

UK Statement – UN LSC 2024 – Agenda Item 4 General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities.

Chair, distinguished delegates.

Firstly I'd like to congratulate you, Chair, on your appointment. We wish you every success in this role.

Before the United Kingdom makes its general statement, let me first clearly state that Space science and exploration missions, and commercial activities, rely on co-operation and collaboration between states. Russia's violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and its ongoing war against Ukraine has had a significant impact on this essential cooperation between space faring nations and is damaging international co-operation on the peaceful uses of outer space. We call again on Russia to end this war and withdraw from Ukrainian territory.

Now let me move onto our General Statement. The UK is pleased to share with you our progress and developments since the last meeting.

In May 2023, we started a Space Regulatory Review to equip the UK's regulatory regime to meet the challenges of the future and strengthen our domestic resilience and international partnerships. The targeted review will drive important policy initiatives in growth, sustainability, and innovation. We engaged with over 300 stakeholders primarily in the space and finance industries to shape the final report, which we plan to publish soon. It will set the direction of the UK's regulatory policy for the next decade – to ensure our framework remains agile and fit-for-purpose. The report will be a call to action for commercial and academic stakeholders, as well as regulators, to play their part and partner with government to undertake a number of recommended actions. The next phase of our work will be to implement these recommendations in partnership with the space sector.

The UK continues to support the development of new, industry-led Space Sustainability Standards, which seek to incentivise best sustainability practice across the lifecycle of space activities. The first two standards will be published this spring.

The UK Government has recently consulted on proposals to incentivise the adoption of more sustainable satellite operations by applying variable limits of operator liability and licence application refunds. The consultation also looks at new third-party liability insurance models and matters of longer-term space sustainability. We will publish its response later this year.

The UK has continued to support important awareness-raising and capacity building for space law and guidelines by funding two UK-UNOOSA projects on the Long-Term Sustainability Guidelines and the Registration of Space Objects. UNOOSA plays a vital role in supporting all member states and the UK is proud to support them in these efforts. We would like to thank and commend Canada for their funding of the Space4Women toolkit which will support mainstreaming gender across public and private institutions.

The UK has demonstrated our commitment to planetary protection by recently standing up a UK Planetary Protection Advisory Panel. Building planetary protection into licensing processes supports best practice for licensed missions to the Moon and wider solar system. The UK is also proud to be part of the Artemis Accords where discussions will continue on how to develop peaceful, safe and sustainable lunar practices.

Space cooperation and collaboration relies on states complying with existing global legal frameworks, including the OST. Those who have not yet done so should ratify or accede to the OST as soon as possible; those who are already party to it should clearly and unambiguously conform to their obligations under it, such as that contained in Article IV not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons.

The UK was pleased to contribute to the meeting of the Working Group on Space Resources last year and look forward to continuing these

discussions and progressing the workplan at this meeting. We would like to thank the Chairs Ambassador Andrzej Misztal and Professor Steven Freeland for their hard work and continued stewardship of the committee, especially the organisation of the very fruitful international conference which took place in Luxembourg on the 26th of March. We would also like to thank Belgium and Luxembourg for hosting and facilitating the event.

We look forward to discussions under the Working Group on the Five Treaties and would like to thank the Chair, Franziska Knur, for her continued leadership. The UK sees particular value in discussions relating to Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty and would like to note our CRP on this subject, outlining how we have notified under Article XI to date.

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

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.