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STATEMENT BY NOBUSHIGE TAKAMIZAWA
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 72ND SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OUTER SPACE -
OCTOBER 17, 2017, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairperson,

The importance of outer space activities has never been greater than it is today when a growing number of nations are enjoying the economic, social, and national security benefits of outer space activities. However, serious challenges have emerged that need to be addressed with urgency. A rise in the number of satellites in orbit has led to not only congestion in space, but a greater volume of space debris, which risks severely impairing the function of satellites if collisions occur. Ensuring safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities have become a critical issue for the welfare and development for all humanity. Therefore, we should work together to mitigate the risks and dangers which threaten the stability of outer space activities.

Mr. Chairperson,

Japan reaffirms the importance of enhancing the rule of law in outer space and will continue working with other nations to that end. In this connection, we reiterate the need to implement principles of responsible behavior for outer space activities, which could be an important step for international rule-making. In particular, we encourage all states to refrain from any action which brings about, directly or indirectly, damage or destruction of space objects. We thus continue to express our concerns about the development of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) capability.

With regard to the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space, which we support in principle, Japan's outer space activities have always been peaceful in nature and this will continue. We have participated in substantive discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) within the CD, including the Way Ahead Working Group that was established this year.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is necessary to explore how the international community can preserve and enhance the long-term safety, security, and sustainability of outer space. In this regard, it is important to build confidence and mutual trust between space actors, in particular through Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs). We reaffirm our commitment, and call on all states to

review and implement, to the extent practicable, the proposed TCBMs contained in the recommendations of the report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in Outer Space Activities. Japan has carried out a wide range of confidence-building measures as submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Japan has also engaged in bilateral and multilateral space dialogues and consultations regarding space security, which can contribute to confidence-building among countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

Space debris is a real threat to any type of entity conducting any type of activity in space. In this context, damaging behavior, like ASAT attacks which generate a large amount of space debris, is of great concern to the international community. Japan is seriously concerned about the actual, not abstract, development and deployment of ASAT weapons capabilities, including terrestrially based. The international community should address this issue as an urgent priority. In order to deal with the problems of long-lived space debris, Japan will intensify our efforts in the field of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and in developing space debris removal technology.

Mr. Chairperson,

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continuing working with other nations to ensure safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.