

Japan



Committee of the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Legal Subcommittee 64th Session

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Japan Item 8: General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The exploration and utilization of space resources has great potential to benefit humanity and to contribute to sustainable development on a global scale, if done in a peaceful, safe, and sustainable manner.

Chair,

Japan's participation in international space exploration is driven by a commitment to expand human frontiers, to advance the well-being of humanity and to foster international cooperation. I would like to provide you with a brief overview of the activities we have undertaken recently.

To begin, the Japanese start-up ispace is scheduled to make a second attempt to land its Mission 2 Lander on the Moon on 6 June. Our hope is for a successful soft landing followed by a technological demonstration of regolith extraction as well as mobility on the lunar surface. Japan has shared the details of the ispace's Mission 2 with UNOOSA and the international community to ensure transparency and in conformity with the provisions set forth in Article 11 of the Outer Space Treaty.

Secondly, JAXA is working in partnership with the Indian Space

Research Organization (ISRO) to develop the Lunar Polar Exploration mission (LUPEX). This is a scientific investigation mission aimed to uncover the presence of water and the potential for resource utilization in the lunar polar region. JAXA will continue its efforts with the aim of launching the lunar probe in 2026 or later.

Beyond the moon, JAXA, in collaboration with NASA, CNES, DLR and ESA, is developing the Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) spacecraft, to be scheduled for launch in 2026. This mission is expected to achieve the world's first sample return from the Martian Sphere in 2031.

Chair,

Japan enacted the “*Space Resources Act*” in December 2021. This Act establishes a national authorization system and rules for the acquisition of space resources for private sector missions, including those of ispace Mission 2. The Act also requires the Government to publish the business activity plan on the website of the Cabinet Office of Japan, whenever a license to the private sector is issued.

In addition to fostering transparency, the Act encourages the Government to assist in the establishment of internationally harmonized systems for the exploration and development of space resources in cooperation with other countries and international organizations.

Chair,

In addition to our national legislation, Japan intends to facilitate discussions on orbital debris in the lunar surface in the Artemis Accords signatory working groups. The Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, as established under the framework of COPUOS, also plays a crucial role in addressing issues related to orbital debris. Last year, Japan submitted possible elements to be considered by the Working Group for a set of recommended principles for space resource activities. We will continue to contribute to ongoing discussions.

In this regard, Japan would like to express our condolences on the passing of the Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Andrzej Misztal, earlier this year. His expertise made a significant contribution to resolving critical issues in the working group and we were always grateful for his dedication to advancing our work.

Finally, Japan acknowledges every effort made to advance international norms in the exploration of outer space, and values the significant contribution of the Legal Subcommittee in safeguarding the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

Thank you for your kind attention.