Japan

Japan Item 7 – "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fifty-ninth session"

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) provides a unique and important platform to promote international cooperation in the field of outer space. Japan would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Chair of the Subcommittee, Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti, for his excellent work.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Given the rapid evolution of the outer space environment and of related technologies, the guidelines for long-term sustainability (LTS) of outer space activities are increasingly becoming a relevant tool to tackle the proliferation of space debris, the increasing complexity of space operations, and the increasing risks of collision and interference that affect the sustainability of space activities. In this respect, Japan welcomes the initiative led by UNOOSA and the UK space agency to raise awareness and capacity building related to the implementation of the LTS Guidelines. Japan has also been cooperating with countries of the Asia-Pacific in this area under the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, and has submitted a case study for the implementation of the LTS guidelines to UNOOSA in 2021.

Recalling the past session of the STSC, we appreciate Mr. Umamaheswaran, Chair of the LTS 2.0 Working Group, for his leadership and extend our sincere appreciation for the flexibility shown by all the delegations to achieve the agreement on the process of this important work of the committee for the coming years.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates

Japan is conducting research and developing technologies related to the mitigation of space debris. One example is an open tool to aid collision avoidance operation by satellite operators called "Risk Avoidance assist tool based on debris Collision proBaBIliTy" (RABBIT). At present, RABBIT provides safe flight operations for 120 satellites of 40 organization around the world.

Moreover, Japan is investigating ways to remove large-size space debris. JAXA is currently cooperating with Japanese industry in research and development of active debris removal (ADR) under the Commercial Removal of Debris Demonstration program. The first phase of this project is scheduled for JFY 2022 to demonstrate the key technology of

ADR such as non-cooperative rendezvous, proximity operation and inspection of a discarded Japanese rocket upper stage.

Respecting the need for considerable transparency in licensing such kinds of On-Orbit Servicing (OOS) missions, the Government of Japan has developed guidelines for a license to operate a spacecraft designed to perform OOS, based on the technical and legal requirements submitted by a working group of experts. Through the implementation of the guidelines, Japan will ensure that future OOS missions are conducted in a safe and transparent manner, in compliance with international rules including the Outer Space Treaty and the UN Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Japan is currently discussing debris mitigation as well as Space Traffic Management (STM) in general to prepare for related activities by Japanese private entities in the near future. We acknowledge the need for transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities to avoid miscalculations and misunderstandings. Japan is currently evaluating the best approach to ensure the transparency of our future activities.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished delegates,

In closing, Space exploration and utilization have yielded tremendous scientific, economic and societal benefits. Japan recognizes that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has been the driver of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. We encourage all members and observers of this Committee to be part of this movement. For its part, Japan will continue its efforts in research, exploration and international cooperation for the benefit of humankind.

Thank you for your attention.