

United Kingdom, Item 11

UK Statement on LTS at the 60th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, 29th-09th February 2024

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

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

At a national level Space Sustainability is one of the key priorities for the UK Government. The UK is committed to protect the space environment through the development of regulations, standards and technology. The UK continues to invest in its space surveillance and tracking capabilities, providing conjunction analysis and warning to UK operators along with re-entry and licence compliance. The UK continues to support preparations for a national debris removal mission, launching in 2026, demonstrating national capability to rendezvous, dock with and safely remove two unprepared, UK-licensed objects from orbit. In 2023, the Sustainable Markets Initiative launched the Astra Carta, a framework inspired by His Majesty King Charles III, to shape future sustainable space exploration, development, and cooperation. While not UK Government policy, the Astra Carta is a positive step highlighting the role of the global private sector in maintaining a sustainable space domain.

Chair,

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

The UK welcomes the annual release of the IADC report on the "Status of the Space Debris Environment" which was released at this session. The report serves 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 continues to be a timely

reminder that global dialogue on the sustainability of the space environment is essential and that only through joint action can we seek to preserve the outer space environment for future generations.

At this session the UK released a Conference Room Paper A/AC.105/C.1/2024/CRP.21. The paper is an update to the UK's approach to the implementation of the guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We are pleased to see that member states are continuing to report on their voluntary implementation of the guidelines. Reporting on implementation of the guidelines is a vital tool to share practices and uncover common challenges in their implementation which may guide future work of the committee. To support this, the UK Space Agency is planning to support the development of a repository, agreed at the 60th session of this committee, to provide an easily accessible and searchable open-source repository of implementation practices which we hope will serve as a tool for building transparency, confidence and capacity. To this end, we continue to encourage member states to submit their implementation practices and welcome opportunities to share our lessons learned in the voluntary implementation of the guidelines.

To further support the capacity building efforts and broaden the reach of the guidelines the UK Space Agency has funded three phases of the LTS Guidelines project with the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs. In 2023, the third phase was successfully completed with 4 virtual events dedicated to the four sections of the LTS guidelines, a free to access e-module on the LTS Guidelines and continuing to support the project website and physical booklets.

The UK looks forward to contributing to the LTS working group discussions at this session of STSC. We also look forward to participating in the Workshop taking place on Tuesday 6th February. This is an important part of the capacity building work of the LTS Working Group which will hopefully support further implementation of the guidelines.

The UK also welcomes the Chairs Working Paper and would like to thank the Chair of the Working Group and UNOOSA for their continued

leadership and the United Kingdom will continue to work with others to contribute across the three pillars of the agreed work plan.

Thank you Chair.