

Japan Item 13 – “General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management”

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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

In recent years, outer space has become congested due to its diversified use and an increasing number of spacefaring nations. In addition, an increase of space debris caused by Anti-Satellite (ASAT) tests and by satellite collisions has posed a growing risk to the sustainable and stable use of outer space.

For Japan, securing the stable, safe and sustainable use of the outer space environment is of the utmost importance. Japan strongly encourages all States to prevent the creation and diffusion of long-lived orbital debris in a manner that is consistent with international norms, and to establish appropriate Space Traffic Management (STM) regulation for better coordination.

Japan engages in appropriate international coordination based on the management of radio frequency and geostationary orbits through the ITU. Furthermore, there is growing importance for the provision of pre-launch notifications that contain information on a launch plan using applicable existing and/or new dedicated mechanisms. With this in mind, Japan has been submitting pre-launch notifications of our launch vehicles and has been reporting its annual launch plans based on the “*Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation*.”

Madam Chair,

In November 2021, Japan established national guidelines for On-Orbit Servicing (OOS). The OOS Guidelines provide technical safety requirements to avoid collision with the client space object or to avoid its approach or collision with third party spacecraft.

The Guidelines also provide guidance for interfering with the client space object to ensure transparency throughout the mission.

Transparency is important to reassure third parties that on-orbit servicing is indeed unlikely to cause collisions with the client space object or third-party objects, and to prevent unexpected collisions caused by third-party spacecraft

approaching the service area without awareness of the plan.

In recent years, various forms of on-orbit servicing, such as life extension and refueling, have been rapidly developing in addition to active debris removal (ADR), such as the commercial debris removal (CRD2) project, which Japan is currently working on. In this context, in order for the business of on-orbit servicing to be widely recognized as safe and secure for all operators, we hope that countries considering licensing on-orbit servicing will establish standards and guidelines in the same manner as Japan did, including those related to transparency.

In March 2022, Japan published the “Mid- to Long-term Policy on Efforts for Rule-Making on the Use of Earth Orbit” with a focus on collision avoidance, Space Situation Awareness, debris mitigation and large constellation. By accumulating national practices and sharing these with international partners, Japan would like to contribute to deepening international discussions on rulemaking on Space Traffic Coordination and Management.

On 8 March 2023, Japan hosted the “*8th International Symposium on Ensuring the Safe and Sustainable Use of Outer Space*” which took place online, and focused on Active Debris Removal and On-Orbit Servicing. During the Symposium, panelists and participants discussed opportunities and challenges to realize globally coordinated efforts to this end.

Thank you for your kind attention.