

UK Statement under Item 13 Future Role and Method of Work of the Committee at the 68th Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Chair, The United Kingdom has taken a leading role on the sustainability, security, and safety of outer space. We believe that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees have crucial roles in ensuring the ongoing sustainability and peaceful use of the space environment.

Regarding the role of COPUOS, there is an important distinction between discussions held in Geneva and those held in Vienna. The discussions here in Vienna should focus on safety and sustainability, which may support the security agenda. While discussions in Geneva should focus on security which may support safety and sustainability. The fact that many space systems are dual-use shows why it is important to have distinct yet complimentary discussions in Geneva and Vienna. To highlight this unique relationship, the United Kingdom organised a side event during this session called, “A tale of two forums: How Geneva and Vienna talk about Space”.

We would now like to share some remarks on the ways of working. The United Kingdom calls upon all Member States to work with us on streamlining the reports of our sessions. Although we view the report as an important outcome of our discussions, the UK is here to exchange best practice and to engage in constructive dialogue on important issues. We believe that negotiating the report and preparing statements to influence the outcome of the report, has become an impediment to our discussions, especially during a time when financial resources are scarce. Member States bring experts from around the world and we should seek to ensure that their time in Vienna is valuable.

Next, the United Kingdom is pleased to see that we have a diverse range of observers represented at COPUOS. We should do more to fully engage the private sector and the scientific community. We encourage delegations to consider including non-governmental actors as part of their delegations. During this session, colleagues on our delegation from Northumbria University organised a side event called, “Space4Women: Using the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for the Space Sector from the Lab Up”, taking place on Tuesday, 1 July at 09:00.

The UK has actively engaged in cross-regional discussions, here in Vienna, and we look forward to continuing these discussions in the lead up to UNISPACE IV. UNISPACE IV has the potential to create a step change in our ambition and engagement in peaceful uses. We are grateful to Italy and Morocco for their efforts so far.

Chair, we hope that our future is rooted in practical, open, informal and expert discussion. We need to focus on the mandate of COPUOS and seek to hear from every actor making a contribution to our collective endeavours. Thank you.