

United Kingdom, Item 9

Future role and the method of work of the Committee

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me to set out the view of the United Kingdom on the future role of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS.

We strongly believe in the role of COPUOS in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the space environment and the unique role of this subcommittee, in discussing the legal aspects of the exploration and use of outer space.

The UK will continue to be active in COPUOS and offer our support to UNOOSA.

I'd like to thank the distinguished delegate from the Russian Federation for highlighting the important work of the OEWG in last week's meetings. The UK does not agree that COPUOS issues are being transferred to the OEWG and we are happy to set out the distinction between COPUOS and the OEWG in the to avoid any confusion.

Our colleagues in Geneva working within the OEWG, which all Members can attend, focus on threats by States to space systems, while our work in Vienna is rightfully focused on safety and sustainability of space activity.

Nevertheless, security-focused discussions in the OEWG are highly relevant to the safety and sustainability agenda addressed in COPUOS, just as COPUOS work is relevant to work of the OEWG. We continue to believe it is important to have, and that it is possible to have, distinct but complimentary discussions in Geneva and Vienna.

Madam Chair, the United Kingdom would now like to share some observations on the ways of working.

Following discussions at the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the UK was pleased to see other delegations also supporting the idea of discussing the agenda items in a coherent order, without jumping between agenda items. The UK sees clear benefits to this approach so countries can plan for expert attendance for agenda items and the Committee can be more comprehensible to our observers.

The UK also noted timing pressures at the last Scientific and Technical Committee. This is linked to the point on the requirement from the Chair and Secretariat to limit our statements to 5 minutes. We need to consider the impact of statements exceeding time limits on undermining the

important work of Working Groups and agreeing key items with the benefits of translation.

The UK also believes a return to a larger amount of in-person activity will alleviate the issues encountered on timing while maintaining the benefits of the hybrid approach through the available webcast.

We appreciate the hard work the Chair and Secretariat undertake and hope we can continue to have fruitful discussions on how to alleviate or mitigate the issues we have raised.

Madam Chair,

Finally, the UK would welcome further inclusion and engagement with the private sector and legal community to complement and inform the work of COPUOS. The UK believes that the Committee should continue to be agile and responsive to enable practical, open, informal and expert discussion which focuses on the mandate of COPUOS.

Thank you Madam Chair, distinguished delegates.

