

【Check Against Delivery】

**Statement of Mr. Kiminori IWAMA,
Ambassador of Japan to Austria
Permanent Representative to the OSCE
OSCE Asian Partners for Co-operation Group Meeting
“Combatting Online Scams”
June 2, 2025 9:30-11:30**

Thank you, Madam moderator,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Thailand and Malta on the success of Friday's workshop. I am pleased that experts from various fields, including the national bank, participated as speakers, and that interactive discussions were held among Participating countries and Partners for Co-operation. I hope that today's discussion will build on what we discussed on Friday and further explore the common theme of “online fraud” and how the OSCE can add value in this area.

Madam moderator,

Online scams have been rapidly expanding in recent years, not only within a single country but also throughout the world.

Online scams are often operated in vulnerable areas such as conflict-affected regions and cause not only enormous economic damage to many countries but also human suffering by involving ordinary citizens in their criminal activities. According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in East and Southeast Asia alone, cyber-enabled fraud caused financial losses up to US\$37 billion in 2023.

In Japan, as the use of social media and cashless payments becomes more widespread, criminal methods exploiting these technologies are becoming increasingly sophisticated and diverse. As a result, financial losses in 2024 reached approximately 300

billion JPY (approximately 1.8 billion Euro), doubling from the previous year, and quadrupling from the year before, indicating an accelerating trend in fraud.

Online scams not only lead to cases of large-scale financial losses or trafficking in persons for forced criminality but are also closely interconnected with other crimes such as money laundering and illegal drug trafficking. Given that the spread of such crimes in the world necessitates international cooperation urgently, in the OSCE forum, Participating states and Partners for Co-operation should work together to deepen cooperation in this field.

As mentioned at last Friday's workshop hosted by Thailand and Malta, we are also concerned about the nexus between online scams and other criminal activities such as financial crimes involving digital assets, money laundering and cryptocurrencies. Especially with regard to cryptocurrencies, we express our serious concerns over cryptocurrency thefts by malicious cyber actors, including North Korea, have reached unprecedented levels.

Madam moderator,

Together with the community and with the intention of leading joint efforts, Japan is promoting international cooperation in collaboration with international organizations such as UNODC to support strengthening the capabilities of foreign law enforcement agencies.

For example: in June 2024 we compiled the document entitled "Comprehensive Measures to Protect People from Fraud". Also, in December 2024, Japan compiled the "Emergency measures to Protect the Lives and Property of Citizens from Robbery Incidents involving so-called 'Dark Part-Time Jobs'". In April 2025, we announced the publication of the "Comprehensive Measures to Protect People from Fraud 2.0". In addition,

particularly in response to online scam cases in the Myanmar border area, Prime Minister ISHIBA has indicated that Japan will prioritize addressing the issue of online scams in cooperation with the international community.

With INTERPOL having deep knowledge and experience in the field of strengthening cooperation with police agencies in various countries, and UNODC having extensive knowledge and experience in the fields of border management enhancement and situational analysis, both international organizations play an important part in addressing the issue, which Japan will leverage through joint information sharing and specialized support to law enforcement capabilities.

Furthermore, Japan intends to continue providing support for the building of law enforcement capabilities to combat international organized crime, including online scams, through international organizations such as UNODC.

As was introduced at last Friday's workshop, the OSCE is the only international organization in the Central Asian region that systematically deals with online scams. We hope that the OSCE will use its regional expertise to strengthen its collaboration with other international organizations and create synergies.

Last but not least, Japan remains committed to fostering a free, fair, and secure cyberspace while upholding universal values such as human rights and rule of law.

I thank you.