

Japan

National Submission to the United Nations Secretary General

Pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 77/251

“Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”

Japan is strongly committed to maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment and strongly supports transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Today, all states are reliant on space systems for peace and prosperity on Earth and this trend is likely to accelerate in the years to come. Against this backdrop, compliance with the existing international law and normative frameworks, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures are important means to avoid potential risks of misunderstanding and miscalculation and ensure a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment for present and future generations. Needless to say, continuous efforts to foster common understanding and establish norms at the international level, including on responsible behaviors in outer space, are necessary to keep pace with the current developments and challenges regarding space systems.

Although Japan did not participate in the Group of Governmental Experts that published its consensus report on TCBMs in outer space activities in July 2013, Japan has carried out a series of unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures that correspond to the activities contained in this report. Below are some examples of concrete TCBMs that Japan has implemented so far.

A. Information exchange on space policies

- Japan enacted the Basic Space Act in 2008, which lays out basic principles concerning the development and use of outer space. This Act is concretized through the successive Basic Plan on Space Policy, the most recent Plan was presented in 2020. More detailed information on diplomatic and defense aspects of outer space is available through annual Diplomatic Bluebooks and Annual White Papers on Defense of Japan. Furthermore, the National Security Strategy published in December 2022 also provides information on reinforcing comprehensive efforts for space security.
- In September 2022, the Government of Japan announced the decision not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile testing in order to actively

promote discussions in the international fora concerning the development of norms of responsible behavior in outer space.

B. Information exchange and notifications related to outer space activities

- Japan registers relevant information to the United Nations in accordance with the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space and exchanges information on the orbital parameters of space objects, as necessary.
- Japan implements TCBMs including prior notification in accordance with the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation to which Japan is a Subscribing State.

C. Risk reduction notifications

- Japan provides risk reduction notifications when a high-risk event occurs.
- Japan enacted the Space Activities Act in 2016. Under this Act, Japan has review standards and guidelines, which requires that the structure of the satellite or equipment must be completely combustible structure and that the risk to the expected landing point is equal to or less than the level of international standards or standards established by space agencies of other countries as a result of sufficient combustion.

D. Contact and visits to space launch sites and facilities

- Japan accepts observers, including experts all over the world, to visit space facilities in Japan, such as the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Tanegashima Space Center and the JAXA Uchinoura Space Center, to the extent practicable in accordance with national laws and regulations.

E. International cooperation

- As a recent example of its various international cooperation efforts, Japan has been engaging in capacity building efforts with a view to contributing to the rule of law in outer space. In May 2021, it announced cooperation on the “Space Law for New Space Actors” project of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). Under this initiative, Japan provides support to emerging space-faring nations in the Asia-Pacific region for the development and implementation of domestic space-related laws.
- Japan also places importance on regional cooperation, including within the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF).
- The Quad (Japan-Australia-India-U.S.) is consulting on organizing workshops for

Indo-Pacific countries on the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) of Outer Space Activities, focusing on the implementation of the guidelines in support of the safety and sustainability of outer space. The workshops will focus on capacity building and include exchanges of lessons learned and experiences in domestic policy, regulations, and outcomes.

In addition, the Government of Japan published “the Guidelines on a License to Operate Spacecraft Performing On-Orbit Servicing” in November 2021, which represents the first national measure in the world taken to enhance transparency on emerging on-orbit services. On-orbit services, such as life-extension of satellites, refueling and active debris removal, can be beneficial to space actors by contributing to space sustainability, yet the same technologies can also be used to capture or disrupt satellites in a hostile manner. Therefore, the role of transparency is vital. These Guidelines aim to provide supplementary requirements in addition to the existing licensing criteria for spacecraft operation and management, it also provides guidance on how to conform to each requirement.

Outer space is a domain where even those innovative technologies developed with benign intention may, if used inappropriately, pose a serious threat due to their dual-use nature. Hence, Japan believes that the behavior-based approach will contribute to enhancing security in outer space by mitigating threats through reducing risks of misunderstanding and miscalculation. Japan underscores the importance of increased TCBMs and proposes that states should put in place National Contact Points (NCPs) to enable states to consult with each other and respond to inquiries from each other as expeditiously as possible, especially regarding space security. Japan remains strongly committed to maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment and will continue to engage actively in multilateral and bilateral fora to this end.

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