

STATEMENT BY JAPAN  
AT THE MEETING OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE 76<sup>th</sup> 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 outer space environment 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, as outer space is becoming increasingly congested, contested and competitive.

In this regard, Japan supports the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space as our unwavering basic position. 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.

The dual-use nature of space objects brings complexity to defining a weapon in outer space and makes it challenging to interpret and verify intentions behind certain outer space activities. In other words, it is difficult to distinguish civil activities and military activities, as well as acts committed out of benevolence or malice.

The international community is required to come up with ideas and approaches that enable us to overcome these challenges. 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. Therefore, Japan supports the establishment of an open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors and stands ready to make proactive contributions to the discussion to uphold space as safe, secure, stable and sustainable environment.

Japan also underlines the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as 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 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 conclusion, Japan would like to reiterate its strong commitment to ensuring the security, safety, stability and sustainability of outer space activities.

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