

Agenda Item 10 – “General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, taking into account the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”

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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The increasing number of space debris poses a serious threat not only to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities, but also to the lives of people on Earth. Japan strongly encourages all States carrying out space activities to cooperate to prevent the creation and diffusion of long-lived orbital debris in a manner consistent with international norms.

National policy and regulatory framework for space activities offer a key solution to limit the generation of space debris. The Japanese government organized a “task force” under the leadership of the Minister of State for Space Policy, comprised of the related State Ministers and the President of JAXA to discuss efficient measures for tackling the issue of space debris.

Japan enforced the Space Activities Act in 2018 to efficiently authorize and supervise non-governmental entities’ space activities. Under this Act, the Government of Japan examines non-governmental entities’ plans to launch or control satellites within the Japanese jurisdiction. All plans are required to satisfy criteria for space debris mitigation such as the prevention of on-orbit break-up and post-mission disposal. Furthermore, JAXA has its own space debris mitigation standards, which provide in-depth technical procedures for multiple debris mitigation areas involving reentry risks and specified detailed requirements.

Another efficient way to tackle the issue of space debris is to respect and comply with international norms. In this regard, Japan encourages all States to properly implement the LTS Guidelines and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

While the efforts of each member state are important, international cooperation is crucial. Countries with rich experience should share their experiences and practices. For the sustainable use of the outer space environment, Japan remains committed to tackling the issue of space debris, and we are keen to raise awareness in collaboration with international partners. In February 2020, Japanese Ambassador Hikihara and Ms. Dipippo of UNOOSA signed a joint statement on space debris. The purpose of this statement is to jointly declare our intention to promote increased understanding and the consolidation of knowledge on space debris and to support the implementation of existing guidelines, following up on the adoption of Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in June 2019.

For the sustainable use of outer space environment, Japan will continue to be actively engaged in tackling the challenges of space debris and set an example through a series of measures mentioned above. Japan would like to call upon all Member States to make further efforts to mitigate space debris.

Thank you for your attention.