



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Submission by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland pursuant to paragraph 11 of Resolution 77/251 (30 December 2022) concerning the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

1. Improving transparency and lines of communication among States is vital for reducing the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation and for creating more favourable conditions for norms of behaviour to be agreed.
2. If States are as transparent as possible about their intentions, capabilities, doctrine and policies it can all help to improve mutual understanding, build trust and reduce risks of conflict.
3. The UK supports the recommendations contained in the [2013 report](#) (A/68/189) of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence Building Measures in Outer Space Activities¹. The UK encourages States to implement these, which can be done unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally.
4. In particular, States should publish their space military and security strategies, policies, doctrines and expenditures as part of implementing the recommendations in paragraphs 27a (pg.12) and para 37 (pg.14) and para 38 (pg.14). Such information could also be hosted on a UN webpage for an additional level of transparency, for example on UNIDIR's Space Security Portal².
5. Also, military space operators should establish a consultative mechanism to give effect to the recommendations contained in paragraph 57 of the report. This might allow, for example, for States to clarify information regarding the exploration and use of space for national security purposes or to clarify ambiguous situations or to prevent or minimize potential risks of physical damage or harmful interference.
6. Additionally, States with a space-launch capability should provide pre-launch notifications of all launches into space in accordance with the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and engage in pre-launch co-ordination with states that might be affected by re-entering debris (e.g. rocket stages) that pose a potential risk of injury to people and damage or destruction of property.

¹ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/408/35/PDF/N1340835.pdf?OpenElement>

² <https://unidir.org/projects/space-security-portal>

7. The UK is leading by example. The Government has published detailed information about its space-related defence and security policies in a variety of documents. Most recently, these include:
- a. The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy³. This document describes the government's vision for the UK's role in the world over the next decade and the action we will take to 2025 including with respect to space.
 - b. The National Space Strategy⁴. This strategy sets out the Government's ambitions for the UK in space, bringing together civil and defence policy for the first time.
 - c. The Defence Space Strategy⁵. The strategy sets out the government's vision for Defence as a responsible global actor in the space domain.
 - d. The Integrated Review Refresh⁶ sets out the UK's response to a more contested and volatile world since the original Integrated Review was published. It sustains the UK's commitment to working within the UK to promote responsible space behaviours.
8. In addition, the Ministry of Defence has published Space Power (JDP 0-40)⁷, which provides a detailed overview of UK military space doctrine.
9. The UK is part of a group of nations whose military organisations are cooperating on combined space operations (CSpO). In line with our commitment to transparency, the vision, purpose and objectives of this initiative are set out in public⁸ and commit the participating states to act responsibly in space and make efforts to avoid escalation and conflict while cooperating on military space operations.
10. Transparency is also important with respect to civilian space activities. Many civilian space systems can also be used for military purposes. For example, an emerging area of opportunity and challenge is the development of systems for active debris removal (ADR) and in-orbit servicing and manufacturing (IOSM).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-integrated-review-2021>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-space-strategy>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-space-strategy-operationalising-the-space-domain>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-refresh-2023-responding-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world>

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1111805/JDP_0_40_UK_Space_Power_web.pdf

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/combined-space-operations-vision-2031>

11. While such technologies offer the prospect of cleaning up the space environment and making space activities more sustainable, they have the potential to be used in either offensive or defensive operations against satellites belonging to other countries. It is therefore important that countries are transparent about the development, deployment and use of such systems. For example, providing advance notification of ADR and IOSM operations or the testing of such technologies, will help build confidence and trust that such systems are to be used for their stated purpose. In these cases, countries should provide information on the nature of the mission and the technologies being used or tested.
12. The UK is committed to transparency in this area. As well as publishing the [UK Plan for Space Sustainability](#) in June 2022⁹, the UK has provided technical presentations to UNCOPUOS on items such as the RemoveDEBRIS mission, and is committed to early engagement with other states for future missions. We will also host an event with New Zealand at UNCOPUOS in June 2023 to share how we are developing the regulatory environment to enable ADR and IOSM. Concerns around dual use underscore the importance of transparency and international cooperation to ensure these types of activities do not pose risks to the stability of space.
13. Comprehensive, consistent and timely registration of all space objects is also important for building trust amongst nations. The UK registers its space objects in accordance with the registration convention and keeps a national register containing details on the purpose and function of the objects as well as their orbital parameters.
14. The UK is working to increase awareness and capacity building around registration and increase the number of Member States ratifying the Registration Convention. In partnership with the United Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the United Kingdom has funded 'The Registration project' in 2023 in order to enhance international registration expertise; support Member States and States Parties to implement their international registration commitments; and to understand current and potential future challenges on registration. This project also complements UNOOSA's work to modernize and digitize the Register in 2023/24. The outputs from this project will be:
 - a. An interview series with Member States to understand how they have implemented various provisions of the Registration Convention and where they have experienced challenges.
 - b. An anonymised report that will showcase good practice and challenges.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-package-of-new-measures-to-drive-space-sustainability>

- c. An expert event ahead of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 2023, which will bring together international regulators, licensors, and leads to discuss registration.
- 15. The Space Industry Act 2018 regulates space launch activity from the UK. Under the act, the UK has established procedures to ensure compliance with the Hague Code of Conduct. Launch operators are required by licence to provide the regulator with information relating to the launch window, launch trajectory and arrangements with other countries. The UK maintains a register of launches that have taken place from UK spaceports and engages in pre-launch co-ordination with states that might be affected by the launch, including re-entering of rocket stages.