



Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee 62nd Session
February 3 – 14, 2025
Japan Item 5 : Space debris.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Space technology has become integral to modern life, supporting everything from weather forecasting to satellite communications, disaster response, and monitoring climate change. The idea of returning to a pre-space age is nearly unimaginable, and practically speaking, it is likely impossible.

However, while space-derived technologies have driven significant global progress, they have also contributed to a growing issue: space debris. This challenge poses a range of risks, from disrupting everyday conveniences to causing potentially catastrophic and irreversible damage. Addressing both current and future space debris is, therefore, essential.

As I just said, addressing the space debris issue requires both “mitigation” and “remediation,” and a possible framework must be established to facilitate these efforts.

There have been positive moves in ensuring that satellites to be launched in the future will not contribute to space debris. For example, in some countries, operators will be obliged by domestic regulations to ensure that their satellites do not become debris. As for the “mitigation” of debris, business incentives and technological development have already begun to function. Needless to say, we need to further enhance our efforts.

As for the “remediation” of debris, the challenges are greater and more complex. The necessary technologies are more difficult to develop. In addition, it is also necessary to sort out and resolve complicated legal issues. Questions such as how to create business incentives, who should bear the cost and how these costs

should be distributed remain difficult to resolve.

Furthermore, there are sensitive national security issues involved. In this regard, the most important considerations are how to ensure transparency and build trust.

Japan has consistently highlighted the urgency of this issue and has called for accelerated discussions on space debris within the COPUOS framework. In 2024, Japan submitted a non-paper with proposals to advance these discussions.

Chair,

Japan has been exploring ways to remove large space debris for space environmental remediation. Under the collaboration between JAXA and Astroscale, a Japanese private company, the Commercial Removal of Debris Demonstration, which is called the CRD2 project, is ongoing. The first phase of this project began last year to demonstrate rendezvous and proximity operations. Until now, this project has successfully acquired the images of the target space debris as well as successfully approaching the target to within 15 meters.

Tomorrow, Mr. Okada, Founder and CEO of Astroscale, will share a technical presentation on the breakthrough innovative technologies for space debris removal.

Japan remains firmly committed to the urgent need for international norms on space debris, actively working with Member States to establish a shared framework. Japan has already taken concrete action by establishing domestic frameworks that align with this vision. These efforts go beyond national implementation—they serve as a stepping stone toward shaping and reinforcing international norms. These efforts not only strengthen our national governance but also contribute to shaping a global framework capable of addressing the challenges ahead.

In closing, I invite all Member States to accelerate our discussions on space debris and strengthen our collective commitment and work to address this critical issue for the benefit of future generations.