

Mr. MAKIYAMA (Japan): As it is the first occasion for the Japanese delegation to take the floor in the First Committee, may I take this opportunity to extend to you, Sir, my heartfelt congratulations on your unanimous election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. My sincere congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau, His Excellency Ambassador Sengul of Mauritania and Mr. Giovanni Micigliolo of Italy. My delegation will co-operate fully with the Bureau as well as with the other delegations in the fulfilment of the tasks assigned to us.

Before speaking on the agenda item, I should like to express my delegation's deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of lives and property and the sufferings of the people resulting from the recent cyclone and flooding on the eastern coast of India. We were deeply shocked by the news of this disastrous event and we earnestly hope that at least a part of the damage resulting from the disaster will be restored and the sufferings will be alleviated as soon as possible.

The past year was no exception in having witnessed spectacular achievements of space science and technology in the field of exploration and use of outer space.

The most remarkable feats accomplished by the missions of Apollo 14 and 15 show again the unlimited possibilities inherent in what science and technology can offer for the future of mankind. The successful orbiting in June 1971 of the first manned scientific station by the Soviet Union was also an event of outstanding importance. I should like to sincerely congratulate both the United States and the USSR for their great success. I should like to express my sincere congratulations also to the distinguished representative of the United States, Admiral Shepard, one of the protagonists of the Apollo programme, on his personal success. I think his presence here, as an astronaut who having travelled in outer space has directly witnessed its marvels and possibilities, adds particular significance to our deliberations on the item now before us.

(Mr. Nakagawa, Japan)

In connection with these manifestations of the activities of the two major space powers, my delegation particularly welcomes the increasing trend of closer co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the field of the exploration and use of outer space, as was obviously exhibited by the representative of the United States when the outer space Committee met last September. This trend will surely advance significant accomplishments for the benefit of all mankind in the field of outer space and, at the same time, enhance the cause of world peace.

Before passing on to the report of the outer space Committee, I should like to touch upon the space activities carried out by Japan which have continued to make steady progress in the past year. A test satellite named "Yasuri", Japan's No. 2 satellite, was successfully launched into orbit in February this year, and, later on, Japan's first scientific satellite called "Ohsumi" was also successfully launched into orbit on 28 September. The primary objectives of this scientific satellite are to carry out scientific observations, including ionospheric experiments, solar radio emission experiments and energetic particle experiments.

My delegation is hopeful that our success, even if it is still modest, will be useful as part of our contribution to the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

I now turn to the report of the outer space Committee. May I begin first by commenting on the part of the report of the Committee dealing with the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. It is indeed gratifying that the Outer Space Committee, through the valuable effort of its Legal Sub-Committee, was finally able to adopt the text of the draft convention on international liability for damage caused by space objects. This accomplishment is certainly the welcome result of compromise resulting from lengthy negotiations and hard bargaining over the past several years.

Having said that, my delegation, as a member of the outer space Committee which participated actively in this process of hard negotiations, feels obliged to reiterate its feelings of dissatisfaction as to the substantive provisions now incorporated in articles XII and XIX of the draft convention, namely the key articles relating to the measure of compensation and the settlement of claims. It should be recalled in this connection that my delegation, together with the delegations of Canada, Iran and Sweden, while not objecting to the procedure