

Statement by H. E. Ambassador Sumio Tarui
Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament

The Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their
Destruction

Geneva, Switzerland, 24 November 2008

Mr. President,

Firstly, allow me to extend my delegations sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention. Japan is confident that under your direction this important Meeting of States Parties will be a successful one. The delegation of Japan is ready to lend you its utmost support in your endeavors over this busy week.

Mr. President,

At this 9th MSP, for the first time in the life of the Convention we are to take decisions on requests for the extension of deadlines submitted under Article 5. It needs to be recognized that over the course of this year Jordan, as the chair of the group mandated to analyze requests, exercised great leadership in guiding the analyzing group of 16 countries to complete a qualified examination of the requests. We especially value the tireless efforts made by His Royal Highness Prince Mired in the work of the analyzing group.

In consideration of the requests, the States Parties should carefully bare in mind how much effort the requesting states have made as well as their future plans for the period of the extension sought. When states are granted an extension at this 9MSP, it is important for them to take ownership and to make their best efforts to clear minefields and to destroy all anti-personnel mines within the extension period. Meanwhile, donor countries should continue and enhance their effective cooperation and assistance to promote mine clearance activities in affected countries. In this connection, I'd like to highlight that the Government of Japan has been providing assistance to the activities of mine-affected countries to fulfill their Article 5 obligations.

In fact, last fiscal year we extended 51 million US dollars in assistance to support mine clearance in 14 countries, including Thailand, Croatia, and Chad, who have all submitted extension requests. Such assistance also includes support for the release of Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHA), which is not necessarily conducted through clearance activities. For instance, we are supporting Thailand in their work to re-check SHAs so that they can reduce the number of suspected contaminated areas in order to be in compliance with their Article 5 obligations as soon as possible. With such recent vigorous debate surrounding the issue of extension requests, it is quite timely to consider and endorse in this meeting Norway's paper, APLC/MSP.9/2008/WP.2, on all available methods to achieve full, efficient and expedient implementation of Article 5. We commend Norway for contributing this paper – it will no doubt help accelerate the States Parties' compliance with Article 5.

Thank you Mr. President