

Japan Item 6 – “Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes”

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

As space activities have diversified over recent years, Japan acknowledges the importance of upholding the rule of law, and calls upon all states to consider ways and means of maintaining the safety, security, and sustainability of outer space. COPUOS can serve an essential role to this end. Japan believes COPUOS can also increase Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, through its unique information sharing platform which can help improve mutual understanding of each other’s space activities.

Space debris is increasingly posing a serious threat to the daily lives of people given our growing dependence on space assets. Specifically, the destruction of a satellite that generates a large amount of space debris indiscriminately increases the risk of collisions of on-orbit space objects and is an irresponsible behavior that undermines sustainable and stable use of outer space. Japan expresses concerns towards such anti-satellite tests that generates a large amount of space debris and believes that states should refrain from using or testing those capabilities. In this regard, Japan welcomes and supports the announcement of the United States not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile testing. We believe this is a positive step towards formulating norms of responsible behavior in outer space.

Japan is taking concrete steps towards tackling this issue through its domestic policy, legal instruments, technical standards, research and development. One such example is the Commercial Removal of Debris Demonstration program, under which JAXA and Japanese industries are working together to develop technology for the removal of large-size space debris.

Another efficient way to tackle the issue of space debris is to respect and comply with international norms. In this regard, Japan believes that implementation of the LTS Guidelines and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines is becoming all the more important, considering the growing diversity of players that are involved in space activities. Japan will continue to constructively participate in discussions of the LTS 2.0 WG.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Japan has actively participated in various space cooperation projects for the peaceful uses of outer space. International cooperation promotes mutual understanding, enhances

transparency, and builds confidence among nations.

The International Space Station is a good example of a successful partnership. Japan has been cooperating with UNOOSA to promote the “KiboCUBE” program. Launched in 2015, it offers a selected entity in a developing country the opportunity to deploy a CubeSat from the Japanese Experiment Module “Kibo” of the ISS. So far, CubeSats developed by teams from Kenya, Guatemala, and Mauritius, winners of the first, second and third round, have been deployed from the ISS through the KiboCUBE programme. Each of the CubeSats is their country’s first satellite, and Japan hopes that the experiences acquired from the KiboCUBE programme will be applied in the development of future satellites. Currently, the teams from Indonesia, Moldova, SICA, Mexico and Tunisia, the winners of the third to six rounds, are developing their CubeSats.

Another example of multilateral space cooperation is the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, APRSAF. This is a successful initiative of regional peaceful cooperation led by Japan. The forum attracts participants from space agencies, governmental bodies, and international organizations, such as the United Nations, as well as private companies, universities and research institutes from over 30 countries representing various regions. The open framework of APRSAF enables various entities to participate in various programs under the Forum.

The theme of last November’s APRSAF session was “Expand Space Innovation through Diverse Partnerships.” Heads of space agencies shared their visions of space initiatives in the challenging era of COVID-19, and participants acknowledged the increasing importance of space technology especially in supporting remote activities.

Thank you for your attention.