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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Views of States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities

Note by the Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. In the report on its fifty-ninth session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space agreed that States members of the Committee should be invited to submit their views on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities ([A/68/189](#)) and on document [A/AC.105/1116](#) to the sixtieth session of the Committee, in 2017, and that those matters should be addressed under the item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes (see [A/71/20](#), para. 272).

2. In a note verbale dated 26 January 2017, the Secretary-General invited States members of the Committee to submit their reports by 25 March 2017. The present note was prepared by the Secretariat based on the replies received to that invitation. The views of Japan and Pakistan were previously submitted to the Committee in conference room papers ([A/AC.105/2017/CRP.19](#) and 10, respectively).

II. Replies received from States members of the Committee

Japan

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Introduction

In accordance with the agreement made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its fifty-ninth session ([A/71/20](#), paras. 271 and 272), Japan submits this paper as Japan's view on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Today, the use of outer space contributes to various aspects of everyday life and the importance of space activities is ever increasing. Outer space is being used by more and more actors, not only by Governments, but also by non-governmental organizations and private sector entities. On the other hand, legally binding rules relating to outer space activities have not been established since the United Nations space treaties were developed in the 1970s. Faced with the emerging challenges, which were not fully considered 40 years ago, such as orbital congestion, space debris and anti-satellite activities, the transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities contained in the recommendations in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see [A/68/189](#)) can complement the existing space treaties and contribute to the rule of law in outer space.

Japan believes that these measures are important for ensuring the safety, stability and sustainability of the outer space environment and has spoken out about the importance of these measures in the joint communiqué of the Group of Seven (G7) meeting of Foreign Ministers and the statement on non-proliferation and disarmament, which were issued in Hiroshima, Japan, in April 2016. In the statement we reaffirm our commitment and call on all States to review and implement, to the extent practicable, the proposed transparency and confidence-building measures, such as information exchange on space policies and strategies, information exchange and notifications related to outer space activities in a timely manner and an effective consultation mechanism.

In accordance with the statement, Japan introduces the national status of implementation of the measures in this paper.

Implementation status

With respect to paragraph 37 of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, Japan has published the “Basic space plan”, which provides basic policy and concrete measures relating to the development and use of outer space in Japan. Its implementation schedule is revised and published every year. In addition, the respective ministries or agencies publish white papers and reports on their policies and activities, which also include the field of space.

With respect to paragraph 38 of the report, Japan reports on and publishes its space budget, including for national security, every year.

With respect to paragraph 39, Japan adheres to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space and submits registration information to the Office for Outer Space Affairs as soon as practicable.

With respect to paragraph 40, the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) of Japan provides space weather information through the website “NICT Space Weather Information Center” (<http://swc.nict.go.jp/contents/index.php>).

With respect to paragraph 41, Japan provides pre-launch notifications of space vehicle launches in accordance with the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

With respect to paragraph 42, when operating spacecraft, Japan performs conjunction assessments and considers the flight safety of other States’ space objects. In addition, when Japan’s spacecraft come close to the spacecraft of other States, Japan coordinates with their operators in order to avoid collisions to the extent practicable.

With respect to paragraph 43, Japan provides information on re-entry of the space object to relevant international agencies that can provide notices to airmen and mariners to the extent practicable.

With respect to paragraph 44, Japan publishes information on its outer space activities, including on the events mentioned in this measure. For example, when the X-ray astronomy satellite ASTRO-H “Hitomi” malfunctioned in 2016, its operator, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) shared this information through press conferences. Japan also briefed the fifty-ninth session of the Committee on the latest developments regarding Hitomi.

With respect to paragraph 45, Japan has never intentionally destroyed a space object and has no intentions of doing so in the future.

With respect to paragraphs 46 and 47, Japan accepts observers, including experts from all over the world, to visit space facilities in Japan, such as the JAXA Tanegashima Space Center and the JAXA Uchinoura Space Center, to the extent practicable in accordance with national regulations.

With respect to paragraph 48, Japan conducts all space activities in accordance with relevant multilateral commitments and national regulations.

With respect to paragraphs 49 to 56, Japan is actively participating in various international space cooperation programmes. With regard to cooperation relating to sustainable development, Japan plays a leading role in the Group on Earth Observations and promotes the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, which can contribute to tackling global issues such as natural disasters, climate change, biodiversity, food security, agriculture and so on.

Japan also promotes international cooperation under the regional framework of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, which is a unique forum in the region for enhancing space activities and gaining the socioeconomic benefits of space technologies and their applications.

In addition to these multilateral cooperation efforts, Japan is also part of various cooperation programmes that contribute to capacity-building in the field of space. For example, KiboCube is a United Nations-Japan collaborative programme that offers developing countries the opportunity to deploy cube satellites from the Japanese experimental module (Kibo) of the International Space Station. Japan believes this programme can contribute to developing space skills and knowledge in developing countries.

In that context, last December, Japan's relevant ministries and agencies passed the "Basic strategy of capacity-building for developing countries in the space field". Japan will continue to contribute to capacity-building in the field of space.

With respect to paragraphs 57 and 58, Japan has signed various Government-to-Government consultation frameworks on space issues with other countries. In addition, Japan actively participates in multilateral forums, such as the Committee, the International Telecommunication Union, the Conference on Disarmament and so on.

With respect to paragraph 60, Japan hosted the second Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum Workshop on Space Security in Tokyo in 2014, as well as other workshops and conferences on space issues, such as the international symposium on ensuring the stable use of outer space. Apart from that, Japan also participates actively in workshops and conferences held in foreign countries.

With respect to paragraph 61, Japan publishes information on its outer space activities through press releases, websites, presentations at conferences, workshops and so on.

With respect to paragraph 62, JAXA supports the front lines of education through educator training programmes and the development of learning material that leverages the results achieved in various space programmes. JAXA also participates in a range of education-related international conferences, as well as in activities organized by international organizations.

With respect to paragraph 63, Japan introduces and coordinates space policies and programmes through various mechanisms, including the consultation frameworks and the multilateral forums mentioned in the implementation status under paragraphs 57 and 58.

With respect to paragraph 67, Japan actively participates in the outer space-related discussions and activities of the United Nations system, including the Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization, and so on.

With respect to paragraph 69, in the joint communiqué of the G7 meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Hiroshima in April 2016, we committed to enhancing the long-term safety, security, sustainability and stability of the space environment, increasing transparency in space activities, and strengthening norms of responsible behaviour for all outer space activities.

With respect to paragraph 70, Japan acknowledges the importance of reviewing the implementation of the measures mentioned there and submits this document to this end.

With respect to paragraph 71, Japan ratifies and adheres to all the treaties listed in this measure.

With respect to paragraph 73, JAXA has established the "JAXA space debris mitigation standard", in accordance with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the International Organization for Standardization standard 24113 entitled "Space debris mitigation requirements", and conducts its activities in accordance with this standard.

In addition, Japan is now setting up a proper mechanism that covers the private sector's space activities. In consequence, Japan established the Act Concerning

Launch and Control of Satellites” in November 2016. The Act specifies that licence applicants for satellite operations shall meet required criteria that prevent them from increasing space debris by taking appropriate measures; to ensure the proper structure of satellites that prevent the diffusion of any equipment and component to the outer space; to prevent collision with other satellites; and to dispose satellites under proper conditions.

Conclusion

These transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities play a great role in complementing the space treaties and ensuring safety, stability, and sustainability of the outer space environment. Japan affirms its commitment and calls on all Member States to review and implement these measures.

Pakistan

[Original: English]
[29 March 2017]

Comments on document A/68/189

Pakistan believes that outer space is the common heritage of humankind and the country is committed to the peaceful uses of outer space for the socioeconomic uplift of the country. Pakistan appreciates the efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities for preparing the consensus report of the study on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. Considering the importance of society’s growing reliance on space resources and considering their vulnerability, Pakistan supports the recommendations of Group of Governmental Experts for consideration by all States as non-legally binding voluntary measures.

Moreover, Pakistan endorses the view that draft transparency and confidence-building measures can reduce misunderstandings and miscalculations regarding space activities of States. In that regard, guidelines being drafted by the Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities would be helpful in addressing threats to the sustainability, safety and security of outer space activities.

Pakistan, envisaging fruitful outcomes of transparency and confidence-building measures, also welcomes the exchange of information relating to major military expenditures on outer space, a consultative mechanism, outreach, coordination and particularly international cooperation as these steps would improve interaction between participants in clarifying information and ambiguous situations.

Pakistan reiterates its stance that transparency and confidence-building measures should be aimed at increasing the security, safety and sustainability of outer space. It particularly welcomes the recommendation of the Group of Governmental Experts to further develop international cooperation between spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all Member States.

Pakistan recognizes the value of transparency and confidence-building measures as well as of the non-legally binding international code of conduct for outer space activities in promoting trust among States. It has been participating actively in these efforts and believes that such initiatives should be pursued in an inclusive, universal and participatory manner within the United Nations system, taking into account the interests of all Member States. However, these voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for legally binding treaty based obligations. There are clear gaps in the international legal regime governing the uses of outer space with security implications. These gaps must be plugged by concluding a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament.

Pakistan hopes that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would conduct capacity-building and outreach activities on transparency and confidence-building measures within the context of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities in line with the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

Comments on document A/AC.105/1116

The report describes the role of United Nations entities in supporting Member States in the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities within existing mandates and identifies the ways that United Nations entities can further assist Member States in implementing recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.

Pakistan acknowledges and supports the initiatives and mechanisms aimed towards increasing confidence among the States for interrelated environmental sustainability, global peace and security under the five treaties and agreements of international space law. We also appreciate the proposal of Office for Outer Space Affairs for expansion of the existing treaty mechanisms of the Registration Convention and Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space to provide regular notifications relating to the risk reduction in outer space activities.

Furthermore, Pakistan believes in the strengthening of coordination mechanisms related to space activities within United Nations entities such as the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations report on military expenditure, and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and database.

Pakistan extends and supports the recommendation of voluntary familiarization visits to space launch sites, flight command and control centres and other operational facilities of the outer space infrastructure with reference to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. We also appreciate the role of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to assist Member States in implementing the obligations of the Secretary-General under the Outer Space Treaty to facilitate voluntary visits, or even organize the logistics of the visits.

Pakistan recognizes the importance of international cooperation in developing and exchanging knowledge, expertise and technologies in strengthening transparency and building confidence among Member States. In that regard, the role of United Nations entities in supporting Member States through various intergovernmental platforms, mechanisms and initiatives is appreciable. Moreover, Pakistan is a member of various United Nations-led international forums related to space activities including but not limited to the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN), the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG), the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (COSPAS-SARSAT), the Expert Group on Space Weather, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, etc. These forums are helpful in enhancing confidence and coordination among Member States.

Moreover, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space provides a basis for all States to develop and strengthen their capacity to undertake and/or derive benefits from space activities. Pakistan supports the initiatives of capacity-building of the Member States, in particular non-spacefaring developing nations, through United Nations platforms such as the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, etc., as recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts.