United Kingdom, Item 09

UK Statement on Space Weather at the 61st Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, 29th January to 9th February 2024

Chair, Distinguished Delegates.

The UK continues to prioritise activities to mitigate the impacts of space weather. Severe space weather is identified in our National Risk Register and our response outlined in the Severe Space Weather Preparedness Strategy. Achieving resilience requires international collaboration. The UK has built strong working relationships with our international partners, and we wish to enhance this further. Towards this, the UK invested a further €95m into the European Space Agency (ESA) Vigil space weather mission at the November 2022 ministerial and we are looking towards ensuring continued investment in 2025. We would like to express gratitude to those other nations supporting this mission and would encourage others to join in the global efforts to improve space weather forecasting capabilities. The UK continues to support the work between the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), International Space Environment Service (ISES) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) on improving international cooperation across the Space weather domain. The UK are content with the initial planning and the established Declaration to determine which aspects each of the international entities will focus on, the facilitation of the recent International Space Weather Coordination Forum in Geneva at WMO, and the publishing of a Statement of Intent following the forum.

The UK were pleased that at STSC 60th session, there was approval to transfer Member State survey data to custodianship at the WMO to enable the data to continue to be used to advance the goal of improved international space weather services. Many Space Weather measurements rely on use of the radio frequency spectrum and we support the work currently being undertaken within the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to provide appropriate recognition for space weather sensors within the Radio Regulations. The UK is pleased to see that the work performed by ITU has progressed with a definition within the radio regulations at the recent World Radiocommunication Conferences 2023 (WRC-23) and is now a formal agenda item for the 2027 conference.

At a national level, the Space Weather Instrumentation, Measurement, Modelling and Risk (SWIMMR) programme is enabling the UK space weather community to make valuable advances in terms of monitoring and modelling many different aspects of space weather, with a strong aim of transitioning results into operational use in line with our Preparedness Strategy. The majority of activities will have concluded by April 2024 with the expectation of transitioning results into operational use at the Met Office subject to an evaluation phase. Work continues to secure funding for follow-on work, to sustain and enhance the achievements of SWIMMR, seeking to establish a dependable and consistent process for operationalising research.

Thank you Chair