

**Agenda Item 15 - UK Statement on Space Resources at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS**

Chair,

The United Kingdom is pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the work we are doing regarding the development of space resource utilisation policy, and to provide our views on the legal aspects associated with such activity. As expressed at the Legal Sub-Committee in 2021, the UK believes that COPUOS can, and should, focus on ‘in-situ space resources’ use. Radio waves or geostationary orbit slots fall under the remit of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Chair,

The United Kingdom is a proud signatory of both the Outer Space Treaty, as the foundation of the global governance of outer space, and the Artemis Accords because we fully recognise the opportunity that utilising resources in space affords us and the wider international community.

In-situ space resources will help us unlock deep space exploration, propel scientific research, help us to craft the tools and technologies of the future and, ultimately, enable humans to live, work and sustain life on the lunar surface and other celestial bodies.

Chair,

On a national level we have invested over £500,000 to support British industry and academia to conduct research associated with space resource utilisation. This includes supporting Metalysis, Thales Alenia Space UK

(TAS-UK) and AVS on oxygen extraction from lunar regoliths using the FCC Cambridge process, the Open University on developing ways to heat regolith to aid lunar construction activities, and the University of Southampton and University College London on water purification systems using plasma.

The UK is developing new policy surrounding lunar orbit and lunar surface missions; creating the foundations for future missions and setting forth how space resources can be used, and it is why we have repeatedly outlined our commitment to the United Nation's Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space and are ensuring all our activities comply fully with the Outer Space Treaty. We look forward to providing updates on this at future sessions.

Chair,

The United Kingdom are supportive of the work plan proposed by the Working Group on Space Resources and we wish to thank the Chair Andrzej Misztal and the Vice Chair Steven Freeland, for their excellent leadership. We would like to actively encourage all member states to share information on their activities in relation to space resource utilisation, including their nature, conduct, and location, as we believe this is necessary to identify the work to be done in this area. This is a key step in our work. Without understanding the types of missions being proposed, we will be unable to move forward; to exchange views on how our legal framework applies to the activities and where there may be future recommendations.

Finally Chair, the United Kingdom believes that by sharing detailed information on space resource activity and by effectively supporting the Working Group on Space Resources, we can ensure that space resource activity is, and continues to be, conducted in a safe, sustainable, and peaceful manner for the benefit and interest of all.

Thank you Chair.