



DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

**Statement delivered by Mr. Shigeru UMETSU
Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of
the Delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament
Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas
6 April 2022, Geneva**

Mr Chair,

I would like to make a general statement rather than making specific comments. Japan appreciates Ireland's leadership and efforts in holding the Political Declaration consultations on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We share the recognition that the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas may result in increased collateral harm to civilians. Japan would like to reiterate the importance of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, bearing in mind the recent deterioration of the security environment and the increasing number of cases in which the perpetrators are non-state actors.

Mr Chair,

As we have just heard from the distinguished Ambassador of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government and various media reports have revealed that atrocities, including the mass killing of innocent civilians, were committed in the areas which were occupied by Russian forces. Japan takes extremely seriously the fact that a large number of civilians in Ukraine have been killed as a result of the acts of the Russian forces, and is deeply shocked by this revelation. The killing of innocent civilians is a grave breach of international humanitarian law and absolutely unacceptable. Japan vehemently condemns it. The truth about these atrocities must be uncovered and Russia must be held strictly accountable. Japan has referred the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the grounds that war crimes appear to have been committed, and counts on the progress in the investigation by the ICC Prosecutor.

Mr Chair,

International humanitarian law is a robust framework that disciplines, among others, the protection of victims in armed conflict in order to limit the damage of conflict and protect those affected by armed conflict. I would like to reiterate the need for compliance with international humanitarian law to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflict, even in discussions over EWIPA.

Having said that, the basic concept of international humanitarian law is to strike a balance between humanity and military necessity, and in this regard, we would like to point out that the use of explosive weapons per se is not prohibited or restricted. We commend the draft Political Declaration before us for consultation, as it makes it clearer than previous drafts that compliance with international humanitarian law is fundamental to the discussions surrounding EWIPA. There is no specific definition under existing international law for the weapons category of "explosive weapons," but since all weapons are required to be used in compliance with IHL, we believe that the content seeking compliance with IHL will appropriately raise the issue of humanitarian concerns in their use.

Japan believes that confirming the importance of compliance with international humanitarian law in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) has a certain significance in reaffirming the importance of civilian protection. We believe that it is important to obtain the support of a large number of countries, including major countries, and we hope that this discussion will progress in a manner that will prompt the common understanding by many countries.

I thank you, Mr. Chair