

Agenda Item 3: General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities.

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 onto our General Statement. The UK is pleased to share with you our progress and developments since the last meeting.

In May 2024, the UK published the Space Regulatory Review, setting out strategic priorities to further enhance the UK's innovative, agile and attractive regulatory environment. The UK is now implementing a comprehensive package of regulatory reforms in partnership with the sector based on its recommendations. Our work is focused on identifying gaps and opportunities in the space regulatory framework to better enable innovative markets in support of the government's priority outcomes of growth and security. I am pleased to set out some highlights:

The UK has established the Regulatory Innovation Office to streamline regulation, reduce bureaucratic procedures, and accelerate the emergence of new technologies in the UK market. The space sector has been selected as one of the initial priority areas.

The UK has committed to developing innovative approaches to regulatory development, including the use of sandboxes. The rendezvous and proximity operations (RPO) regulatory sandbox brought together government, industry and the independent regulator to develop a hypothetical debris removal and servicing mission concept to improve the regulatory environment in the UK for future debris removal and in-orbit servicing missions.

The UK has continued 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. With regards to the Registration Project, we would like to highlight that the second National Focal Points meeting for Registration is taking place next week, on the 12th and 13th May. We would like to thank UNOOSA for organising this session and look forward to building on the productive discussion from the last National Focal Points meeting.

The UK is committed to promoting good regulatory practice for Lunar Operations. We are supportive of the ongoing ATLAC process as an important step to ensuring there is a forum to discuss important lunar issues, such as lunar disposal, heritage sites and lunar science preservation. The UK has been actively preparing for our anticipated first lunar licence application this year, with SSTL's Lunar Pathfinder Communications and Navigation Relay. As part of these efforts, we have commissioned studies to better understand safe and responsible practices for lunar disposal, and we are pleased to summarise these efforts as part of a technical presentation later this week. *The UK views planetary protection as an important principle for space exploration and we will shortly be publishing a technical framework on Planetary protection to give UK operators clarity on how to implement the UK's planetary protection obligations.* The UK is also proud to be part of the Artemis Accords where discussions will continue on how to develop peaceful, safe and sustainable lunar practices.

The UK continues to support the development of new, industry-led Space Sustainability Standards, which seek to incentivise good practice across the lifecycle of space activities in order to protect future access to space. The first two standards have been published by the British Standards Institution for public consultation and we encourage all members and observers engage in this process.

Space cooperation and collaboration relies on states complying with existing global legal frameworks, including the OST. Those who have not yet done so should ratify or accede to the OST as soon as possible; those who are already party to it should clearly and unambiguously conform to their obligations under it, such as that contained in Article IV not to place any objects carrying nuclear weapons in orbit Earth's orbit.

The UK looks forward to contributing to the meetings of the Working Group on Space Resources. We would like to thank Vice Chair Professor Steven Freeland for his hard work and continued stewardship of the committee, especially with regards to the recent circulation of the zero draft of the Initial Draft Set of Recommended Principles for Space Resource Activities. The UK views the zero draft as a great contribution to the work of the committee and we look forward to discussions with delegations over this LSC.

We also look forward to discussions under the Working Group on the Five Treaties. The UK sees particular value in discussions relating to Article XI and we would like to thank the Chair, Franziska Knur, for her continued leadership of the working group.

Finally, Chair, we would like to extend our thanks for your leadership of this committee, and the Secretariat for their hard work, including the organisation of this meeting.

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.