

UK Statement on Space-system-based disaster management support at the 62nd session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS

Chair, thank you for this opportunity to address the committee on the subject Space-system-based disaster management support.

The United Kingdom notes that, as the International Charter for Space and Major Disasters (the Charter) approaches its 25th anniversary, the Charter responded to a record 84 disasters in 2024, the highest number of activations in a single year since its foundation in the year 2000. We recognise that this reflects the increasing demand, importance, and acceptance of Earth observation as a valuable operational tool for risk and impact management. The Charter is accessible to all nationally mandated disaster management authorities under its universal access programme.

As the current Chair of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) we report that the 34 CEOS Member Agencies have noted the global mobilization on the triple crisis of climate, biodiversity, and pollution at last year's CEOS plenary held in Montreal. CEOS agencies renewed their commitment to monitoring the environment and climate from space through the coordinated planning, production, improvement, interoperability, and availability of space-based climate data records on a global scale for maximum impact on climate policy development and implementation, particularly in the use of space-based Earth observation in support of the Global Stock take (GST). The relevance of coordinated space-based Earth observations for key strategic priorities, including the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), was also noted.

The United Kingdom's expertise in Earth observation, weather, and climate from satellites is used to inform positive action and support the development of global policy and interoperability.

In September 2024, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) launched an innovative Satellite Emergency Mapping Service (SEMS). SEMS uses state-of-the-art satellite imaging technology to deliver near real-time, high-resolution data and insights that will enhance decision-making capabilities and enable faster, more efficient response efforts when disasters strike, offering a significant boost to Scotland's

resilience against natural and human-made disasters. The service, which utilises data from the International Charter: Space & Major Disasters, and Copernicus, will also contribute to future crisis preparedness, using baseline data collected by satellites to model potential scenarios, inform long-term resilience planning, and develop more effective response strategies.

The United Kingdom's Met Office continues to provide leadership and significant contributions to the international standards setting, capacity development, and research to operations work of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), notably through the UN's Early Warnings for All initiative and the ongoing development and implementation of global meteorological data exchange policies, including satellite data. The Met Office is also instrumental in delivering the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Weather and Climate Information Services (WISER) programme, working in partnership agencies and programmes around the world to deliver transformation in the generation and use of weather and climate services in order to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.

On behalf of the UK, the Met Office is also a major contributor to EUMETSAT, which has recently declared its initial third generation Meteosat (MTG) satellite operational. Through launches of the MTG 'sounding' companion satellite in 2025 and forthcoming second generation of polar-orbiting satellites, the benefit that can be derived from space data continues to grow. These valuable new sources of data, and advances in the underpinning science and computing will significantly improve the ability to predict severe weather, monitor ongoing situations and support disaster response.

Continued International collaboration is now more important than ever if we are to adequately address the climate crisis and mitigate disasters, and we look forward to engaging further and working with all nations in this critical undertaking. Thank you.