

Japan Item 5 – “General exchange of views”

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

The Japanese delegation is pleased to congratulate you on your election as Chair of COPUOS. We are confident that we will have a highly successful session under your leadership, and we look forward to working with you. We also warmly welcome Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia as new members of the Committee. We would like to extend our appreciation to the Acting Director Mr. Niklas Hedman and the Secretariat of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), as well as to the entire Office for their exceptional work in realizing a hybrid format meeting for this year’s COPUOS and the subcommittees despite the difficult circumstances posed by COVID-19. We would also like to express our appreciation for the leadership and hard work of the former Director, Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo, contributing to the evolution of the membership of COPUOS reached to one hundred.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, let me refer to the current situation in Ukraine. Russia’s aggression against Ukraine seriously infringes upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. This unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force shakes the very foundations of the international order in Europe, and in every corner of the globe. The series of decisions and acts of Russia are clear and flagrant violations of international law and the United Nations Charter. Japan condemns in the strongest terms Russia’s acts of aggression. Russia must immediately stop the aggression, withdraw its forces back to Russia, and come back to the path of diplomacy.

In this context, Japan does not support the proposed establishment of a new regional centre for space science and technology education, hosted by the Roscosmos Corporate Academy, which was referred to in UNGA resolution 76/76.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Japan welcomes the progress made during the two Subcommittees this year, amidst these difficulties, including the efforts of newly established Working Groups. Japan recalls and appreciates the efforts that the Working Group on Space Resources agreed its methods of work and 5-year workplan and that the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) of outer space activities reached consensus on its terms of reference, methods of work and workplan so as to start the important substantive work. Japan is committed to contributing to productive discussions in the Subcommittees as well as in the COPUOS.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Japan is convinced that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an indispensable factor for the Japanese space policy and activities.

Regarding the recent developments in our space activities, Japan has conducted four launches since the last COPUOS meeting. In the area of human spaceflight, following Japanese astronaut NOGUCHI Soichi who returned to the earth in May of last year, astronaut HOSHIDE Akihiko completed a long duration mission as the commander of the International Space Station from April to November of last year. During his mission, Astronaut HOSHIDE conducted numerous experiments including for medical science, joint experiments with private companies on plant cultivation for lunar exploration, and lectures for Asian students.

Japan has also been actively engaged in the field of space exploration and space science. In June 2020, Japan updated its Basic Plan on Space Policy, recognizing the importance of the space domain as a frontier for cutting-edge science and technology, and as a driving force for economic growth. Japan will leverage its expertise, and bring in capabilities from various industry sectors to take part in global space exploration efforts. In October 2020, Japan signed the Artemis Accords as a political commitment to establish an internationally shared framework on various principles for civil space exploration activities and the use of outer space by national space agencies. In December 2020, the Government of Japan and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation on the Civil Lunar Gateway. In May 2022, on the occasion of Japan-U.S. summit meeting, both leaders announced progress in collaboration on the Artemis program, including reaffirming shared intention to include a Japanese astronaut on Gateway and on human and robotic lunar surface missions.

Japan will also contribute to sustainable lunar exploration. For example, JAXA has committed 2 CubeSats, OMOTENASHI and EQUULEUS, to the first Artemis mission in 2022. In the same JFY, JAXA will launch the “Smart Lander for Investigating the Moon”, called SLIM, aiming to pinpoint lunar landing technologies. In addition, JAXA plans to provide a habitation system and logistics resupply to the Gateway, and to develop the Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX), a pressurized crew rover with ISRO. As for Mars exploration, JAXA is planning to launch the “Martian Moons eXploration (MMX)” in JFY2024, applying the sample return technology used for Hayabusa2.

In June 2021, Japan passed a bill on the exploration and development of space resources including by the private sector. In December 2021, the “*Act on the Promotion of Business Activities for the Exploration and Development of Space Resources*”, commonly known as the “*Space Resources Act*” of Japan, came into force. Japan expects

to share the knowledge and experience gained from these activities in the newly established working group on space resources of LSC.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Japan acknowledges the importance of international cooperation in ensuring the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space. In this regard, information sharing and exchanges on national space legislation are important for enhancing space activities pursuant to the treaties and other international norms. The “National Space Legislation Initiative (NSLI)” under the activities of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) provides a regional opportunity to contribute to such objectives.

The Initiative is open to the national governmental organizations of the Asia-Pacific countries. Under this initiative, a study group consisting of practitioners in space policy and law from nine countries, namely Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam, conducted a joint study to and drafted a report on the status of their national space legislation. The report was jointly submitted to the 60th session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS (LSC), and is available on the LSC website. With the wide support of the APRSAF community, the second phase of the Initiative has launched and welcomed new participants from New Zealand, Singapore and Turkey. As the host country of the APRSAF and a participating country of the Initiative, Japan will actively promote its activities to further enhance the development of national space legislation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Furthermore, in May 2021, during the 60th session of the LSC, the Government of Japan and UNOOSA announced their cooperation on a new project titled the “Space Law for New Space Actors”. The financial contribution to the project in FY2022 has increased compared with the previous year. Through this cooperation with the Office, Japan is supporting the capacity-building of emerging spacefaring nations in the Asia-Pacific region to draft national space laws and regulations in line with international space law.

Japan has also been promoting global navigation satellite system (GNSS) cooperation under the framework of Multi-GNSS Asia and has been supporting cooperation among governments, academia and industries in the Asia-Pacific region. Recently, Multi-GNSS Asia has expanded its activities to include the development of new applications and businesses, and welcomed the participation of the next generation of professionals and users.

In conclusion, the Japanese delegation reiterates its commitment towards the peaceful use of outer space and is looking forward to fruitful discussions during the Committee.

Thank you for your kind attention.