

Japan Item 12

“General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management”

Japan

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

In recent years, outer space has become congested due to a rapidly increasing number of space objects. In addition, an increase of space debris caused by Anti-Satellite (ASAT) tests has posed a growing risk to the sustainable and stable use of outer space.

For Japan, securing the stable, safe and sustainable use of the outer space environment is of the utmost importance. Japan encourages all States to work towards ensuring sustainable Space Traffic Management (STM).

Chair,

In March 2024, Japan's Interagency Task Force updated the “Mid- to Long-term Policy for Rule-Making on the Use of Earth Orbit” to consider its efforts to enhance collision avoidance, Space Situational Awareness, debris mitigation and remediation and on-orbit services and to address issues related to large constellations. Let me introduce some of our recent efforts.

Space Situational Awareness (SSA) remains a priority for Japan. Ministry of Defense of Japan has developed an SSA system, which became fully operational in March 2023. We also began providing SSA information, such as orbital information of space objects, to private satellite operators. This SSA system will help us make space more visible and avoid orbital collisions more precisely.

Regarding on-orbit servicing, we see various forms emerging recently, such

as life extension and refueling as well as active debris removal (ADR). Currently, Japan is working on a commercial debris removal demonstration (CRD2) project. In order to ensure safe, secure and transparent operations of on-orbit servicing, Japan established national guidelines in 2021 that prescribe technical safety requirements.

The Guidelines require entities conducting on-orbit servicing to obtain consent from the entity having the authority to the client object and service the client space object ensuring transparency throughout the mission. Transparency is crucial in ensuring that the on-orbit servicing does not cause collisions with the client space object or third-party objects and that a third-party spacecraft does not approach the service area without knowing the plan. In addition, Japan publishes an in-advance announcement on on-orbit servicing project on the website of Cabinet Office of Japan to ensure transparency.

We hope that countries considering licensing on-orbit servicing will establish standards and guidelines similar to Japan's, including those related to transparency, so that we can create a business environment in which these services can operate securely.

Chair,

On 4 March 2024, Japan hosted the "9th International Symposium on Ensuring the Safe and Sustainable Use of Outer Space" focusing on rulemaking and collaborations for ensuring the stable use of orbit. During the Symposium, panelists and participants discussed opportunities and challenges to realize globally coordinated efforts to this end.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Japan's commitment to contribute to international discussions on space traffic management in order to ensure the stable use of outer space for current and future generations.

Thank you for your kind attention.