

COPUOS Item 12: UK Statement on Space and Climate Change

Chair, distinguished delegates,

More than half of key climate data comes from space. Earth observation delivers vital information to fight climate change and helps us to manage our environment. That is why Earth Observation is central to the UK's efforts to tackle the global climate and biodiversity crisis. Last year we published the National Space Strategy-in-Action plan, which highlights international collaboration, science, research and innovation as key pillars for achieving the UK's EO goals/ambitions.

The UK is privileged to play a significant role in global Earth Observation efforts through our membership of the European Space Agency (ESA), EUMETSAT, CEOS, GEO, bilateral and multilateral missions, and our own national programmes. This year, the UK was proud to rejoin the Copernicus component of the EU Space Programme. Our participation reinforces the UK's position at the forefront of efforts to tackle global climate and environmental challenges.

The UK hosts ESA's Climate Division which spearheads R&D to support climate science and services, and drives international cooperation and knowledge exchange through the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and World Meteorological Organisation processes.

We are also involved in many key European climate missions, and look forward to the launch of Microcarb, which left the UK for France in January after its assembly, integration and testing. Microcarb will provide invaluable measurements of CO₂ fluxes on a global and regional scale and provide essential information for businesses and decisionmakers.

The UK also leads ESA's TRUTHS mission, which will create a space-based climate observatory to supply a 10-fold improvement in the accuracy of climate data, and upgrade the performance and integration of the global EO system.

Chair,

The UK remains an active member of both the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), and is proud to have been endorsed as the incoming CEOS Chair for 2025.

The UK supports rapid national and global action to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, including methane, as part of our commitment to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and we continue to progress the collective commitment made under the Global Methane Pledge at COP26.

We are therefore delighted that, in partnership with NASA, the UK Space Agency will co-lead efforts to develop internationally agreed best practices for satellite-derived methane emissions data, alongside JAXA, ESA, EUMETSAT and other Agencies in the CEOS Greenhouse Gas Task Team. This work will ensure that methane emissions are measured and analysed to the same standard across the globe.

Our bilateral and multilateral relationships continue to yield exciting projects. This Spring, under the UK's International Bilateral Fund, UK entities embarked upon the Aquawatch-UK project with Australian partners, which will use space technology to develop an integrated water quality monitoring and forecasting system.

The UK is also a signatory to the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) International Charter, and last year we were delighted to support our first 'SCO-compliant' project, looking at Eelgrass mapping in partnership with the Swedish Space Agency.

Closer to home, the UK cultivates a variety of national activities through our EO Investment Package, and numerous climate-services projects under the leadership of Space4Climate (S4C), which celebrated its 10-year anniversary this year.

Finally Chair,

The UK Space Agency and Space4Climate were proud to host a stand at the first ever 'space pavilion' at COP28 in Dubai, which provided an important platform for sharing of international policy, technical and scientific expertise.

It was there that the UKSA also agreed the first Space Climate Pledge with 25 other space agencies. We look forward to taking forward more multilateral discussions and opportunities in the year ahead.