

## United Kingdom, Item 6(a)

### The definition and delimitation of outer space

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates.

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, let me first thank you, Madam Chair, for your leadership during the session. I would also like to thank UNOOSA Director, Niklas Hedman, and the wider UNOOSA team for their work to facilitate the session.

UK spaceflight activities are regulated through the 2018 Space Industry Act and its underlying legislation. When developing this regulatory framework, the UK carefully considered the definitions used within this legislation, and looked to industry, Members States and UN treaties to provide the best insight.

Under the UK Space Industry Act the term 'Sub-orbital' encompasses the launch or the procurement of the launch, operation and return of a craft capable of operating above the stratosphere, or a balloon capable of reaching the stratosphere carrying crew or passengers. The Act uses these terms to determine the activities to be regulated by the Act, it does not define where space begins.

Under the Space Industry Act, the term 'Space activities' encompass the launch or procurement of the launch, operation and return of a space object or aircraft carrying a space object or any activity in outer space. A 'Space object' refers to an object that will go into Earth orbit or beyond or the launch vehicle responsible for putting the object into orbit.

More broadly, our approach to regulating launch to orbit and sub-orbital launches from the UK is to look at the purpose and function of the mission. It is the UK's view, that defining where space begins is not necessary to be able to regulate these activities and is not required when considering future space traffic management approaches. This approach allows the UK to develop a regulatory regime that is more flexible and readily adaptable to innovation in a rapidly evolving sector.

Regardless of how a launch is defined, the UK has taken an approach to place safety at the heart of the regulation of our spaceflight activities. Applicants for a launch operator, return operator or a spaceport licence must include a safety case with their application. The safety case must demonstrate that the applicant has systematically identified the major accident hazards associated with planned activities. The safety case is a live document, licence holders must keep the safety case under review and update the regulator on any material changes.

We hope that by sharing the UK's approach to launch to orbit and sub-orbital activities, that this has been beneficial to other Member States. We are happy to discuss our approach in more detail with Member States that would be interested.

Thank you Madam Chair and distinguished delegates.