

Japan, Item 12 – “General Exchange of information on Non-legally binding UN Instruments on Outer Space”

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Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A number of principles, declarations and guidelines for the peaceful uses of outer space in the form of UN General Assembly resolutions have been developed in the Committee since the early 1980s. For Japan, these resolutions have been playing an important role in complementing the existing treaties for the peaceful uses of outer space.

With the development of space technology and an increase and diversification of space actors, the safe and sustainable use of outer space must become a primary consideration in managing our activities. To address contemporary challenges in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of non-legally binding instruments and related practices.

In this context, Japan proposed this agenda item, co-sponsored by Austria, Canada, France, Nigeria and the United States in 2013. The purpose of this agenda item is to facilitate an exchange of views and information sharing on the implementation of non-legally binding United Nations instruments.

The compendium of responses to the questionnaire, which Japan distributed at the 55th Session, has invigorated discussions on this agenda item and can be a useful reference to all states endeavoring to implement non-legally binding United Nations instruments. We hope that more states and international intergovernmental organizations will provide information on their implementation measures.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for distributing the compendium and for maintaining it on a dedicated page of the UNOOSA website, making it accessible to all relevant actors.

Madam Chair,

In order to ensure the safety of our activities, it is crucial that all space actors respect and implement these non-legally binding United Nations instruments.

As an example, Japan’s “*Act on Launching of Spacecraft, etc. and Control of Spacecraft*” and its related review standards provide legal standards for space debris mitigation measures in line with the “*UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines*”. In the Act, the Government of Japan examines non-governmental entities intending to launch or control satellites from Japan and requires them to take measures to mitigate space debris such as the prevention of break-up and post-mission disposal. Japan is committed to managing its space activities in accordance with the “*UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines*” and other related standards through this national regulatory mechanism. To ensure the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space activities, we are committed to tackling the issue of space debris through legal instruments, technical standards and research and development. Japan would like to call upon all Member States to make further efforts to mitigate space debris.

The Guidelines on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines), is another recent and important non-legally binding instrument adopted in COPUOS. For Japan, ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities must become a priority, considering the expansion and diversification of space players.

The LTS Guidelines address an enhanced exchange of information on space activities, such as the registration of space objects and pre-launch notifications. In turn, increased efficiency in our communication and transparency supports the safety of space operations as well as confidence building among states. Japan encourages all states to properly implement the LTS Guidelines.

Japan is looking forward to contributing substantially in our discussion on this agenda item with a view to achieving a meaningful outcome.

Thank you for your kind attention.