

United Kingdom, Item 8: 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.

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 & the Caribbean, two prestigious space awards, and is helping nations to achieve the 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 officials in Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries to better manage outbreaks and improve planning and prevention measures.
2. The RE-SAT project has developed an energy planning tool in partnership with the Seychelles, enabling them to rely more on solar and wind renewables and 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. And the Earth and Sea Observation System 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.

Chair,

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, mean 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 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 a number of countries.
- 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.

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

Chair,

While this all tells a positive story, the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted global governments' ability to invest in aid initiatives. However, the UK remains a 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 which space tools developed through IPP have provided support – including 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.

Thank you, Chair.