

STATEMENT BY JAPAN
AT THE MEETING OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE 75th SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OUTER SPACE -
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While our society is increasingly relying on space systems, the environment of outer space has been changing rapidly with an influx of new actors and the diversification of activities. As a result, risks against sustainable and stable use of outer space are more serious today than ever before, because outer space is becoming increasingly congested, contested and competitive. Current circumstances make it complicated to distinguish civil activities and military activities. These developments necessitate the international community to bring new ideas and approaches in order to advance our discussions.

As our unwavering basic position, Japan supports in principle the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space. We have participated in substantive discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as well as in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) of the United Nations.

Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are pragmatic and near-term measures to increase trust and prevent misperception and miscalculations in space activities, which currently involve a wide range of actors and stakeholders. We believe that it is imperative to reaffirm the significance of TCBMs. The international community should reach a common understanding on ways to reduce threats to space systems in order to maintain outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, and sustainable environment, free from an arms race. As a means to pave the way in this direction, Japan will promote the TCBMs contained in the recommendations of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) Report, which are effective in terms of the goal of PAROS. Japan also believes that the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) could contribute to this endeavor. Further discussions on TCBMs and a common understanding on how we can reduce threats to space systems will help States deepen mutual understanding, and allow them to have a more profound understanding both on threats and risks to space activities and on what could be acceptable parameters for responsible space activities.

In addition to the inherent complexity of defining a weapon in outer space due to the dual-use nature of space objects, it is also challenging to interpret and verify intentions behind certain outer space activities. Japan underscores the need to characterize responsible behavior, which would be a practical step to further develop and implement norms, rules and principles in outer space, and could prove relatively durable in the face of changing circumstances.

In conclusion, Japan would like to re-emphasize its commitment to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities.

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