

Statement by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA
Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament
at the Informal consultation on “Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare”
Geneva (online), 4 March 2021

First of all, I would like to thank the Irish Government for holding today’s informal consultations meeting and for inviting Japan to it. Please be assured, Mr. Chair, of our full support and cooperation for your chairmanship. I also appreciate the improvement shown in the revised draft currently on the table, especially in terms of consistency of terminology throughout the document. We sense some of our textual comments were reflected.

Mr. Chair,

Japan highly appreciates the lead taken by Ireland in this current exercise, because we fully share the importance for civilians and civilian populations to enjoy general protection against dangers arising from military operations. We also share the need of constant care to be taken to spare the civilians, civilian populations, and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations. These principles are enshrined in the International Humanitarian Law and Japan constantly supports initiatives aiming to improve the compliance with the IHL through multilateral diplomacy. We also echo the Chair and some of the previous speakers when they underlined the importance to make non-state actors comply with international law including the IHL.

Based upon these shared values, allow me to briefly make some overarching comments.

First, we fully agree with several previous speakers that the entirety of International Humanitarian Law should be observed and implemented, since IHL provides robust legal basis for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. To that purpose, the IHL adopts a holistic approach by providing several different measures. Care should be taken to avoid the misunderstanding that the emphasis on the selected rules and principles of IHL in this Declaration intend to prioritise among them.

Second, we must be aware that there are explosive weapons that are used in full compliance with the applicable international and national laws and regulations to fulfil a lawful mandate. We are of the view that care must be taken to avoid sweeping stigmatisation of explosive weapons as far as they are utilised in full compliance with international norms including IHL.

Third, in the field of the protection of civilians from humanitarian consequences in armed conflicts, we have already a densely woven structure of the norms. Japan adheres to those norms. Duplication of, and deviation from, the established norms are something to be avoided. To clearly identify the areas in which this Declaration aims to make added-value and to differentiate it from the existing diverse instruments in the related area, clear definitions of key concepts would be of

particular importance.

Mr. Chair,

Japan is happy and willing to participate constructively in this collective effort led by Ireland for the sake of our common noble causes, without prejudice to Japan's position on the Political Declaration.

We would like to submit, as necessary, more concrete comments on the text in this Section in due course.

Thank you Mr. Chair