

Japan Item 9

“General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources”

Japan

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations on your election. My appreciation goes to Director Holla-Maini and her team.

The exploration and utilization of space resources has great potential to benefit humanity and to help sustainable development in the world, if we do so in a peaceful, safe, and sustainable manner.

Mr. Chair,

First ever all, let me share with you the passion of ours and dearest colleagues.

Japan participates in international space exploration to expand human frontiers, to benefit humanity and to promote international cooperation. I would like to present some of our activities.

First, the Japanese SLIM, which stands for the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, spacecraft successfully landed on the lunar surface in January this year, with an accuracy of approximately 55 meters east of the original target site. Upon landing, the spacecraft surveyed the lunar surface using onboard cameras. We expect this technology and scientific outcome will contribute to international space exploration, and space resource exploration in the near future

Second, in the manned lunar cooperation, last week during Prime Minister Kishida’s visit to the US, Japan and the US signed a Lunar Surface Exploration Implementing Arrangement. Under this agreement, Japan will provide and operate a pressurized lunar rover while the United States will allocate flight opportunities for two Japanese astronauts to the lunar surface.

Third, JAXA is cooperating with Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to develop the Lunar Polar Exploration mission (LUPEX). LUPEX is a scientific mission to investigate the presence of water and the possibilities for resource utilization in the lunar polar region.

Furthermore, beyond the moon, in collaboration with NASA, CNES, DLR and ESA, JAXA is developing the Martian Moons eXploration, (MMX) mission. This aims to collect samples from one of the Martian moons.

Mr. Chair,

Let me briefly introduce the relevant national legislation.

The Japanese private sector is also working toward lunar activities and the exploration of lunar resources.

While Japan encourages such activities by the private sector without discouraging innovations, we need to ensure the accurate and smooth implementation of Japan's obligations under the space related treaties, such as the Outer Space Treaty. For this purpose, Japan enacted the "*Act on the Promotion of Business Activities for the Exploration and Development of Space Resources*", commonly known as the "*Space Resources Act*" in December 2021.

The Act provides a national authorization system, rules for the acquisition of space resources etc. It also requires the Government to publish the business activity plan on the website of the Cabinet Office of Japan, when it issues a license to it. In this way, the Act provides transparency. In addition, this Act encourages the Government to help to establish internationally harmonized systems on the exploration and development of space resources in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. Japan is therefore keen to contribute to the relevant discussions.

Mr. Chair,

Apart from our national legislation, Japan signed the Artemis Accords in 2020 as a political commitment to establish a set of principles for the exploration and use of outer space by civil space agencies. We welcome the 9 new

signatories after the last session of COPUOS, bringing the total number of countries to 36.

In our view, the Artemis Accords contains several important concepts, such as transparency, release of scientific data, and space resources in support of safe and sustainable space activities. Therefore, it should be useful to refer to several important concepts of the Artemis Accords when developing a future UN framework for space resources activities.

For the development of such framework, the Working Group on the legal aspect of Space Resource Activities plays a crucial role. In this regard, Japan appreciates the efforts made by the Working Group, as well as its Chair, Mr. Andrzej Misztal, and Vice Chair, Mr. Steven Freeland.

Japan provided inputs at the Expert Meeting in Luxembourg in March and presented an overview of our Space Resources Act and efforts for information sharing at the International Conference during this Legal Subcommittee. We are committed to continuing to contribute to the Working Group and look forward to fruitful discussions during this and future sessions.

Finally, but equally important, Japan admires every efforts made for international norms in outer space and the important role played by the Legal Subcommittee to ensure the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

Thank you for your kind attention.