

STATEMENT BY JAPAN
AT THE MEETING OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE 77th SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OUTER SPACE -

OCTOBER, 2022, NEW YORK

Mr. Chair,

While our society is increasingly relying 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 as our unwavering fundamental position. We have participated in substantive discussions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), including the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space held in 2018 and 2019. Japan attaches great importance to the current Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors created by the UNGA's resolution 76/231.

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. Japan announced its commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile testing in September this year. Japan co-sponsors the draft resolution submitted by the US to this committee. Japan views the work of the aforementioned OEWG as a practical way forward in advancing the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and stands ready to make proactive contributions to the discussion to uphold outer space as a safe, secure, stable and sustainable environment.

Japan also underlines the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as pragmatic and near-term measures to increase trust and prevent misperception and miscalculations in outer space activities, which currently involve a wide range of actors and

stakeholders. We believe that it is imperative to reaffirm the significance of TCBMs. The international community should reach a common understanding on ways and means to reduce threats to space systems. As a means to pave the way in this direction, Japan promotes the TCBMs contained in the recommendations of the 2013 GGE Report, which are effective in relation to the goal of PAROS. Japan also believes that the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) could contribute to this endeavor. Further discussions on TCBMs and on how we can reduce threats to space systems will help States deepen mutual understanding, and allow them to have a more profound understanding on both threats and risks to space systems and on what could be acceptable parameters for responsible outer space activities.

In conclusion, Japan would like to reiterate its strong commitment to ensuring the safety, security, stability and sustainability of outer space activities.

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