

Statement by Mr. Katsuyuki Kawai
Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs
(“Nairobi Summit on Mine-Free World”, Nairobi,
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December 2, 2004

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor to have the opportunity to address the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention on behalf of the Japanese government. It is also my pleasure to visit the home country of H.E. President Mwai Kibaki, who visited Japan last month.

Today we gather here on the Continent of Africa for our common endeavor to resolve the problem of anti-personnel mines. It is Africa where the first human being is thought to have originated. From this first human being who stood on African soil, the human civilization bloomed. To our great regret, however, it went on to invent weapons that aim to deprive people of the ability to walk, and even to take people’s lives. It is therefore of great significance that today, here in Africa, we unite our voices to end the scourge of anti-personnel landmines.

Sixty years ago, an atomic bomb destroyed Hiroshima, killing one hundred and forty thousand people within a few months. Even today, *hibakusha*, or survivors of the atomic bomb, are still suffering and dying from radiation sickness. I am from Hiroshima. Having grown up with *hibakusha*, I am fully aware of the inhumanities of nuclear weapons and this has made me determined to work toward world peace.

To our great relief, nuclear weapons have not been used since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, including the use of anti-personnel mines, past and present conflict continues to affect civilian life in many parts of the world. Anti-personnel mines kill or maim innocent people indiscriminately and many women and children fall victim to these mines.

In August of this year, in Shin-Asahi town of Japan, 1,200 youth, including mine

survivors, held an international children's conference to ban landmines. They urged adults to create a world free of mines. In response to their call, let us work together in close cooperation with all concerned parties, in particular, civil society, to renew our commitment today toward the elimination of anti-personnel mines.

Mr. President,

The universalization of the Ottawa Convention is crucial to achieving the elimination of anti-personnel mines. Many states have joined the Convention by overcoming various barriers that stood in the way of their accession. Japan was no exception. At the Treaty Signing Ceremony in 1997, the late Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi stated "the decision to sign the Ottawa Treaty was not an easy one because the signing of this milestone treaty is very closely related to our own national defense." Nevertheless, so that our children might live in a world free from the threat of landmines, Foreign Minister Obuchi, who became Japan's Prime Minister the following year, made the historic decision to sign the Convention for the high cause of humanitarianism. Today, I once again call upon those states that have not yet joined the Convention to do so without delay.

Mr. President,

Another important challenge that we have to address is achieving the goal of zero victims. Japan announced it would provide 10 billion Japanese Yen or 91 million US dollars under the "Zero Victims Program" over a five year period from 1998. Since then, Japan has contributed approximately 145 million US dollars for assistance in more than 30 countries. Many mine affected states will be faced with a mine clearance deadline in 2009. In the next 5 years, Japan will continue to provide mine action assistance on a similar scale, according to the following 3 principles with emphasis on Asia, the Middle East, and Africa:

The first principle is consolidation of peace. Japan will support mine action as a way to consolidate post-conflict peace. Japan believes that mine clearance and victim assistance contribute to the stability, reconstruction and development of a country in the wake of conflict.

The second is human security. To protect and empower every mine victim, Japan will

promote the care, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of survivors into society.

The last principle is close cooperation between governments, NGOs, the private sector and academia. Japan will promote research and development of advanced technology to increase the safety and efficiency of demining activities. For example, Japan is conducting evaluation tests in Afghanistan as well as in Japan.

Mr. President,

It certainly required unprecedented courage for mankind to first stand on African soil. And it was this courage that made a great difference in our history. Today, let us recall this courage and renew our determination to take action for a world free of mines. In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Japan's unwavering commitment to the goal of zero victims.

Thank you very much.