

# UK Statement at Scientific and Technical Sub-committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS): Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space

World news story

Delivered by Tony Forsythe, Head of Space Technology at the UK Space Agency, 8 February 2022.



Chair,

The United Kingdom has participated in the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space for a considerable number of years and recognises its usefulness as a forum for exchanging views about the technical aspects of such sources, and for promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Safety Framework. Such exchanges have allowed the Working Group to conclude that the Safety Framework is widely accepted and is valued by member States when developing and applying their national safety systems. No significant implementation challenges have been identified. The UK looks forward to receiving the Working Group's report at this session, giving the conclusions that it has been able to draw from its current work plan and recommending any further work that needs to be done.

The UK delegation is aware of ambitious plans for manned space missions to other solar bodies such as the Moon and Mars which may entail the expanded use of nuclear power sources. We, therefore, consider that the STSC should ask the Working Group to gather relevant information about such potential future uses of NPS in outer space, especially with regard to the use of fission reactors for propulsion or habitation purposes. Based on this information-gathering exercise the Working Group should be asked to make recommendations about the need for additional international guidance on safety standards and how such standards might best be developed, either by

further work within the Working Group or by establishing a new expert group as was done when drafting the Safety Framework.

Thank you, chair.

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