

**United Kingdom, Item 10**

**General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, taking into account the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.**

Chair, distinguished delegates,

The UK delegation is pleased to have this opportunity to share the progress and developments made in the past year with regards to space debris mitigation.

We would like to thank UNOOSA and Japan for their important workshop on Active Debris Removal on Monday, and Astroscale for Wednesday's interesting technical presentation. Astroscale UK are also providing a technical presentation on Tuesday on their experience of licencing ADR operations in the UK. We value COPUOS as a vital forum to discuss these issues, which informed our decision to host a joint side event with New Zealand at Plenary 2023, discussing our developing approach to joint ADR missions. We would also like to echo the comments made by Japan on the importance of discussing ADR issues at COPUOS.

The UK government recognises the growing volume of debris in space is both environmentally and commercially unsustainable, requiring swift and shared action to clean up Earth's orbit. The UK is committed to promoting the sustainable use of space for all and reiterates the need for collaboration and discussion on how we can work together to tackle the issue of space debris. The UK plays an active and leading role in the development of international best practice for the long-term sustainability of outer space. Our recently published Space Industrial Plan, which builds on the National Space Strategy and Plan for Sustainability, confirms that sustainability and effective regulation are national priorities. Our continued support of events such as Secure World Foundation's Summit for Space Sustainability demonstrates the value we place on continued global engagement.

The UK national legislation incorporates internationally recognised guidelines and standards on space debris. The UK continues to be a strong advocate for the important work of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC). All satellites and launch vehicles licensed by or launched from the UK meet the appropriate IADC space debris mitigation guidelines. We have also implemented the LTS guidelines in our national approach and are encouraging their widespread implementation via our international work.

The UK provides conjunction analysis, warnings as well as digitised re-entry and licence compliance information to support monitoring and enforcement of UK licensed operations. Some of the largest debris-generating events in history have been the destructive testing of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles, most recently in 2021. The UK has committed not to conduct such tests, as part of our enduring efforts to promote responsible space behaviours. We call on others to make the same commitment in line with the General Assembly resolution 77/41.

The UK is undertaking a review of its regulations, in collaboration with stakeholders, to enable sustainable space operations such as debris removal and life extension services. The UK believes that active debris removal (ADR) is a key aspect of debris mitigation and remediation, and regulatory frameworks must play a key role in enabling these missions. The UK's national ADR mission to remove two unprepared, UK-licensed and non-operational satellites from Low Earth Orbit is targeting a launch date in 2026.

As we look beyond our own planet to the Moon and Mars, we must ensure our activities minimise debris that damage the lunar environment or affect future Missions. This is why the UK is developing regulation around sustainability in the lunar environment and beyond Earth orbit. The UK believes that the growing number of missions to the Moon means that beyond-Earth orbit sustainability will become ever more salient. We believe there is an increasing need for greater international discussion to ensure we protect the Lunar environment for future use, and we welcome the proposed UNOOSA Conference on Lunar Sustainability.

The UK's policy on the registration of space objects is fully integrated into its regulatory framework and is essential for enabling transparency and multilateral collaboration. As part of the working group of the Five Treaties, we will participate in an exchange of views on the implementation of Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty on information sharing approaches.

Remediating, preventing, and mitigating against space debris remains a priority for the UK. The UK believes that through robust national legislative frameworks and international cooperation, positive sustainability and safety outcomes can be achieved.

Thank you, Chair.