



## South Africa

### **Statement on the Report on the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its 60<sup>th</sup> session: Agenda 6**

#### ***Check against Delivery***

Thank you Chair,

South Africa commends Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti for his excellent leadership of the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC).

At the outset, South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the African Group and the Group of 77 and China.

The link between space technology and sustainable development is tangible when it comes to the fast tracking the achievement of the SDG Agenda and Agenda 2063, both of which have been severely impacted by the COVID pandemic. Space science and technology provides the key to getting back on track as evident in its implementation in a broad range of issues such as water, climate change, earth observation, satellite navigation and disaster risk management, amongst others and are deeply intertwined with the 3 pillars of sustainable development. In this regard, all efforts must be undertaken to preserve outer space for the peaceful purposes and the benefit of all, especially those countries that do not have advanced space programmes.

Chair,

We are entering a new and exciting space era with an envisaged return to the moon and exploration of Mars and deep space. In this regard, South Africa expresses concern over the rapid deployment of mega constellations and the corresponding danger they pose to space actors and the environment at large through accidental collisions, accidents and a proliferation of space debris. We call upon major contributors of space debris to fulfil their historic responsibility in its mitigation and removal and implementation of the relevant voluntary guidelines.

South Africa joins other members of the committee in expressing concern at the challenges mega constellations pose to ground-based astronomy. As the committee is aware, South Africa is home to a large number of telescopes, one of which is the most sensitive in the Southern Hemisphere and is a co-host of the Square Kilometre Array Telescope, all of which requires clear skies to capture sensitive images of the universe with clarity and depth. In this regard, we express our appreciation for the

robust discussions held on the inclusion of an item on Dark and Quiet Skies on the agenda of the STSC during the meeting of the subcommittee. We have noted that support for the item has been overwhelming, indicative of the importance member states attaches to this issue and the desire to work constructively with the astronomy community to address challenges in a practical manner, namely through the establishment of a Technical Experts Group.

With these few words, South Africa takes note of the report.

I thank you.