

Statement by H. E. Ambassador Sumio Tarui
Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference of Disarmament
Concerning a Possible Approach to Restrictions of Certain Types of Cluster Munitions

Meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to
the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons
Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

17 January 2008, Geneva

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to share our views on possible ways to address humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions while striking a balance with security requirements, hoping to make advancement in our discussions and make a real difference in reality.

We consider that restricting certain types of cluster munitions which cannot address the humanitarian concerns is a way to strike this balance. In other words, reliable or accurate cluster munitions should not be restricted or prohibited.

There are various means to achieve reliability or accuracy such as equipping the sub-munitions with self-destruction, self-neutralization, or self-deactivating mechanisms or otherwise reducing failure rate below a certain level. Cluster munitions which contain only a limited number of sub-munitions result in limited number of unexploded sub-munitions. Cluster munitions equipped with guidance system can improve accuracy and reduce the areas where unexploded sub-munitions might be dispersed, making their clearance easier.

Mr. Chairman,

Cluster munitions which are not reliable or accurate should be restricted or prohibited in the following manner:

- Their development, production, acquisition, or transfer should be immediately prohibited. In this way, we can make sure that these cluster munitions will not continue to increase.
- The use of these types of cluster munitions, which countries already possess, should be limited to only when it is strictly necessary and up to a certain period of time. This sets a transition period.
- After the transition period, they should be prohibited altogether.

Mr. Chairman,

But we can do more. When cluster munitions are used in accordance with the new agreement, we must comply with the international humanitarian law. Japan supports clear stipulation of relevant international humanitarian law principles in the new instrument.

Japan supports making an international agreement in the form of a new Protocol attached to the CCW to address the humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions. The measures I have just sketched out can constitute a main body of the new Protocol which can strike a balance between humanitarian concerns and security requirements.

Thank you.