

Japan Item 14 – “General exchange of views on the application of international law to small satellite activities”

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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Small satellites can be developed and manufactured at low costs by using relatively simple technology. They can be utilized in various areas, from educational purposes to technology demonstration, communication, and remote sensing, and they have the potential to meet increasing demands of space technologies in various countries. With these characteristics, small satellites can provide emerging spacefaring nations with good opportunities to build their capacity in the utilization of outer space.

The Japanese Experiment Module “Kibo” of the ISS, with the unique capability of an airlock system and a robotic arm, is capable of deploying small satellites. The first deployment of CubeSats from Kibo was successfully conducted in October 2012. Since then, small satellites from Japan as well as from various countries’ educational or research institutions have been deployed. A distinct advantage of deploying small satellites from the ISS, compared to a direct launch by a launch vehicle, is that it could mitigate launch requirements owing to the lower vibration environment during the launch, therefore lowering the threshold of space activities.

For years, Japan has been cooperating with UNOOSA to promote a UN-Japan collaborative programme known as “KiboCUBE.”

So far, CubeSats developed by teams from Kenya, Guatemala, Mauritius, Indonesia, and Moldova, who were winners of the first, second, third and fourth round of opportunities, have been deployed from the ISS through the KiboCUBE programme. With the exception of Indonesia, each of the CubeSats was the respective country’s first satellite, and Japan expects that the experiences acquired from the KiboCUBE programme will be applied to the development of their future satellites. Currently, teams from SICA, Mexico, and Tunisia, who were the winners of the fifth and sixth round, are developing their CubeSats.

Since 2020, the KiboCUBE programme has also been covering the early phase of satellite development by offering an educational opportunity called

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“KiboCUBE Academy.” The Academy offers a series of online lectures and technical consultations, in collaboration with Japanese universities, which aims to help applicants design, develop, test, operate, and utilize their CubeSats.

Japan has been conducting small satellite activities in accordance with international norms. For example, Japan established the “Manual Pertaining to the Notification for Registering Space Objects” in 2018. Regarding space debris mitigation, the “*Act on Launching of Spacecraft, etc. and Control of Spacecraft*” refers to space debris mitigation measures, which are specified in the license requirements for the control of spacecraft.

We hope to promote responsible small satellite utilization through these endeavors, and are ready to contribute to the discussion on the legal aspect of these activities under this agenda item.

Thank you for your kind attention.