



DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro Ogasawara,
Permanent Representative of the Delegation of Japan to the Conference on
Disarmament
Fourth Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through
norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours
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Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Chair for his unwavering efforts, including during the intersessional period, to seek common ground in preparation for this session, which is now crystalized in the draft report before us. Japan is happy to join the statement of the cross-regional group delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Philippines. We would like to reiterate Japan's full support and strong determination to contribute to a consensus report of this OEWG.

Mr. Chair,

From the previous discussions of the OEWG, it is clear that all states are reliant on space for their peace and prosperity and that there is a pressing need to address space security in light of the current rapid developments. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight four points that Japan considers important to be included in the final report.

First is the benefit of the behavior-based approach. Space is a domain where

even innovative technologies developed with benign intention may, if used inappropriately, pose a serious threat to others, due to their dual-use nature. Given the blurring distinction between military and civil space assets and services, it is crucial to focus on how a capability is used and its consequences when addressing space threats, rather than focusing solely on capabilities or objects. Such an approach is more observable and can endure future technological advancement, while not hampering development of innovative solutions to space sustainability. Japan firmly believes that fostering common understanding on responsible and irresponsible behaviors regarding outer space in an inclusive manner would contribute to reducing misunderstanding and miscalculation, as well as to preventing an arms race in outer space.

Second is the applicability of existing international law and norms and the relation between non-legally binding and legally binding instruments. As reaffirmed in previous sessions, existing international law, notably the Outer Space Treaty and the United Nations Charter, apply in outer space and States' compliance should be reiterated. While accumulation of practices is limited in the space domain compared to other domains, we are witnessing a rapid evolution of the use of space. In this regard, common understanding fostered within this OEWG could lay the foundation for a future legally-binding instruments (LBIs). Therefore, non-legally binding instruments and LBIs are not a dichotomy, nor a trade-off, but rather complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Third is shared views on threats and norms of responsible behaviors. In the face of the challenge of formulating a consensus report that should reflect very

informative and enriching discussions at this OEWG, we consider there was a convergence of views on a wide range of topics in the discussions of this Group, including the following four points:

- 1) The urgency of addressing destructive behaviors that cause substantive amount of debris, as such behaviors can escalate tensions and pose danger to peace and security as well as to the sustainable use of outer space;
- 2) Rendezvous and proximity operations are not threats per se, but can be threats when conducted in an irresponsible manner, such as operations that cause physical damage to others without prior consent and those that lack transparency;
- 3) Reaffirmation and articulation of transparency and confidence building measures related to outer space that can reduce misunderstanding and miscalculations; and
- 4) The interest in and need to continue discussions on threats and norms, building on the work of this OEWG.

Mr. Chair,

Fourth is the value of this OEWG and the continuation of our discussions. Japan highly appreciates the inclusive, dynamic and interactive approach that this OEWG has taken under your skillful guidance, which has generated genuine dialogue pertaining to space security with the participation of various relevant stakeholders. This merits to be mentioned in the report and we support a follow-on process to deepen our discussions further.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to reiterate our strong condemnation of North Korea's launch using ballistic missile technology conducted on August 24, 2023. Such a launch is a clear and flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions and poses a grave threat to regional and international peace and stability. North Korea announced its intention to conduct another launch in October. Japan urges North Korea not to conduct further launches using ballistic missile technology and to fully comply with all relevant UNSC Resolutions.

Thank you.

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