

Agenda Item 11 – “General Exchange of information on Non-legally binding UN Instruments on Outer Space”

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

A number of Principles, Declarations and Guidelines for the peaceful use of outer space in the form of UN General Assembly resolutions have been developed in the Committee since the early 1980s. Japan would like to reiterate that these resolutions have been playing an important role in complementing the existing treaties for the peaceful use of outer space.

With the development of space technology and an increase and diversification of space actors, it is urgent to consider the safe and sustainable use of outer space. To address contemporary challenges in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of non-legally binding instruments and related practices thereto.

In this context, Japan proposed this agenda item in 2013, co-sponsored by Austria, Canada, France, Nigeria and the United States. The purpose of this agenda item is to facilitate the exchange of views and information sharing on implementation of these non-legally binding United Nations instruments.

The compendium of responses to the questionnaire, which Japan distributed at the 55th Session, has invigorated discussions on this agenda item and will be a useful and meaningful reference for all states and agencies to implement non-legally binding United Nations instruments. We also hope more states and international intergovernmental organizations will provide information on their implementation measures.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for distributing the compendium so that we could continue this work with a view to increasing the number of states and international intergovernmental organizations included therein and for maintaining the compendium on a dedicated page of the website of the UNOOSA for the reference of all states and agencies to implement these non-legally binding United Nations instruments.

It is also important that these non-legally binding United Nations instruments are respected and implemented nationally by all space actors.

As an example, Japan’s “*Act on Launching of Spacecraft, etc. and Control of Spacecraft*” and its related review standards provide legal standards for space debris mitigation measures in line with the “*UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines*”. In the Act, the Government of Japan examines non-governmental entities that intend to conduct launches or control satellites from Japan and requires them to take measures to mitigate space debris such as the prevention of break-up and post-mission disposal. Japan is

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committed to managing its space activities in accordance with the “*UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines*” and other related standards through this national regulatory mechanism. To ensure the safety, security, sustainability, and stability of outer space activities, we shall take a solid step towards the issue of space debris through legal instruments, technical standards and research and development. Japan would like to call upon all Member States to make further efforts to mitigate space debris.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share our views on the Guidelines on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines), which is another recent and important non-legally binding instrument adopted in COPUOS. Japan acknowledges that the long-term sustainability of outer space activities is one of the most important issues at hand, considering the expansion and diversification of space players. The LTS Guidelines address an enhanced exchange of information on space activities, such as the registration of space objects and pre-launch notifications. In turn, increased efficiency in our communication and transparency support the safety of space operations as well as confidence building among states.

Japan is looking forward to contributing to a substantial discussion on this agenda item with a view to achieving a meaningful outcome. We hope that all delegations will make active contributions under this agenda item.

Thank you for your kind attention.