

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space 64th session: UK statement on space and sustainable development

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The United Kingdom is pleased to address the Committee on our activities in the field of 'Space for Sustainable Development' – which feels particularly significant during this pivotal year of climate action, in which the UK is delighted to hold the presidency of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties, in partnership with Italy.

The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme – IPP – utilises the UK space sector's capabilities in satellite technology and data services to develop space-enabled solutions in partnership with developing countries which deliver real benefits to people on the ground and, ultimately, make the case for investment in space to policymakers.

Now over five years into its tenure, IPP has a portfolio of 43 projects grant-funded in 47 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America & Caribbean, two prestigious space awards (including the 2020 Group on Earth Observations' SDG Award for commitments to sustainable development), and is helping nations to achieve their UN Sustainable Development Goals.

IPP projects are achieving sustainable change and some examples of this include:

1. A pioneering dengue fever forecasting system called D-MOSS incorporating Earth observation data, in-situ observations and seasonal climate forecasts, allowing government officials in Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries to better manage outbreaks and improve planning and prevention measures.
2. The RE-SAT project which has developed an energy planning tool in partnership with the Seychelles, enabling them to rely less on expensive fossil fuel electricity generation and more on abundant resources of solar and wind renewables and ultimately reach their target of 15% renewable energy by 2030. This is now being implemented in other Small Island Developing States across the Caribbean and Pacific.
3. A transcontinental forest mapping and monitoring project, called Forests 2020, helped develop a National Map of Forests and Land Use for Ghana. This was launched earlier this year by their National Forestry Commission and will be formally adopted as a national product for the use of climate reporting and zero deforestation supply chains in both the forest sector and for commodity exports.
4. And the Earth and Sea Observation System (EASOS) MarineWatch tool which has helped to identify and map the trajectory of three oil spills, improving the response to and policing of marine pollution – in addition to environmental benefits, clean-up costs saved by early intervention

are estimated to be over £3 million.

There are also many programme-wide impacts which have supported sustainable development and demonstrate the case for investment in space solutions. Specific examples include:

- IPP's forestry projects in partnership with Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, almost 40 million hectares of forest are already being monitored using Earth observation solutions, while an estimated one million hectares of deforestation has been avoided.
- Over 47,000 farmers have already been directly engaged in IPP to map field boundaries, test decision-support tools and begin implementing agronomic advice as a result of IPP's agriculture projects with Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.
- IPP tools from projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Fiji, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Vietnam have been applied to over a dozen natural disaster situations, including volcanic eruptions, typhoons, and even evacuation centres set up to cope with population displacement due to armed conflicts.
- And many lives have been saved by IPP-funded satellite communications tools, which have supported search and rescue operations of small-scale fishing vessels in South Africa and Madagascar and delivered video training to health workers in remote areas of Nigeria, providing life-saving care to pregnant women and their infants.

The full extent of IPP achievements since 2016 will be evaluated at the end of this year and we stand ready to report on this with members of the Committee.

While this all tells a positive story, the Coronavirus pandemic has, of course, impacted global governments' ability to invest in aid initiatives. However, the UK remains a world-leading donor and is keen to maximise the impact of ongoing collaborative work to ensure sustainability, and to explore areas of mutual interest for future partnerships.

The UK's membership of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters since 2005 also reflects this outlook, and we are proud to be part of this collaborative which has seen over 700 activations since the Millennium. These include activations for natural disasters for which space tools developed through IPP have provided support – including swift provision of maps and analysis reports to partners by the CommonSensing climate resilience project when Cyclone Harold struck Pacific Island nations in April 2020.

IPP is therefore an excellent representation of the UK's mission to be a force for good in the world and we stand ready to explore areas of mutual interest for future partnerships and collaboration.

Finally, we look forward to using the review phases stemming from the Space 2030 Agenda as further opportunities to showcase how international cooperation on this important topic can assist all countries to realise their

SDG targets.