



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**61ST SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF
THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE:**

**AGENDA ITEM NO 16: PROPOSALS TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES
OF OUTER SPACE FOR NEW ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE LEGAL
SUBCOMMITTEE AT ITS SIXTY-SECOND SESSION**

28 MARCH – 8 APRIL 2022

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Thank you Madam Chair

South Africa appreciates the opportunity of contributing to the work of COPUOUS and its two subcommittees. Accordingly, we welcome the establishment of the new International Astronomical Union (IAU) Centre for the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies from Satellite Constellation Interference. The Centre will be jointly hosted by the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) and the National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory (NOIRLab). The IAU Centre will focus on the effect of large satellite constellations on both optical and radio astronomy.

Madam Chair,

South Africa is deeply appreciative that the 59th session of the COPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee was cognizant of the importance of adding a new agenda item on Dark and Quiet Skies. The working paper prepared by Chile, Slovakia, Spain, the IAU, the European Southern Observatory, and the SKAO identified guidelines that may be feasible for implementation by satellite constellations. South Africa, through the SKAO, will participate and actively contribute to the IAU Centre to support the adoption of the guidelines for low Earth orbit satellite constellation, radio astronomy and optical / infrared astronomy.

Madam Chair,

South Africa promulgated a national legislation, called the Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act of 2007, followed by national regulations to preserve the pristine environments for radio and optical astronomies in South Africa. However, national regulations in their current form do not protect the Radio Quiet Zone from low Earth orbit satellite constellations.

It is for this reason that we of the view that the Legal subcommittee may consider a new agenda item at its sixty second session that will review and improve the guidelines for low Earth orbit satellite constellation, radio astronomy and optical / infrared astronomy. The voluntary guidelines should develop further into an agreement between different Administration of low Earth orbit satellite constellation, radio astronomy and optical / infrared astronomy.

While we fully agree that the sub-committee should be not arbitrarily overburdened with additional agenda items, we are also aware that the protection of space is a shared responsibility, and where possible, we should create synergies between the 2 subcommittees to mitigate the negative impact of mega-constellations on astronomy

Thank Madam Chair