

United Kingdom General Statement on Item 4: General Exchange of Views at the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 68th Session 25th June to 2nd July

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Before the United Kingdom makes its general statement, let me first clearly state that Space science and exploration missions, and commercial activities, rely on co-operation and collaboration between states. Russia's violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and its ongoing war against Ukraine has had a significant impact on this essential co-operation between space faring nations and is damaging international co-operation on the peaceful uses of outer space. The UK supports all efforts to secure a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and we call on Russia to cease its senseless attacks on civilians and agree an immediate, full and unconditional ceasefire.

Now, let me move on to our general statement.

This Committee has a vital role in advancing the peaceful uses of space that improve the lives of so many people across the world. The UK recognises COPUOS as the crucial UN forum for discussing both the benefits we receive from space and the challenges we face to its sustainable use. The work that we do and the work of UNOOSA is important and we are proud to participate in this forum.

The UK government recognises space as a strategic priority that plays an essential role in supporting economic growth and national security.

Following a domestic review of our space regulations last year, the UK has been taking action to enhance our regulatory environment. This includes through an innovative sandbox on rendezvous and proximity operations to test the regulatory framework for innovative missions.

The UK welcomes efforts to establish an expert group on Space Situational Awareness and a study group on legal and policy issues related to space traffic. This is important work for the Committee to consider and we believe that good coordination of space traffic is vital to achieving a safe, secure and sustainable outer space environment.

The UK continues to support important awareness-raising and capacity-building for space law and guidelines by funding two UK-UNOOSA projects on the Long-Term Sustainability Guidelines and the Registration of Space Objects. We were pleased with the success of the second National Focal Points meeting for Registration. We would like to thank UNOOSA for organising the session and all delegations who took part.

Finally, we would like to recognise the pressures that the UN system, and particularly UNOOSA, is facing right now. We therefore call on all members of this committee to support UNOOSA in its important role and to work collaboratively in the Vienna spirit.