



DELEGATION OF JAPAN  
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Statement delivered by Shigeru UMETSU

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to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr. Coordinator,

As stated at the first meeting on March 22nd, Japan is strongly committed to maintaining space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment. To this end, Japan considers it pragmatic to establish a common understanding on patterns of behaviours to consider how to prevent an arms race in outer space, since behaviours can be observed and can serve as measurable criteria for identifying potentially threatening behaviours.

Japan welcomed a smooth launch of the first session of the open-ended working group (OEWG) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, which took place last month here in Geneva. The discussions at the OEWG were fruitful and enabled us to identify areas of focus to pursue vis-a-vis relevant existing legal principles within our newly-launched exercise to reinforce existing legal and normative frameworks. We have now a better understanding on the priorities and the direction in which Member States would like to orient the work of the WG.

Since the discussions we had at the OEWG meetings are closely related to the work of this Subsidiary Body, allow me to share with this Body Japan's view and key takeaways from the OEWG's discussion.

First, the issue of dual-use in space security was amply discussed. 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. This dual-use nature also poses difficult challenges for identifying space threats through focusing solely on technological capabilities. What matters, therefore, is not the capabilities itself but the way such capabilities are used and deployed.

Second, throughout discussions at the OEWG, a shared sense of urgency was expressed by States. Many participants underlined the need to elaborate their consideration of behaviours that are responsible or irresponsible with regard to space security.

Mr. Coordinator,

These observations on the discussions at the OEWG last month further convince my delegation of the relevance of three focal areas which we have proposed at the first meeting for the work of this Subsidiary Body. Allow me to succinctly reiterate these three areas.

-The first is the creation of debris by deliberate destruction of space objects. In this regard, the commitment from the U.S. not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing, which has also been announced by Canada, is a positive step towards formulating norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. Japan welcomes and supports this commitment.

-The second is rendezvous and proximity operations (RPO). Further discussions to articulate best practices and enhance TCBMs would be beneficial to advance considerations on responsible behaviours while not hampering development of innovative on-orbit services.

-The third is harmful interference, which include both kinetic and non-kinetic interference, which was discussed by a number of States during the OEWG as well.

In addition to these three areas, I would like to add transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) as the fourth possible area of our discussion. TCBMs was also largely discussed at the OEWG as one of key elements to reduce the threats in outer space.

We hope to hear further views and opinions on these points from other delegations.

Thank you, Mr. Coordinator.

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