

United Kingdom, Item 12

UK Statement on LTS at the 60th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, 6th-17th February 2023

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The United Kingdom attaches great importance to the Long-Term Sustainability of the Outer Space Environment.

Chair,

At a national level Space Sustainability is one of the key priorities for the UK Space Agency. In June 2022 UK Space Agency co-hosted the Summit for Space Sustainability with the Secure World Foundation at the Science Museum in London. The conference which had the theme “Global Priorities for Space Sustainability” saw leading constellation operators, regulators and policy makers discuss trends for the environment, new policy approaches and emerging technological solutions. At the conference, the UK Minister for Science, Research and Innovation announced the UK intent to develop a new kitemark or space sustainability standard led by Industry and supported by Government. Alongside advances in national policy the UK has also supported new technologies and missions that seek to enhance the safety and sustainability of UK space activities. This has included funding two projects that will provide the preliminary design of a national active debris removal mission, roll out of our conjunction analysis service known as Monitor Your Satellites and support for new propulsion systems that will allow for greater manoeuvrability of small satellites on orbit. Lessons learned from both the advances in policy and technology will be used to support future discussions of the Long-Term Sustainability Working Group.

Chair,

The UK recognises that to achieve the goal of a sustainable space environment international collaboration and the disseminating best practices, knowledge and experience is vital.

The UK welcomes the IADC report on the “Status of the Space Environment” as a critical insight into the global compliance to the space debris mitigation guidelines and the forecasted environmental challenges we may begin to face on-orbit. The report serves as a timely reminder that global dialogue is essential and that together we must develop a common appreciation of the targets for a sustainable space environment that meets the needs of the present generations while preserving the outer space environment for future generations.

As a key part of this global dialogue the UK attended the LTS informal in November and would like to thank the Chair, his team and UNOOSA for their organisation of this event and the working group.

At the LTS November informal last year, we proposed the idea of a common and agreed template to record the implementation progress of the LTS Guidelines. This would be in line with the voluntary implementation and reporting process for the Guidelines. By agreeing on a template, this will allow for easier interpretation and comparison of approaches, while ensuring continuity and access for future reports.

To continue to support raising awareness and building capacity of the Guidelines in an inclusive approach. In December, the UK announced we were sponsoring the third phase of the LTS project with UNOOSA. It will build on the work completed in the first two phases by delivering virtual expert events and e-learning materials.

Four virtual events will be held this year, each dedicated to one section of the LTS Guidelines, from Sections A to D. They will feature expert speakers at each event and provide an opportunity for discussion with questions and answers.

We hope these events and resources will be helpful for member states and demonstrate our continued commitment to supporting the LTS Guidelines.

The UK looks forward to contributing to the LTS working group discussions at this session of STSC. The informal meetings of the working group will include key insights into member states approach to voluntary implementation of the 21 agreed guidelines. It is hope that this sharing of practices will serve as a good starting point to highlight new and emerging issues.

Thank you Chair.