

## **IAU statement to be delivered under the Agenda Item General exchange of views at the 2022 LSC Session.**

Madame Chair,

The International Astronomical Union wishes to congratulate you for your election to the Chair of the Legal SubCommittee. We are confident that under your guidance, the work of the LSC will proceed in the most smooth and effective way.

Madame Chair, distinguished Delegates,

the IAU represents more than 12,000 professional astronomers from about 90 Countries, all of them also present in this international forum. The IAU main mission is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects through international cooperation.

Indeed the IAU believes in the unifying power of science, in particular of astronomy, and looks back with admiration to the great progress in space science that was made possible by the cooperation among scientists of many different nationalities. The IAU does hope that that fruitful collaboration could continue and wishes to remind everybody that we are living under the same sky.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates

The deployment of large communication satellite constellations represent an important technological development for improving the global network connectivity.

However, the large number of satellites in Low Earth Orbit, estimated to grow to several tens of thousands in a few years, have a serious impact on the astronomical observations, both in the optical/IR and radio wavelength ranges.

The problem has been thoroughly discussed during the last 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the STSC under the specific Agenda Item 18 "General exchange of views on dark and quiet skies for Science and Society". A Working Paper on the theme was presented by the Delegations of Austria, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Slovakia, Spain and by the Observers IAU, ESO and SKAO. The Working Paper was positively commented by 25 Delegations and it was decided to maintain the same Item in the Agenda of next year STSC Session in order to assess the evolution of the situation.

The Working Paper encourages all stakeholders, in particular the astronomical community, space industry and the constellations' companies to collaborate in studying and implementing all possible measures that can mitigate the negative impact of the constellations on astronomy and on the visibility of the pristine night sky.

The coordination of these actions is the main mission of the new “Centre for the protection of dark and quiet sky from satellite constellations interference” or CPS which has been recently constituted by the International Astronomical Union.

While the IAU is confident that, in collaboration with its new Centre, the known industries and companies currently planning and deploying communication constellations will voluntarily adopt best practices that will mitigate the negative impact on astronomy, the IAU also considers useful and prudent to explore the possibility of proposing internationally agreed guidelines and regulations aimed at reducing future space technological developments that may have serious negative impact on astronomy and in general on the progress of science. Therefore the IAU encourages the Legal Subcommittee and its Working Groups to include the issue of the protection of dark and quiet sky in their consideration.

The IAU is pleased to announce that a specific area of activity of its new Centre is devoted to Policy matters: all interested Delegations are warmly invited to collaborate with the IAU Centre with the aim of proposing regulations that are effective in terms of protection of astronomy and science and at the same time they do not represent an obstacle to technological developments.

Thank you for your attention.

[about 4 minutes reading]