 STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MARI AMANO
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
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- THEMATIC DEBATE: OUTER SPACE -
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Mr. Chairman,

The importance of outer space activities has never been greater than it is today. Our lives are now directly and broadly dependent on many space-based technologies that provide services such as telecommunication, earth observation, and navigation services. In Japan especially, the devastating earthquake and tsunami of last year reminded us of the immense value of these technologies in the field of disaster management. Thus, assuring the security, safety, stability and sustainability of outer space activities is a growing concern to Japan as well as the international community as a whole.

I also would like to point out that long-lived space debris has been gradually constituting a threat to any kind of space activity and potentially limits the possibility of use and exploration of outer space. In fact, it is already causing great danger to current activities in outer space. Japan therefore calls on all countries to refrain from any action that may lead to creation of more long-lived space debris, such as ASAT tests.
Mr. Chairman,

It is with these issues in mind that Japan as one of major space-faring nations considers the strengthening of outer space governance a matter of urgency. To that end, we have noticed at least two positive movements since last year. The first is the start of discussions at the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. Japan hopes that this GGE comes up with forward-looking outcomes in the near future that will accommodate the interests of all responsible UN member states.

The second positive step is the intensifying exchange on the draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities proposed by the European Union. Given the difficulty of moving to a legal-binding instrument, Japan considers the EU’s effort as a constructive and realistic multilateral measure. As our Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba expressed in January this year, Japan is not only actively contributing to the deliberation of the draft Code of Conduct, but also promoting participation in the multilateral deliberation process by all other interested countries, especially Asian countries.

Mr. Chairman,

We also support in principle the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space. Japan’s outer space activities have always been peaceful in nature and this will continue. As such, my country has taken active part in the discussions on the issue of PAROS within the CD. In this context, we consider that there are a number of issues that need to be carefully examined in the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space that was jointly presented by China and Russia in 2008.

Lastly, please allow me to briefly touch upon national developments. Japan recently conducted an administrative restructuring of our space policy by establishing an interagency body in the Cabinet Office as well as
a national committee consisting of influential experts. This restructuring should allow us to enhance the formulation of our strategic space policy to a greater extent. I would like to emphasize that Japan is determined to further explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes under the relevant international laws.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.