

Japan, Item 13 – “General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management”

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Your excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recent years, outer space has become congested due to its diversified use and an increasing number of spacefaring nations. In addition, an increase of space debris caused by Anti-Satellite (ASAT) tests and by satellite collisions 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 strongly encourages all States to prevent the creation and diffusion of long-lived orbital debris in a manner that is consistent with international norms and to establish appropriate Space Traffic Management (STM) regulation for better coordination.

Japan engages in appropriate international coordination based on the management of radio frequency and geostationary orbits through the ITU. Furthermore, there is a growing importance for providing pre-launch notifications that contain information on a launch plan using applicable existing and/or new dedicated mechanisms. With this in mind, Japan has been submitting pre-launch notifications of our launch vehicles and has been reporting its annual launch plans based on the “*Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation*.”

Your excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last November, Japan established the national guidelines for On-Orbit Servicing (OOS). The OOS Guidelines provide technical safety requirements to avoid collision with the client space object or to avoid its approach or collision with a third party spacecraft.

The Guidelines also provide guidance for interfering with the client space object to ensure transparency throughout the mission.

Transparency is important to reassure third parties that on-orbit servicing is indeed unlikely to cause collisions with the client space object or third-party objects, and to prevent unexpected collisions caused by third party spacecraft approaching the service area without knowing the plan.

In recent years, various forms of on-orbit servicing such as life extension and refueling have been rapidly developing in addition to active debris removal (ADR), such as the commercial debris removal (CRD2) project, that Japan is working on. In this context, in order for the business of on-orbit servicing to be widely recognized as safe and secure for all the operators, we hope that countries considering licensing on-orbit servicing will establish standards and guidelines that cover the requirements Japan has established, including those related to transparency.

On 8 March 2022, Japan hosted the “*7th International Symposium on Ensuring Stable Use of Outer Space*” online, which focused on STC and STM. During the Symposium,

Agenda Item 12 – “General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management”

panellists and participants discussed opportunities and challenges to realize globally coordinated efforts to this end.

In addition, Japan is currently discussing the potential mid-term Space Traffic Coordination and Management policy to contribute to international rulemaking. The policy will be established and released around spring this year.

Thank you for your kind attention.