



DELEGATION OF JAPAN  
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Statement by Ambassador OGASAWARA Ichiro  
as President-designate of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of High contracting  
parties to Amended Protocol II at the Group of Expert Meeting,  
16 August 2021

Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices pose a disproportionate threat to the civilian population, both during and after hostilities. They cause unacceptable humanitarian harm by killing, injuring and traumatizing people and communities as well as damaging or destructing civilian objects and critical infrastructure. The effects of these weapons disrupt communities and impede the provision of humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and stabilization efforts and jeopardize social and economic development both long and short term.

Amended Protocol II remains as relevant as ever and represents an important instrument of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and continues to play an important role in preventing and mitigating superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering. Its capacity to balance security needs and humanitarian concerns allows it to function as a core instrument of international disarmament and a critical part of the international community's response.

And while progress has been made, challenges have intensified, complicating efforts to mitigate and respond to evolving threats — which, in the past year, have been exacerbated by access and mobility hurdles due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

It is my sincerest hope that our work in this Group over the course of the coming two days will be guided by this understanding of the fundamental importance of Amended Protocol II, its continued relevance and the need to seek methods of protecting civilians from harm more effectively.

In order to further strengthen the Protocol, more consideration must be given to a plethora of issues germane to the effective implementation and operation of Amended Protocol II. Universalization, maximizing the submission of national reports and leveraging the information contained therein to further inform and guide the work carried out in the framework of the Protocol remain at the core of our efforts.

Given that our meeting put a particular focus on the multifaceted challenges to peace, security and sustainable development posed by **Improvised Explosive Devices**, I would also like to say a few words on this issue.

As the world's ongoing conflicts seem to have been overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic, IED-attacks continue to pose a disproportionate threat to the civilian population, both during and after hostilities, and kill or injure more people annually than attacks with any other type of weapons, except firearms. In 2020 alone IEDs accounted for 59% of all civilian casualties worldwide<sup>1</sup>.

We need political will and cooperation among Governments, the United Nations, international and civil society organizations to prevent and respond to this threat. I therefore hope that the discussions we will have on this subject will lead to results-based action and contribute to Member States discussions in other fora, such as the relevant Committees of the General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> Explosive-Violence-Monitor-2020 (<https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Explosive-Violence-Monitor-2020-V3-single-pages.pdf>)