

The draft of the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities

1 Background

(1) In the light of the difficulty in formulating a new legally binding treaty at the multilateral consultations related to outer space, including the Conference of Disarmament (CD) and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), there is a gradual formulation of a tide to structure the space governance and to ensure appropriate implementation of related treaties among different countries through so-called “soft law”.

(2) In December 2008, the European Union (EU) adopted the Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council. Later, based on consultations with various countries, the revised version of the Code of Conduct was adopted at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council in September 2010.

(3) On 25th January 2012, Minister for Foreign Affairs GEMBA announced that ‘We welcome the initiative led by the EU and we are ready to participate actively in the international discussion related to this initiative.’ Later, the EU held the Code of Conduct Friends meeting in Brussels in February 2012 (with participation from approximately 15 countries), and a preparatory meeting in March 2012 (with participation from approximately 30 countries). On 5th June 2012 the first multilateral meeting open to all the member countries of the United Nations was held in Vienna.

2 Key features of the draft of the International Code of Conduct proposed by the EU

Provisions of the Code of Conducts includes the following: minimizing the possibility of accidents, collisions or other harmful interference; refraining from intentional destruction of space objects to mitigate the creation of space debris; to notify the risks of collisions including the operation plan, change of orbit, or re-entry that may result in dangerous proximity to the space object; and allowing to request consultations when there is possibility of violation of the Code by another state. In addition, the Code of Conduct is intended to cover both civil and military space activities.