

United Kingdom, Item 7UK Statement on Item 7. Report of the STSC

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 (STSC) this year. We would also like to particularly thank the chair Ulpia Botezatu, for her hard work in presiding over the sessions.

The STSC remains a unique forum for member states and permanent observers to share updates on their respective national and joint developments in the advancement of the peaceful uses of outer space. This year we were fortunate to hear updates on missions such as Chandrayaan-3, ESA's Zero Debris approach and the work of a range of external committees such as CONFERS and the IADC, which seek to advance international good practice associated with space activities. Alongside this, the Committee's working groups were also able to make key advances in their programme of work. I would like to highlight a few of these:

The UK recognises that to achieve the goal of a sustainable space environment, international collaboration and the dissemination of good practice, knowledge and experience is vital. To this end the UK has been a strong supporter of the Working Group for the Long-term Sustainability of the Outer Space Environment and would like to thank Umamaheswaran R. of India, his team and UNOOSA for their organisation of the working group. At this year's STSC the Working Group discussed a structured approach to address the challenges faced by Member States across the 3 pillars of work; voluntary implementation of the guidelines, capacity building and new areas related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The UK is pleased by the progress made in the recent informals. We look forward to using the proposed structure in **today's** session to guide our discussions on the challenges faced and develop evidence-based recommendations for our future work.

The Working Group on Nuclear Power Sources also met to continue their discussions under the able leadership of Leopold Summerer. We are all aware of renewed international plans for crew missions to other solar bodies such as the moon and Mars, some of which may include the expanded use of nuclear power sources. In that context, it is great to see that a new multi-year workplan has been agreed, focusing on promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space. Additionally, the group will collect and analyse relevant technical information about potential future uses of nuclear power sources in outer space, particularly those involving nuclear reactors, to integrate and complement the Safety Framework.

Importantly, the Working Group will continue its work at Plenary this session with a series of intersessional meetings. A key priority for the UK will be to ensure that an approach is agreed to ensure advances and lessons learned from the commercial sector are reflected in our ongoing work.

At the sixty first session, the topic of Dark and Quiet Skies was also discussed. The UK was pleased to see the Committee agree to a new agenda item under the title “Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations: addressing emerging issues and challenges”. The UK continues to believe that the impact of satellite operations on radio and optical astronomy is an important issue which would benefit from ongoing dialogue between operators, the astronomical community and regulators. Therefore, to ensure that the agenda item is valuable to the community, its scope must remain closely linked to the title and original intent, which is to focus on raising awareness of the emerging issues and identify balanced approaches to preserving the skies for astronomy.

Thank you for your kind attention.