

Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

Japanese delegation always appreciates your enthusiastic manner as co-chair of the general status and operation of the convention.

Regarding the universalization issue of this convention, we welcome newly ratified countries, Malta and Congo. The latest number of the state parties arrived at 114 countries. This is a significant progress in past three years.

However, there are still many things to be done in this respect. In Asia Pacific region, still many countries have not ratified nor signed. Among the 39 countries categorized in the region of Asia Pacific, only 15 are states parties, 5 signatory and the rest of 19 are non-member states. These numbers show that there is an imbalance in this region and the principle of this treaty has not spread. We'd like to emphasize again to facilitate universalization process toward future.

Last November, MOFA and AAR, (Association for Aid and Relief, Japanese NGO) co-hosted the seminar, "The 1st Land Mine Monitor Seminar" in Tokyo, to promote ratification in Asia. One of the remarkable thing was People's Democratic Republic Lao had joined the seminar.

Government of Japan will continue its efforts to enhance universality in the world, especially in Asia Pacific. We'd like to take this opportunity to call upon all states parties to make further efforts to universalize this convention, by following manner.

All states parties should directly and strongly request the non signatory-countries, to join the Ottawa convention as soon as possible. These efforts should be made at their capitals and also through as the highest diplomatic channel as possible.

Also states parties may wish to discuss the reactions they received in the next session of the Standing Committee, the general status and operation of the convention.