

Japan, Item 4 – “General exchange of views”

Japan

**Statement by Ambassador KAIFU Atsushi
at the 63rd Session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS**

Chair,

Let me begin with my congratulation to you, Mr. Chair Santiago Ripol Carulla on your election. I am confident that we'll have a highly successful session of the Legal Subcommittee under your leadership.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja the former Subcommittee Chair for her outstanding work during her term.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, the Director of UNOOSA, and her team for your exceptional work. Japan is committed to supporting the Director's leadership.

Chair,

Upholding the rule of law in outer space is highly important to ensure the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space activities.

To this end, COPUOS and its Subcommittees play a unique and vital role in developing the United Nations Space Treaties and other non-legally binding instruments. As space activities diversifies in quality and quantity, roles and missions of COPUOS to address emerging issues are getting even more significant.

States should act in the outer space in accordance with international law to ensure the exploration and utilization in a safe and sustainable manner. Japan firmly believes that outer space must remain a domain free of nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Full compliance with the existing legal frameworks, including the Outer Space Treaty, is our common

responsibility. Japan is now putting forward a draft UN Security Council resolution to this effect.

Besides existing LBIs, the Guidelines on the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities are also to be implemented faithfully as a practical set of norms. Japan encourages all States and intergovernmental organizations to implement them.

Chair,

To ensure rule of law in the outer space, Japan has been actively promoting international cooperation. Let me here illustrate some of Japan's efforts in this regard.

First, Japan hosts the "National Space Legislation Initiative (NSLI)" under the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF). The NSLI promotes information sharing and mutual learning on, as well as helps draft and implement, the national legislation and policies of the participating countries.

The 2nd NSLI submitted to the last COPUOS its joint report of 13 participating countries on their national space legislation and the implementation status of the LTS Guidelines. The next 3rd round of NSLI is about to start. We invite interested states to join in this open endeavor.

Second, the "Space Law for New Space Actors" project, a joint effort of Japan and UNOOSA. We've been supporting capacity building in emerging spacefaring nations in Asia-Pacific. Japan hosts a regional technical advisory mission in Tokyo in January this year with the topic of "national authorization and continuing supervision." More than 20 participants from 7 countries attended. I thank Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Japan is committed to continue this endeavor.

Chair,

Since years, Japan promotes space activities focusing on the advancement of cutting-edge S&Ts, at the same time Japan believes in high potentials of space activities to drive and stimulate economic growth and new business. To promote commercial activities while ensuring a safe and sustainable space

environment, adequate rules and standards are indispensable. Here are two examples of measures of Japan in this respect.

First, on-orbit servicing. Japan works very hard on active debris removal (ADR) in cooperation with private entities. To ensure safe ADR operations, Japan established the national guidelines in 2021 to set out supplementary requirements for safe, and transparent on-orbit operations. The guidelines have already been applied to the joint project of JAXA and Astroscale Japan to demonstrate ADR technologies, called CRD2. We encourage other countries to establish similar guidelines for licensing on-orbit servicing. In this connection, I am pleased to invite you all to a technical presentation by Mr. Nobu OKADA, CEO of Astroscale Holdings, in the afternoon of Wednesday, April 17th.

Second, space resources. Given their great potential for humanity and sustainable development on Earth, Japan enacted its “*Space Resources Act*” in December 2021 to promote and ensure that business activities are to be conducted in accordance with international norms. Based on this Act, Japan looks forward to contributing to the establishment of internationally harmonized mechanisms on space resource activities. Japan is committed to the WG on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities with appreciation to the efforts by its Chair, Mr. Andrzej Misztal, and its Vice Chair, Mr. Steven Freeland.

Chair,

Japan is a big believer of international cooperation at the field level. I may draw your attention to following two activities in this regard.

First, the KiboCUBE program. This joint program between UNOOSA and JAXA supports developing countries in deploying their CubeSat from the Japanese “Kibo” module of the ISS (ISS). Kibo, means "hope" in Japanese, has helped so far five teams in realizing their hopes of successfully deploying their CubeSats. This also offers unique opportunity to learn and feel elements of international space law through the development and operation by their own.

Second, lunar exploration. Japan's Lunar mission in January, the SLIM spacecraft (Smart Lander for Investigating Moon) achieved first pinpoint landing in history. This will surely contribute to the Artemis Program as well as future international space exploration. Japan and the United States have recently

agreed on the cooperation in a pressurized lunar rover and in the provision of two flight opportunities to the lunar surface for Japanese astronauts. The Artemis Accords, signed by Japan in 2020, will promote peaceful exploration and contribute to the establishment of principles for the new stage of exploration and use of outer space.

Chair,

Japan echoes the condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This is a flagrant violation of international law, which is the very foundation of international cooperation in outer space activities.

Chair,

In concluding, I reiterate Japan's enthusiasm for keeping, developing, and enhancing international norms. Japan remains strongly committed to the Legal Subcommittee.

Thank you for your kind attention.