



General Assembly

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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Note verbale dated 4 May 2017 from the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations (Vienna) addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations (Vienna) has the honour to provide the following notification with respect to the re-entry of the space laboratory Tiangong-1.

Tiangong-1 was launched into outer space on 29 September 2011. It conducted six successive rendezvous and dockings with spacecraft Shenzhou-8, Shenzhou-9 and Shenzhou-10 and completed all assigned missions, making important contributions to China's manned space exploration activities. On 16 March 2016, the Tiangong-1 Target Manned Space Vehicle ceased functioning. It had fully fulfilled its historic mission. To date, Tiangong-1 has maintained its structural integrity. Its operational orbit is under constant and close surveillance by China. Its current average altitude is 349 kilometres and it is decaying at a daily rate of approximately 160 metres. Its re-entry is expected between October 2017 and April 2018. According to the calculations and analysis that have been carried out, most of the structural components of Tiangong-1 will be destroyed through burning during the course of its re-entry. The probability of endangering and causing damage to aviation and ground activities is very low.

China attaches great importance to the re-entry of Tiangong-1 and will take the following measures in terms of monitoring and public information. First, it will further enhance monitoring and forecasting. China will make strict arrangements to track and closely monitor Tiangong-1 in its orbital development and will publish a timely forecast of its re-entry. China will make use of the international joint monitoring information under the framework of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee in order to be better informed about the descent of Tiangong-1. Second, it will improve the information reporting mechanism. Dynamic orbital status and other information relating to Tiangong-1 will be posted on the website of the China Manned Space Agency (www.cmse.gov.cn) in both Chinese and English. In addition, timely information about important milestones and events during the orbital decay phases will be released through the news media. As to the final forecast of the time and region of re-entry, China will issue the relevant information and early warning in a timely manner and bring it to the attention of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Secretary-General of the United Nations by means of note verbale through diplomatic channels.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 30 June 2017.

