

United Kingdom, Item 3

UK General Statement at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical  
Subcommittee of COPUOS, 3rd-14th February 2025

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, please allow us to express our sadness regarding the passing of Ambassador Andrzej Misztal. We saw the Working Group on the Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities make excellent progress under his leadership. He will be greatly missed.

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. We call again on Russia to end this war and withdraw from Ukrainian territory.

Now let me move onto our General Statement

The United Kingdom continues to work collaboratively on ground-breaking space science and exploration missions with international partners. An example of this is BepiColombo, a joint mission between the European Space Agency (ESA) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). This mission saw significant involvement from Airbus Defence and Space in the United Kingdom who delivered key spacecraft subsystems. BepiColombo recently completed its final flyby of Mercury, capturing a series of exquisite images and we look forward to the scientific discoveries it will return when it enters orbit in 2026. The United Kingdom continues to look for opportunities for international collaboration and as part of this we will work with our European partners on the plans for future science and exploration missions at the Council of Ministers later this year.

2024 saw significant progress in lunar exploration with a series of ambitious missions from both commercial actors and space agencies. The United Kingdom would like to specifically congratulate China's National Space Administration (CNSA) on the significant achievement of returning samples from the lunar surface. The advancements in capabilities for the exploration of the moon underlines the importance of the Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC) to help facilitate international cooperation and coordination. To support this the United Kingdom are pleased to co-sponsor a CRP at this session, outlining a summary of the discussions held in 2024 to support the implementation of the ARTEMIS Accords principles.

The United Kingdom is proud to work with both domestic and international partners to champion space-based technologies and their uses for climate action. This year, the UK Space Agency are Chair of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites where we are focusing on “Unlocking Earth Observation for Society”. Our membership of the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters continues to be vitally important, providing key Earth Observation space data to support disaster response globally. The Charter has provided support to the authorities and the humanitarian community in responses to almost 1000 disasters in 160 countries since 2000. In fact, the Charter was activated, along with the Copernicus Emergency Management Service, recently in the United Kingdom for support on the impact from Storm Eowyn.

Space debris continues to be a significant global issue with the potential to disrupt critical services. The United Kingdom continues to take a multi-faceted approach to delivering on its space sustainability commitments - from regulatory reform to continuing to support a national debris removal mission. In May 2024 the UK Space Agency and the UK Space Command in partnership with the UK Met Office launched its National Space Operations Centre (NSpOC). NSpOC combines and coordinates civil and military space domain awareness capabilities to enable operations, promote prosperity and protect UK interests in space and on Earth from space related threats, risks and hazards. The United Kingdom would like

to thank UNOOSA for its efforts in socialising the challenge of Space Traffic Coordination and we look forward to exploring this further at this session.

Finally, Chair, distinguished delegates, we look forward to a constructive session to further our cooperation and dialogue in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.