

**UK Statement – UN COPUOS 2022 – Agenda Item 7 - Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**

Chair, distinguished delegates,

The United Kingdom would like to extend its thanks to COPUOS delegates and UNOOSA who contributed to the success of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee this year. We would also like to thank the chair Juan Francisco Facetti, for their hard work in presiding over the sessions.

The United Kingdom attaches great importance to the Long-Term Sustainability of the Outer Space Environment. Sustainability is just as important in space as it is on earth.

We were delighted that the working group on the long term sustainability of outer space were able to agree the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan for the next five years. We would like to again, express our thanks to the Chair of the working group, Umamaheswaran R for their dedicated leadership. We look forward to beginning our work and building on the success of the previous working group.

To achieve the goal of a sustainable space environment, the UK is playing a leading role alongside UNOOSA in supporting an inclusive approach to capacity building and implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space.

To support the implementation of guidelines C.1 and C.2 on international cooperation, the UK was pleased to have established our first project with

UNOOSA in 2021, which supported awareness-raising and capacity building in relation to the LTS guidelines. Phase 1 of the project led to concrete outcomes, namely the publishing of an accessible version of the LTS guidelines in all 6 official UN languages. Three expert events with industry, regulators and space agencies also led to the production of almost 45 implementation case studies.

For phase two of the project, UNOOSA conducted 42 interviews with Member States of COPUOS and international intergovernmental organizations to identify challenges associated with implementation. We are extremely pleased that this report has now been published on UNOOSA's website. We would like to thank the team at UNOOSA for all their hard work in pulling together such an informative resource. Sharing approaches and challenges of implementation of the LTS guidelines is vital for our work going forward and so we would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to all those that were interviewed and provided their views and information.

From the UK's perspective, understanding 'what is stopping countries from being able to implement the guidelines' is critical to understanding the form of future capacity-building activities.

The report demonstrates the diverse range of approaches and challenges that Member States have when implementing the guidelines and the differing approaches Member States have to supervising their national space activities. The success of the guidelines is clear, with interviewees hailing the adoption of them as a landmark achievement in space policy and space diplomacy. Despite being relatively new, some interviewees

confirmed that they had already been referred to in national space law sources.

It also was stated frequently that “legal certainty is one of the best incentives that a Member State can offer to its space sector”.

However, despite this assertion, the report highlights the challenges of implementation particularly because some of the stakeholders remain unaware of what they should do or from whom they can seek assistance when operationalising the guidelines.

As COPUOS spent almost a decade negotiating these voluntary guidelines, and given the challenges raised in the report, we believe that focussing on implementation, in terms of the work of new working group is fundamental. This will enable us to identify potential gaps and challenges that may form the basis of recommendations to ensure we continue to work to implement them.

We would like to highlight that jointly with UNOOSA the UK will be holding a side event on Thursday 9th June between 10 and 11 am, Vienna time, virtually alongside other distinguished delegates to talk about experiences in implementing the guidelines. We would welcome all to join.

Finally, the United Kingdom has participated in the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space for many years and recognizes its effectiveness regarding all technical aspects of such power sources, and for promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Safety Framework.

Considering the plans for space missions carrying crew to other solar bodies such as the moon and Mars, some which may include the expanded use of nuclear power sources, the agreed recommendation by STSC last year, for a further one-year extension of the multi-year workplan to 2023 in order to finalize the report to the Subcommittee will be very helpful in order to explore options for gathering information about advances in knowledge, practices and plans for future space nuclear power source applications. The UK anticipates that the Working Group will recommend to the STSC, the new arrangements that will be needed to take forward the development of safety guidelines for potential future uses of nuclear power sources in outer space.

The UK would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Sam Harbison for his dedicated and skilful work chairing this Working Group for many years and the hard work in following up all of the informal and formal meetings of the nuclear power sources Working Group during the course of the Working Group's time. The UK expresses our sincere gratitude for his important part in the time, knowledge and helpfulness he brings to the working group and the progress made so far.

Thank you for your kind attention.