

## Item 9

UK Statement on Near Earth Objects at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, 3-14 February 2025

Chair, distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the United Kingdom is pleased to inform this body that the UK Space Agency, through the UK National Space Operations Centre (NSpOC), has become a member of the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN). Membership to the International Asteroid Warning Network is a demonstration of the UK's commitment to Planetary Defence activities in the lead up to the International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence in 2029, and beyond.

As a co-sponsor of the International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence resolution passed in 2024, the United Kingdom welcomes the opportunity to raise global understanding of the threat that asteroids and comets may pose to the Earth in the future and how we might protect our planet from these Near-Earth Objects.

The UK Space Agency, through the UK NSpOC, is responsible for the receipt and redistribution of potential Near-Earth Object impact event notifications on behalf the UK Government. The NSpOC has made its global optical space surveillance and tracking network available for follow-up observations of Near-Earth Objects which could potentially impact the Earth. NSpOC will work with IAWN partners to deliver follow-up observations of Near-Earth Objects which could potentially impact the Earth including where feasible through our global optical space surveillance and tracking network.

The UK Space Agency is supporting the European Space Agency in the development of the 'FlyeEye' telescopes that will photograph large swaths of the sky each night, searching for asteroids. We are conducting early studies for ESA's deep-space mission 'NEOMIR' (Near-Earth Object Mission in Infra-Red) that will enable the detection and monitoring of asteroids that we cannot see from the ground.

The UK Space Agency, through ESA, is also supporting the 'RAMSES' (Rapid Apophis Mission for Space Safety), that will study the asteroid Apophis on its close flyby of our planet in April 2029. The unique perspectives that these missions offer is vital for considering how we may deal with any Earth-bound threats in the future, as well as providing new scientific insights into the formation and evolution of our Solar System.

The United Kingdom recognises the importance of the international communities work in relation to the identification and monitoring of Near-Earth Objects. The recent interest in

2024YR4 underlines the importance of international cooperation on this topic and we look forward to continuing to work with partners.

Thank you, Chair, distinguished delegates