Japan

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee 62nd Session
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Japan Item 9 : Near-Earth objects.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Japan recognizes the importance of the exploration of asteroids. While the probability of a Near-Earth Object (NEO) collision with Earth is low, it is important to understand the fundamental characteristics of NEOs by observing and exploring them to avoid such risks.

Chair,

Japan firmly believes in the importance of international cooperation on Planetary Defense in order to address potential threats to Earth and to human lives. On this note, we highly commend the professional work and efforts of the distinguished delegate of Romania as well as IAWN and SMPAG to designate the year 2029 as the "United Nations-designated international year of asteroid awareness and planetary defense," coinciding with the close approach of the asteroid Apophis on 13 April 2029. The designation is a significant step forward in raising public awareness of this critical issue and accelerating international cooperation.

In support of these efforts, Japan's newly revised Basic Plan on Space Policy explicitly outlines our commitment to advancing international cooperation to this end. This includes the development of an exploration program that leverages the unique observation opportunities presented by the asteroid Apophis in 2029 and contributes to global planetary defense activities.

Chair,

In 2024, JAXA established a dedicated Planetary Defense team to address to enhance Japan's capacity in this field. As one of its early initiatives, the team participated in NASA's "5th Planetary Defense Inter-Agency Table Top Exercise" last

April.

Furthermore, in November of 2024, JAXA and ESA issued a joint statement emphasizing the importance of international collaboration on Planetary Defense to prepare against potential threats posed by near-Earth objects. In October 2024, ESA's Hera mission in cooperation with JAXA was successfully launched and plans to is expected to reach its target asteroid in 2026. The two agencies are now exploring potential cooperation on ESA's Rapid Apophis Mission for Space Safety (RAMSES), which aims to explore Apophis during its close approach in 2029.

Moreover, Japan has worked to strengthen its international cooperation beyond exploration missions. Last year, JAXA's Planetary Defense Team participated in the annual meeting of the space-based disaster management project, *Sentinel Asia*, hosted by the Philippine Space Agency to raise awareness of the significance of Planetary Defense in the context of disaster risk management.

Chair,

In 2020, the Asteroid Explorer Hayabusa2 collected surface and underground samples from the C-type asteroid Ryugu and successfully brought them back to the Earth. The spacecraft is now on the way to explore two more asteroids with a planned flyby observation of Asteroid Torifune (the provisional designation is 2001 CC21) in 2026. In 2031, the spacecraft will arrive at a small and fast rotating asteroid known as 1998 KY26 for observation.

Chair,

Japan remains fully committed to advancing research missions to deepen our understanding of the basic features of NEOs. We will continue addressing the critical challenges of Planetary Defense with a holistic approach, in close collaboration with international partners.

Thank you for your attention.