

Japan Item 11 – “General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, taking into account the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”

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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The increasing amount of space debris poses a serious threat not only to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities, but also to the lives of people on Earth. Japan strongly encourages all States to carry out space activities in a cooperative manner to prevent the creation and diffusion of long-lived orbital debris in a manner consistent with international norms.

Specifically, the destruction of a satellite that generates a large amount of space debris indiscriminately increases the risk of collisions of on-orbit space objects. In order to maintain sustainable and stable uses of outer space, last September, Japan announced its commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT) missile testing. Japan also welcomes the adoption, last year, of the UN General Assembly resolution submitted by the United States, Japan, and other like-minded countries, which calls upon all countries not to conduct such tests for the benefit of all. In order to further develop this initiative, Japan will continue to work with like-minded countries to ensure that the resolution becomes an international norm.

Madame Chair,

National policy and regulatory frameworks for space activities offer a key solution to limit the generation of space debris.

Japan enforced the Space Activities Act in 2018 to efficiently authorize and supervise non-governmental entities' space activities. Under this Act, Japan established space debris mitigation requirements for space objects controlled from Japan. These requirements are related to the design of spacecraft to prevent dispersion of its components and parts, the control of spacecraft to avoid collision with other spacecraft, as well as efforts to achieve on-orbit lifetime of spacecraft of no more than 25 years in low earth orbit after the termination of the control.

Furthermore, JAXA has its own space debris mitigation standards, which provide in-depth technical procedures for multiple debris mitigation areas

involving reentry risks with specified detailed requirements.

In addition, Japan promotes research and development in the field of Active Debris Removal. JAXA is currently cooperating with a private entity on a project named Commercial Removal of Debris Demonstration, CRD2. The first phase of this project is currently underway and will demonstrate the key technology of ADR, such as non-cooperative rendezvous, proximity operation and inspection of a discarded Japanese rocket upper stage. By sharing good practices and the results of technological development, Japan hopes to contribute to international cooperation and rulemaking to enhance debris mitigation and remediation measures.

In particular, for satellites carrying out on-orbit servicing, Japan established national guidelines that prescribe supplementary requirements to ensure safe, secure and transparent performance of on-orbit servicing.

Japan is currently discussing a potential mid-term Space Traffic Coordination and Management policy with a focus on collision avoidance, Space Situation Awareness, debris mitigation and large constellation with a view to contributing to international rule-making.

Another efficient way to tackle the issue of space debris is to respect and comply with international norms. In this regard, Japan encourages all States to properly implement the LTS Guidelines and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

Japan will continue to be actively engaged in tackling the challenges of space debris, for the sustainable use of the outer space environment, and will set an example through the series of measures mentioned. Japan would like to call upon all Member States to make further efforts to mitigate space debris.

Thank you for your attention.