

UK Statement – UN STSC 2024 – Agenda Item 12 - Future Role of the STSC

Chair,

Please allow me to set out the view of the United Kingdom on the future role of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS.

We believe that this subcommittee plays a unique part in ensuring the ongoing discussion of the scientific and technical aspects of the exploration and sustainable use of outer space.

The United Kingdom has taken a leading role on both the space sustainability agenda and space security.

With regard to the role of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 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.

We would now like to share some remarks on the ways of working.

First, the UK would like to express our gratitude to the Chair of COPUOS for his successful efforts to streamline the agendas of the subcommittees. We believe that this has allowed for a more informal exchange of ideas. Addressing each agenda item in sequential order has also granted more predictability for participants. The STSC should be easy for observers to understand, not just governments, and we think this change has helped in that direction. We call upon all delegations to consider ways to

innovate and make our work easier for non-experts to understand, including through the further consolidation of agenda items. We also welcome the Chair's efforts to decrease our environmental impact by reducing printed documentation.

Second, the United Kingdom is pleased to see that we have a diverse range of observers represented at COPUOS and its subcommittees. Space sustainability does not fall to governments alone. We believe that we should do more to fully engage the private sector and the scientific community. We would encourage delegations to consider including non-governmental actors as part of their delegations throughout the COPUOS meeting cycle. We collectively agreed in the OMNIBUS resolution to "pursue greater engagement with industry and private sector entities to further their support for and contributions to the overall work of the Office". The UK believes that sharing experience, ideas and creating a common vision, is one of the defining benefits of the multilateral system.

Next, the United Kingdom would like to thank Chile, Spain and South Africa for their work pertaining to Dark and Quiet Skies. We are pleased to be a member of the Group of Friends and we hope that the efforts to create an agenda item will reach consensus.

Chair, we will continue to be active in the STSC and in support of UNOOSA, including through funding programmes to help others to implement the Long-Term Sustainability guidelines.

The UK has actively engaged in cross-regional discussions, here in Vienna, to better understand how we might utilise COPUOS in new, improved, ways. Our hope is to create the opportunity for increased interaction between Member States, including through informal discussion, by making space for our experts to speak to each other,

and to consider new agenda items and the concerns of our new Members, whilst retaining the valuable discussions here.

Chair. Our work is only just beginning. 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 Chair and to all of the participants at this session.