

**Speech by Mr. MACHIDA Tatsuya,
Counselor of the Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
On the Occasion of Ending Ceremony for
Community Based Demining Activity supported by
Japan's Assistance for Japanese NGO's Projects
At Tasaen Commune, Kamrieng District in Battambang Province
September 4, 2012**

- Venerable monks,
- H.E. Mr. Prach Chann, Governor of Battambang Province
- H.E. Mr. Oum Phumro, Deputy Director General of Cambodian Mine Action Centre
- Mr. Tanigawa Yasuyuki, Resident Representative of Japan Mine Action Service
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the ceremony for commemorating the completion of the community based demining activity in Tasaen Commune with high presence of H.E. Mr. Prach Chann, Governor of Battambang Province and H.E. Mr. Oum Phumro, Deputy Director-General of CMAC.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japan Mine Action Service and Cambodian Mine Action Centre which cooperated with each other to implement this project under the funding from the Japanese Government.

The Government of Japan, recognizing the seriousness of the landmine problems in Cambodia, has been continuously supporting mine clearance activities since 1992 with the total amount of assistance exceeding JPY 12 billion (around 145 million US dollars) up to date. Japan's assistance includes the provision of demining equipment and technical cooperation to CMAC and the funding to Japanese NGOs.

As a result of the efforts by Cambodian Government and international donors, the number of landmine and UXO victims has decreased in recent years. However, there still remain a large number of mines and UXOs across the country, which threaten the daily lives of the citizens and disturb the development of landmine affected areas. In fact, Battambang is the most affected province in Cambodia with one third of casualties concentrating in this Province.

JMAS, in cooperation with CMAC, conducted mine clearing in Kamrieng District in Battambang Province for the past six years. In the process, JMAS employed the local villagers as demining staff who helped clear the minefields of their own villages. I have heard that more than half of the locally employed are women who have played an important role through the demining activities.

I understand that six years' activity by JMAS has cleared approximately 422 hectares of land and released the local people from the threat and fear of landmines. I was informed that the demined areas had been transformed into farming land for rice, cassava and corn and in addition, Japanese companies had invested in the area hiring more than 200 local people.

I firmly believe that this project has contributed to the improvement of the living condition and the development of the local communities. I am hopeful that the villagers will take advantage of the improved environment and make further efforts for the development of the communities.

Last but not least, I sincerely hope this cooperation will further strengthen the friendly relations between the Japanese people and the Cambodian people.

Thank you for your attention.