



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
Final consultation on the Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in
Populated Areas
17 June 2022, Geneva**

Mr Chair,

To begin, I would like say thank you to Ireland for its ongoing efforts in organizing this series of consultations on the political declaration.

Mr Chair,

We share your concern about the collateral damage to civilians caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We note the recent deterioration of the security environment and the increasing number of cases in which the perpetrators are non-state actors, and would like to reiterate the importance of protecting civilians in situations of armed conflict.

International Humanitarian Law is a robust framework that disciplines, among other things, the protection of victims of armed conflict in order to limit the damage of conflict and protect those affected by it. Indiscriminate attacks that violate the obligation of ensuring “Attacks shall be limited strictly to military objectives”, and attacks that are predicted to cause excessive civilian collateral damage are in violation of International Humanitarian Law and will not be tolerated.

These consultations regarding EWIPA are significant in reaffirming the need for compliance with International Humanitarian Law in order to strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict. Japan has shared the concern about the collateral harm to civilians caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, has recognized the importance of related international

efforts, and has actively participated in the discussions of the process related to this Political Declaration. The EWIPA consultations involve difficult issues, as it reaffirms the need for compliance with International Humanitarian Law, while also considering the basic concept of International Humanitarian Law, namely: the pursuit of a balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations.

On the other hand, the final draft of the Political Declaration, based on those issues, points out that the use of explosive weapons is not itself subject to prohibition (as stated in the new paragraph 2.5), while confirming the obligations under International Humanitarian Law and stating the importance of compliance with such obligations, and we believe that the content is well-balanced.

It is important for this discussion to garner the support of many countries, including major nations, and we hope that the draft Political Declaration will be adopted at today's meeting in such a manner.

Mr Chair,

Japan has appreciated the efforts of the Chair throughout this process. We appreciate that the draft Political Declaration contributes to the objective of confirming and strengthening the importance of civilian protection and harm reduction and the efforts necessary to this end with regard to EWIPA, without creating new norms or obligations. Japan also supports the draft Political Declaration.