

Japan Item 8 – “Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its sixty-third session”

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Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Japan would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Santiago Ripol Carulla for his excellent work and dedication as the Chair of the Legal Subcommittee, which enabled us to have a fruitful session of the Legal Subcommittee in April. On the other hand, it was deplorable that we could not reach a consensus on the report of the meeting. We sincerely hope that this will not repeat or undermine “Vienna Sprit”.

The Legal Subcommittee provides a unique platform with its open and broad membership and expertise to discuss various legal aspects of the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Thus, Japan has been actively engaged in discussion in the subcommittee.

Japan repeatedly emphasizes the importance of strengthening the rule of law in outer space to ensure the safety, sustainability and stability of outer space activities.

During the sixty-third session of the Legal Subcommittee in April, Japan in particular, took the issue of space debris. Space debris is a serious problem that should be addressed through international efforts. Japan submitted a non-paper titled “Japan's view on the way forward to advancing the discussion on possible normative mechanisms on space debris mitigation and remediation measures under the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.” In this paper, we call for the need to accelerate the discussions on the issues related to mitigation and remediation, including active debris removal (ADR), under the framework of the COPUOS.

We organized with Argentina and Germany an informal consultation exploring views of other states on the issue. Mr. Mitsunobu Okada, CEO of Astroscale delivered the technical presentation on this issue.

We advocated to accelerate our discussion on holistic approach to address this space debris issues with view to promoting mitigation and remediation.

Chair,

These important works of the Subcommittee must not be just words on papers but must be implemented. The effective way to make such norm settings function is, we believe, that each country that is engaged in space activities should develop national legislations that are consistent with international space law. We, Japan, are ready to work together.

First, I would like to bring into attention the “National Space Legislation Initiative (NSLI)” that Japan hosts under the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF).

The NSLI promotes information sharing and mutual learning on, as well as helps drafting and implementation of the national legislation and policies in participating countries. So far, participating countries, including Japan, submitted two joint reports in 2021 and 2023 on the status of their national space legislation and the implementation of the LTS Guidelines. We expand the scopes of cooperation not only in quantity but in quality. We have just launched the 3rd phase of NSLI with three new topics of Space Economy, Space Resources, and the Artemis Accords.

Second, UNOOSA’s *Space Law for New Space Actors project*. Since 2021, Japan has been providing financial and technical contributions to this project. This project aims to building the capacity of Asia and the Pacific countries in establishing national space legislation. Japan hosted a regional technical advisory mission in Tokyo in January of 2024 with the topic of “National Authorization and Continuing Supervision.” We are extremely grateful that more than 20 participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand attended the event. We work on the next project with the Philippines and Thailand.

We continue our endeavors.

Chair,

We are not just working with partners, but we ourselves are accumulating our own efforts in our domestic actions.

In 2021, Japan enacted its “Space Resources Act.” The Act defines an entities’ legal obligation when applying for a license to conduct exploration and development of space resources as well as the acquisition of ownership.

Under this Act, Japan issued its first license to a private entity in November 2022 and publicized its business activity plan on the website of the Cabinet Office of Japan.

During the last Legal Subcommittee, Japan provided an overview of this Space Resources Act and efforts for information sharing in the working group on Legal Aspects of Space Resources. In this regard, Japan appreciates Chair, Mr. Misztal, and its Vice-Chair, Mr. Freeland for their work.

We assure our continued commitment to work of Legal Subcommittee.

Thank you.