Statement by the Government of Japan
Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
Preparatory Committee for the 6th Review Conference
(6 September 2021, Geneva)

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Preparatory Committee for the 6th Review Conference. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation during this session. I would also like to thank the CCW Implementation Support Unit for their integral role in enabling our discussions.

Japan believes that the 6th Review Conference will provide High Contracting Parties with a valuable opportunity to evaluate the achievements made so far, and to renew their commitments to the Convention and its Protocols.

Mr. President,

CCW remains as relevant as ever and represents an important instrument of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and continues to play a vital role in preventing superfluous injury or unnecessary sufferings. Its capacity to balance consideration of military necessity and humanity allows it to function as a core instrument of International Humanitarian Law structure.

Japan welcomes the continued efforts for universalization made by present and past CCW Presidents. There are currently 106 High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II, which means that 19 High Contracting Parties to the CCW are not parties to the Amended Protocol II. As President-designate of the 23rd Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II, I sent a letter in August this year to the representatives of these 19 High Contracting Parties. In the letter, I underscored special political context of this year where we have the Sixth Review Conference. I provided them with a “Ratification Kit” prepared by UNODA, in order to facilitate their procedural steps toward adherence to the APII.
AP II has been largely regarded as most appropriate venue for discussing matters related to the Improvised Explosive Devices. I would like to recall that IED attacks continue to pose a disproportionate threat to the civilian population, both during and after hostilities, and kill or injure more people annually than attacks with any other type of weapons, except firearms. For the 23rd Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to APII, I have recently proposed as President-designate to update the “Declaration on IED” of which submission to the Fifth Review Conference was recommended by the 18th Annual Conference of APII. The President-designate proposed through a silent procedure to the High Contracting Parties of the Amended Protocol II to decide;

- to start the process to update the IED Declaration to be guided by the President-designate and the IED Coordinators with a view to preparing a draft updated IED declaration and
- to ask the President designate and IED Coordinators to present the draft updated IED declaration to the High Contracting Parties to APII for consideration at the 23rd Annual Conference.

As announced by the UNODA on 1st of September, no objections were raised to the silent procedure. Consequently I intend to proceed on this matter, together with the IED coordinators, as decided by the High Contracting Parties.

Mr. President,

With regard to the issue of emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), Japan has been actively engaged in the discussion at the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). Japan believes that further clarification and discussions are necessary on the key elements pertaining to our discussion on LAWS, and that the discussion of the GGE on LAWS should be held in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. We understand that key elements of this Group’s consideration on LAWS are: application of international humanitarian law; human responsibility; human–machine interaction, and weapon reviews, as described in the joint working paper submitted by Australia, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
In this regard this list is not exhaustive and future discussions should not be prejudiced. Japan would like to reiterate that, for an effective and constructive process towards consensus, discussions of the Group should be closely based on and build on the texts agreed upon in the course of the past GGE activities, especially on those in the current review cycle. At the same time, Japan is also willing and open to discuss new consensus elements on top of the past achievements, in order to ensure a positive outcome of the CCW Review Conference.

I thank you, Mr. President.