

Agenda Item 12 – “General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management”

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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

It is now our common understanding that the outer space is congested and contested. This situation attracts serious concern as the number of countries conducting space activities rapidly increases and new space activities such as sub-orbital spaceflights and constellations of small satellites by private sectors have recently emerged.

Therefore, space traffic management (STM), which entails developing and implementing a set of technical and regulatory provisions to promote safe access into outer space, operations in outer space and return from outer space, free from physical or radio-frequency interference, is of the utmost importance in order to keep the outer space environment safe, stable and sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to reiterate Japan’s commitment to this endeavor, and call on Member States to implement the existing framework related to STM. Japan engages in appropriate international coordination based on the management of radio frequency and geostationary orbits through the ITU. Furthermore, I would like to reiterate the importance of providing pre-launch notifications that contain information on a launch plan using applicable existing and/or new dedicated mechanisms. With this in mind, Japan has submitted prelaunch notifications on our space launch vehicles and reports annual launch plans based on “*Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation*.”

Japan has also been working to enhance the capability of Space Situational Awareness (SSA), which will be essential for effective STM. Based on the recent “Basic Plan for Space Policy” and its implementation schedule, Japan will establish SSA-related facilities such as an optical telescope and radar observation facility and a whole-of-government system, scheduled to be implemented in the JFY 2023. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the capability of SSA internationally, Japan has been cooperating with the United States since 2013, and started cooperation with France two years ago. JAXA will make a technical presentation on their activities on SSA and space debris in tomorrow morning.

On 28 February and 1 March, Japan hosted the “*International Symposium on Ensuring Stable Use of Outer Space*” in Tokyo, which focused on SSA and STM. During the Symposium, panelists and participants discussed ways and means to address the challenges of increasingly congested outer space environment. They also discussed civil-STM initiatives and the importance of international cooperation not only from the viewpoint of security but also for future economic growth.

Mr. Chairman,

With reference to the issue of space debris, Japan attaches great importance of this issue and will further elaborate on its position in the agenda item 10 “Space debris.”

To touch on briefly, in the area of technical development, Japan is conducting a research on space debris at a national level and investigating the system for actively

removing large sized space debris. JAXA will partner with the private sector in programs including research, ground testing, and demonstration in orbit and so on.

Japan is of the view that securing the stable use of the outer space environment is important and strongly encourages all States to cooperate to prevent the creation and diffusion of long-lived orbital debris in a manner consistent with international law. We recognize the importance of strengthened international norms of behaviors in the outer space.

It is also important to consider rules and norms about on-orbit space activities, which could become an urgent priority in light of the clear threats of increasing space debris and orbital congestion. Policy makers and legal experts should try to have a mutual understanding of some basic principles for outer space activities which is the basis for technical and regulatory provisions, while technical experts from related fields should continue examining these issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Considering the increasing number of space debris and threats of orbital congestion, we would like to reiterate that developing rules especially for on-orbit activities is an urgent priority as well as establishing an integrated, harmonized, and comprehensive STM system for future space activities.

Thank you for your kind attention.