



STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA

1 – 9 JUNE 2022

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

**REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS FIFTY-
NINTH SESSION**

**AGENDA ITEM NO 7: REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
SUBCOMMITTEE**

Chairperson, and Distinguished delegates

South Africa expresses its appreciation to Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay for the excellent work in steering the 49th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

My delegation would like to note some of the key issues reported in the 59th Session of the Subcommittee.

With regard to the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space, South Africa is pleased to note the progress made within the Working Group under the chairship of Mr Umamaheswaran R. of India and we further welcome the endorsement of the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the Working Group. We are of the view that sharing of experiences and reviewing best practices and lessons learned in the practical national implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities is important as it would enhance overall communication, international cooperation, awareness-raising and capacity-building.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes the draft provisional agenda for the sixtieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee with special attention to Agenda Item 17, General exchange of views on dark and quiet skies for science and society.

Chairperson,

South Africa has a vibrant scientific community working on both radio and optical astronomy. As many would be aware, South Africa is home to the Southern African Large Telescope, the largest single optical telescope in the southern hemisphere. It is also home to the MeerKAT radio telescope which is the most sensitive telescope of its kind in the world and a precursor to the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope, currently in construction in South Africa and Australia.

The Republic of South Africa promulgated a national legislation, called the Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act of 2007, followed by national regulations to preserve a pristine environment for radio and optical astronomy in South Africa. Previously, the combination of these national protections and technology advancements in telescopes permitted avoiding anthropogenically generated electromagnetic radiation to a large extent. Going forward, the large number of low earth orbit satellites in deployment, and proposed, may overwhelm current mitigation techniques for astronomical observations.

Chairperson,

The Republic of South Africa notes the efforts to protect radio telescopes and radio quiet zones from satellite constellations implemented by some countries, and the continuous engagement between the astronomy and satellite community. It is for this reason that, South Africa recommends the continuing collaboration between interested stakeholders though the newly established International Astronomical Union (IAU) center for the

protection of the dark and quiet sky from satellite constellation interference. The IAU centre will focus on awareness raising and mitigation measures to satellite interference in astronomical observations and the night sky. The trade-offs between the protection of the dark and quiet sky and the needs of orbital operators should address challenges relating to the interference from: (a) artificial light at night; (b) the large number of low Earth orbit satellite; and (c) radio-wavelength emissions.

Chairperson,

The Republic of South Africa supports the continued exchange of views on Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society within COPUOS.

Thank you Chairperson