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Statement by the Delegation of Japan
At the First Committee of the 71st session
of the General Assembly
-Thematic debate: Outer space -

19 October 2016, New York

Mr. Chairperson,

The importance of outer space activities has never been greater than it is today. Outer space has immense potential for the social, economic, scientific and technological development of all states, and also could contribute to tackling global issues such as natural disasters and environmental degradation. From this point of view, ensuring safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities has become also very urgent issue for the welfare and the development of all mankind. We are concerned about all the non-transparent and irresponsible behaviors in outer space, and should work together to mitigate the risks and dangers which threaten stable utilization of outer space.

Mr. Chairperson,

To tackle these challenges, enhancing the rule of law in outer space is the top priority for international community. Therefore, we reiterate the need to evolve and implement, in a prompt and pragmatic manner, principles of responsible behavior for outer space activities, which could be an important step for the international rule-making for outer space activities. In this context, we encourage all States to take appropriate measures to cooperate in good faith to avoid harmful interference with outer space activities and stress the importance of all states, in a manner consistent with international law, to refrain from any action which brings about, directly or indirectly, damage, or destruction, of space objects. Needless to say, the development of ASAT-capability has been the most serious concern. .

With regard to the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space, which we support in principle, Japan's outer space activities have always been peaceful in nature and this will continue. As such, Japan has taken active part in

the discussions on the issue of PAROS within the CD. In this context, we consider that there are a number of issues that need to be carefully examined in the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to point out that international cooperation and transparency and confidence-building measures are also very important to solve these problems. We reaffirm our commitment, and call on all states, to review and implement, to the extent practicable, the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures contained in the recommendations of the UN Group of Governmental Experts Report. Japan has carried out various kinds of bilateral and multilateral space dialogs and consultations regarding space security, which can contribute to the confidence-building among countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

The development of technology could be critical for the stable use of outer space. To deal with the problems of long-lived space debris, which has been gradually constituting a threat to any kind of space activity and potentially limits the possibility of use and exploration of outer space, the advanced technology such as Space Situational Awareness or Active Debris Removal are very important. Japan is committed to the research and development of these capabilities for ensuring the stable use of outer space, as stated in the latest Japan's Basic Plan on Space Policy.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.