



DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Statement delivered by Ambassador Ichiro Ogasawara of the
delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament,
Second Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space
threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours
12 September, 2022

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished colleagues,

At the outset, allow me to also extend my heartfelt condolences to the
Delegation of the UK on the passing away of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth
II.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. Hellumut
LAGOS, for the smooth launch of this OEWG and reassure you of the full
support from the Japanese Delegation. Japan is strongly committed to
maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable
environment and advancing discussions on reducing space threats through
norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors, based on UN General
Assembly resolutions 75/36 and 76/231, as a practical way forward in
advancing the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

In order to provide some basis for the second session of this OEWG,
let me share Japan's key takeaways from the previous session as well as
views regarding the agenda for this session.

First of all, the peaceful use of outer space and protecting the space environment are of critical importance for all, including future generations. At the last meeting, many states shared the recognition of the increasing reliance on space for our daily lives and security. From this point of view, Japan strongly believes that states should refrain from the deliberate destruction of space objects that creates negative impact on the space environment, especially through debris which could hamper access to and use of outer space for a long time. In this context, I have the pleasure to announce that Japan commits not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile testing and joins the US commitment announced in April.

Second, properly addressing the dual-use nature of space assets is important in discussions of space security. As it was amply highlighted in the first session, 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. For example, it is possible to cause extensive damage simply by hitting an object with other object. This dual-use nature also poses difficult challenges for identifying space threats if we focus solely on capabilities of space assets. Rather, it is more practical to establish a common understanding on patterns of behaviors. Such an understanding can serve as the basis for identifying potentially threatening activities.

The third point is that the first session saw many states share the applicability of relevant international law, notably the Outer Space Treaty, these countries also emphasized the importance of further clarifying terms referred to in the Treaty such as “harmful interference”. When considering current and future threats, while we understand the significance and utility

of focusing on the capability that can bring about a specific threat, what matters more is the way such capabilities are used. Japan suggests focusing on the consequences, impacts or effects caused by behaviors, rather than specific capabilities of a certain asset. This approach would enable us to explore further innovation in such areas as on-orbit services. Moreover, rules to regulate specific capabilities may be quickly invalidated and outdated by the emergence of new technologies.

In this context, while not prejudging the outcome of this session, Japan considers that a starting of our discussion of defining the notion of “threat” should be behaviors that cause physical damaged or grave, harmful consequences as it is the most obvious case, especially when conducted against security related space systems such as nuclear command, control and communication; early warning systems; national technical means of verification or the systems necessary for sustaining the everyday lives of citizens.

Mr. Chair,

As all states are reliant on space, we believe that the inclusive process of this OEWG is well suited for deepening and fostering common understandings on reducing space threats and look forward to further discussions.

Thank you.

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