distinguishing the smell of mines from other elements in the environment. Japan intends to be sensitive to socio-communal conditions as well. There are devices that can be used effectively in rural areas but which are not suitable in urban settings, for example.

All these technologies, and investment for them, require enormous financial resources. The unit cost of mine clearance operations is very capital-intensive. Japan would like to make utmost efforts in this regard, but I must immediately add that, as Japan makes a renewed commitment in this area, I would like to make sure that we are not only putting in money and technology, but that we are also putting the hearts and minds of the Japanese citizens into this mission and the high moral ground of the Convention.

On achieving resources, I thank Norway for putting the non-paper forward, and Japan would by all means wish to join the informal contact group as stated in the non-paper.

However, since financial resources are never enough, Japan highly appreciates and supports the point made by Mr. Robert Eaton on the importance of strategic analysis and support, and rational planning of the mine clearance operation.

Lastly, Japan is also prioritizing mine risk education, and at this stage I want to come back to the point I made in the morning session, that as we cope with all aspects of mine problems, we must help affected countries in more general and comprehensive ways. Mine risk education is a priority. But this can be most effectively achieved if we are able to provide better education in general, and literacy for all.

I would like to emphasize at this point that there should not be a gender gap in this regard, and that girls and women must be equally given the opportunity to be educated. Mothers could be in the best position to provide mine risk education, if they themselves were given opportunities for education. My government will make sure that women in the community will be given important roles to play as we make progress in these areas.

Thank you