

Remarks by Minister Onoda at the 11th National Space Policy Secretariat Symposium

Opening remarks

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27 February 2026

I am Kimi Onoda, Minister of State for Space Policy at the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan.

Thank you very much for joining us today at the 11th National Space Policy Secretariat Symposium on Ensuring the Safe and Sustainable Use of Outer Space. On behalf of the organizers, I would like to offer a few words of welcome as we open the symposium.

This symposium has been held annually since 2016 to foster international consensus. It brings together relevant countries to discuss challenges in ensuring the safe and sustainable use of outer space and measures the international community should pursue to that end. Participants share broad perspectives from government, industry, and academia, engaging in cross-border discussions.

In recent years, as the use of outer space expands globally, the risk of collisions between objects in Earth orbit is increasing significantly due to the proliferation of large satellite constellations and space debris. Furthermore, threats and risks in space are growing, with some nations actively developing technologies to jam or disable other countries' satellites to secure their own military superiority.

In this context, Japan has accumulated practical efforts in technology development and rule-making across various fields, including collision prevention for satellites and other instruments in Earth orbit, space situational awareness, debris mitigation and reduction, and on-orbit services.

For example, in the Commercial Removal of Debris Demonstration “CRD2,” a collaborative effort between JAXA and Astroscale, a demonstration satellite was launched in 2024 and successfully observed debris at extremely close range. This project is being conducted based on government guidelines, ensuring safety and transparency.

Furthermore, in February of last year, the Cabinet Office formulated the Guidelines for Collision Avoidance with Satellites, etc., which outlines concepts and specific measures for satellites to avoid collisions with other satellites and space debris.

Then, in June, my predecessor, former Minister Kiuchi, attended the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). There, he communicated

Japan's efforts to the world and stated our commitment to take a leading role in rule-making discussions at the United Nations.

Furthermore, in October, I signed the Memorandum of Cooperation Regarding the Technology Prosperity Deal with Director Kratsios of the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy, explicitly stating that Japan and the U.S. would collaborate on efforts to mitigate and reduce space debris and on Space Situational Awareness (SSA).

Based on these considerations, Japan is currently advancing the development of concrete proposals, such as draft standard coordination items for international orbital services, through ongoing discussions in expert panels and other forums. In March of this year, we held the Ministerial Meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Space Traffic Management, which I chair. We compiled Japan's policy on space traffic management and intend to communicate Japan's practical initiatives to the international community through various forums, including the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

I would also like to introduce Japan's efforts concerning space security.

Based on documents such as the revised National Security Strategy of December 2022, Japan formulated the Space Security Initiative in June 2023 to concretize space security challenges and policies.

Furthermore, in July last year, the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces formulated the Space Domain Defense Guidelines. These guidelines clarify the measures necessary to ensure Japan's space utilization, aiming to enhance predictability for private companies and promote technological development.

Japan is currently reviewing its National Security Strategy and related documents. Accordingly, we intend to revise the Space Security Initiative and work with nations sharing our values to maintain the safe and sustainable use of outer space and free access to it.

Finally, today we have been honored to have leaders and experts from advanced space-faring nations join us as keynote speakers and panelists.

We hope that today's symposium will further deepen discussions on ensuring the sustainable use of outer space and advance industry-academia-government collaboration and international cooperation in this field. Thank you very much.

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