



DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Statement delivered by Ambassador OGASAWARA Ichiro
Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament
Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament
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Thank you, Madam President,

While our society is increasingly reliant on space systems, the outer space environment has been rapidly changing, with an influx of new actors and the diversification of activities. As a result, risks to the stable and sustainable use of outer space are more serious today than ever before, as outer space is becoming increasingly congested, contested and competitive.

In this regard, Japan supports our common efforts for preventing an arms race in outer space (PAROS) as our unwavering fundamental position. We have participated in substantive discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in the CD.

Moreover, the dual-use nature or dual-purpose use of space objects adds complexity to defining a weapon in outer space and makes it challenging to interpret and verify intentions behind certain outer space activities. In other words, it is difficult to distinguish civil activities and military activities, as well as acts committed out of benevolence or malice.

The international community is required to develop ideas and approaches that enable us to overcome these challenges. Japan underscores the need to deepen the discussion on responsible behavior, and the need to establish a common understanding on patterns of responsible or irresponsible behaviors that could realistically endure in the face of changing circumstances. In this context, Japan attaches great importance to the ongoing Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors created by UNGA Resolution 76/231.

Japan believes that this behavior-based approach will contribute to enhancing security in outer space, by mitigating threats including those occurring from misunderstanding and miscalculation which could entail increasing tension and conflict. The dual-use nature or dual-purpose use of space objects brings complexity to defining a weapon in outer space and poses difficult challenges to identifying space threats through focusing solely on objects or technological capabilities. Therefore, behaviors-based approach presents great merit, since behaviors can be more easily observed even in outer space. While it is quite challenging to make a common understanding on the legality of each behavior, we believe that it is attainable and valuable to agree on patterns of behaviors that can be deemed as responsible in outer space.

From this perspective, we appreciate the active discussions held during the third session of the OEWG in January and February this year. During the session, Japan proposed 13 concrete norms with regard to responsible behaviors in order

to facilitate the process of forging consensus on tangible results at the OEWG. For example, these proposed norms include: “States should respect/reaffirm their compliance with international law, including the Outer Space Treaty, the United Nations Charter, and international humanitarian law in outer space,” “States should not conduct rendezvous and proximity operations (RPOs) which cause physical damage to space objects under the jurisdiction of another state, unless prior consent is provided,” and “States should put in place/establish/identify National Contact Points (NCPs) that enable states to consult with each other on issues related to space security.”

We look forward to continuing our contributions and discussions during this intersessional period and at the fourth and final session of the OEWG in August. The process of formulating and accumulating such common recognition on norms, rules and principles could eventually lead to the formulation of legally binding instruments in the future, as we have seen in the development of the Outer Space Treaty.

Madam President,

In this connection, Japan considers that behaviors that generate a considerable amount of long-lived debris, especially deliberate destruction of space systems, would threaten the sustainability of and free access to outer space. Such behaviors should constitute a priority issue for the OEWG to address, as they

affect space systems indiscriminately, causing collateral damages not only to the current but also future space users. The norm against direct-ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT) missile testing is included in the above-mentioned Japanese proposal of 13 concrete norms. Last year, Japan announced its decision not to conduct DA-ASAT missile testing and then co-sponsored the US-led Resolution calling upon countries not to conduct DA-ASAT tests, adopted at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly with an overwhelming majority. Japan calls for a wider support to this commitment to achieve secure, stable and sustainable outer space.

Madam President,

Finally, a Resolution entitled “Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space” (A/RES/77/250) was adopted at the UN General Assembly in December last year. In accordance with this Resolution, the Group of Governmental Experts will hold a 2-week session in Geneva in 2023 and another one in 2024, in order to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument on PAROS. Japan has expressed its interest in participating in the GGE, and hopes that there will be productive synergies between the processes of the OEWG on responsible behaviors and this GGE.

I thank you, Madam President, for your kind attention.

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