

## **United Kingdom, Item 3**

### **General exchange of views**

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates.

Before the United Kingdom makes its general statement, let me first clearly state that the work we about to undertake over the next two weeks at the LSC relies on respect for the rules-based international order and the sanctity of the UN Charter. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine damages our work here and in every other forum of the UN. The UK continues to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and calls upon the Russian Federation to end its illegal war and respect the territorial integrity of other Member States.

Now let me move onto the UK General Statement where we are pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the progress and developments we have made since the last meeting of this sub-committee.

On January 9th 2023, the UK conducted its first ever launch from UK soil through Virgin Orbit at Spaceport Cornwall. While the rocket reached space, it did not reach the intended orbit and could not complete its mission successfully. Despite this, the launch successfully demonstrated that the key aspects of the UK regulatory framework for spaceflight worked, not least in ensuring public safety and security. This included co-ordinating with international partners on airspace and maritime arrangements, and payload licensing. We are now undertaking significant

work across government and regulators to capture lessons identified from our first launch, to understand where we can make our process as efficient and effective as possible. The successful aspects of this first launch have given us further confidence that our overall approach to licensing UK spaceflight under the Space Industry Act 2018 and the Regulations made under it is fit for purpose and will enable future UK launches.

In relation to our licensing approach, the Civil Aviation Authority continues its vital role in protecting public safety through the regulation of UK space activities. Since becoming the space regulator in July 2021, the CAA have supported the sector by granting 286 licences, including Spaceport Cornwall's and Virgin Orbit's for the UK's first ever space launch, and currently oversee over 600 licenced satellites in orbit.

Madam Chair,

With the changing orbital environment and emergence of new technologies, the UK recognises that our orbital regulatory regime must evolve to respond to it. As part of the UK's Plan for Sustainability launched at the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit for Space Sustainability that we co-hosted last year, the UK is undertaking a review of our regulatory framework for orbital activities. The intent of the review is to maintain a regulatory framework that incentivises sustainable behaviour, investment and growth. Alongside work on rendezvous and proximity missions which we will cover in our

item 11 statement, we are considering adopting a variable liability limit for satellite operators which would take into account the safety and sustainability of satellite missions. The UK is also supporting the development of a new, industry-led Space Sustainability Mark which would evidence compliance with best practice in space sustainability. This will create a standard for the sustainable use of space; covering the lifecycle of a satellite; applying existing guidelines and principles in relation to space sustainability but, crucially, filling the gaps, and seeking to develop best sustainability practice across the lifecycle of space activities. It will bring together industry, academia, investors and insurers, government stakeholders and international bodies and other regulators and governments to ensure that space continues to support the environmental, economic and scientific interests of future generations.

Internationally, the UK will continue to champion the importance of space sustainability and we are pleased to confirm we will be hosting a Space Sustainability session at the Space Symposium next month in Colorado Springs. The UK is also supporting important awareness raising and capacity building of space law and guidelines by funding two UK-UNOOSA projects on the Long-Term Sustainability guidelines and the Registration of space objects.

The Integrated Review 2021, 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age' set the UK's national security and international strategy, integrating defence, security, resilience, diplomacy, development and trade as well as science

and technology policy. We recently published the Integrated Review Refresh 2023 which responds to key changes in the global context since 2021, in particular the deterioration in the international security environment and intensification of systemic competition. Space remains a clear thematic priority for the UK in delivering these goals and the IRR 2023 reaffirms our commitment to the safe, secure and sustainable use of space, both through engagement with relevant subjects here in Vienna, and through our distinct, yet complementary work at the Open Ended Working Group on Responsible Space Behaviours in Geneva.

Madam Chair, the UK is also considering how we can plan for missions beyond Earth orbit, to the Moon, Mars and beyond.

Therefore, the UK Space Agency was delighted to host the Moon to Mars objectives workshop last year at the Royal Institution on behalf of NASA. With over 100 technical experts from different countries attending, the workshop covered 50 objectives under the categories of Transport and Habitation, Lunar and Martian Infrastructure, Operations, and Science. This enabled the UK and other countries to think about the roles they will play in the Artemis mission. The UK was also excited to see the membership of the Artemis Accords expanding during the last year, increasing to 23 signatory states. The UK sees this as an encouraging sign that an increasing number of international partners are agreeing a common set of principles which will guide space exploration for years to come.

The UK welcomes the substantive work of the Working Group on Space Resource Activities beginning this year. The UK believes that developing practical measures will be an essential part of this work. The UK submitted a paper on its view on space resource activities to the Working Group and would also like to thank the Chair and the Vice Chair for their paper. The UK looks forward to taking part in the meetings of the Working Group at this Subcommittee.

Finally, Madam Chair, we would like to extend our thanks for your leadership of this committee, and the Secretariat for their hard work preparing for this committee.

Thank you Madam Chair, distinguished delegates.